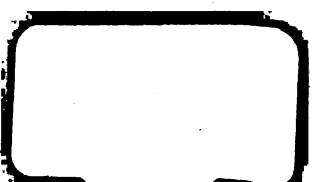




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"The Story of our Lives from Year to Year."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
Abductions and Forced Marriages	228	Cuper's Gardens	460	KENT, Trout Fishing in	488
About Teeth	320	Curates of the Church of England	28	King Arthur's Sword	271
Adapted from the French	293	Cures, Some Popular	260	King's Bench Walk, Temple	158
Afghanistan. The Tenth Hussars and the Cbul River	559	Customs at Sea	143, 543	King's Evil, Touching for the	251
Agreeable Surprise, The Play of The	65	DEAF and Dumb at Lessons	371	LAMBETH Wells	452
Alfred in the Danish Camp	365	Destroyer, The, Torpedo Boat	324	Lancashire, Distress in	520
All Frasco	447, 463	Down South in Fever Time	203	Lion Hotel, Farningham	489
All Hallow's Even. Seamen's Observance of	151	Drama. French Adaptations	296	London Fifty Years Ago	185
All in Half a Century	185	Drury Lane Theatre, History of Dupath Holy Well	354	Lord Milton's Election	903
All or Nothing. A Serial Story, by Mrs. Cahel Hoey 19, 43, 68, 92, 116, 141, 164, 188, 211, 236, 260, 282	151	ELECTIONS Extraordinary	303	Love Me, Love my Dog. A Story	59, 83, 106
All Saints' Day at Dieppe	151	Election Expenses in Old Times	303	MAWCHESER, Distress in	520
America. Down South in Fever Time	203	Employment of Women	274	Margate Hoys	185
America. Pistol-Practice	535	Entertainments, Out-of-door	447, 463	Mariners' Observances of Saints' Days	151
Antiquities in Cornwall	352	"Escroquerie," An	178	Marlborough College Thirty Years Ago	416
Army. Nicknames of Regiments	369	Exeter Change	188	Mars, Mademoiselle	390
Arthur, Sword of King	271	Experiments Extraordinary	402	Marylebone Gardens	464
Artificial Teeth	320	Experiments upon Condemned Criminals	403	Mary Queen of Scots' Attempted Escape from Loch Leven	366
BASHLEY Wells	466	FAIRY Legends of the Queen's County	478	Meat, Price of, Fifty Years Ago	187
Battle Pieces of Music	233	Famous Swords	271	Medical Mystery. A Story	133
Belsize House	463	Farningham, Fishing at	499	Mines in Cornwall	352
Beneft Nights. Old Play-bills	67	Fte in the Fourteenth Century	207	Mr. Bowker's Courtship. A Story	395
Bluebeard at Broglio	124	Fever Time, Down South in	203	Mulberry Gardens, The	449
Books for Christmas Presents	12	Few Wishing Customs, A	608	Musical Battles	233
Bribery and Corruption	303	Fifty Years Ago, London	185	My Land of Beulah. A Story	377, 405, 429, 453, 476, 500, 523, 546, 572, 596, 615
Brick Court, Temple, Goldsmith's Rooms in	154	Fires at Drury Lane Theatre	348	New Orleans. Fever Time	203
Broken Up	592	Fishing for Sardines	326	Norwegian Fishermen, Superstitution of	151
Bundle of Old Play Bills	64	Fishing, Spring Trouting in Kent	498	Night with the Sardines	326
Burning Teeth, The belief in	322	Folk-Lore	251	Off the Beaten Track in Cornwall	352
Burns, The Poetry of	10	Folk-Lore of Queen's County	583	Old and New Cards	38
CABUL River, Accident to the Tenth Hussars	559	Folk-Lore respecting Teeth	320	Old Cornish Houses	352
Cards, Curious Packs of	38	Forced Marriages	228	"Old Drury"	346
Case of the Curates, The	28	Fountain Court, Temple	158	Old English Travellers in Russia	511
Celtic Swords	273	French Adaptations	296	Old French Stage, The	160, 390
Ceylon, Twenty Years' Captivity in	442	French Stage, The Old: Mademoiselle Gausain	160	Mademoiselle Gausain	160
Charles the Second in the Tree	367	Mademoiselle Mars	390	Mademoiselle Mars	390
Charles the Second's Escape to France	368	French Theatricals	570	Old Playbills	64
Charms against Toothache	322	GAMES at Sea	148, 543	On Tramp from the Pacific to the Atlantic	277, 299
Charms and Spells	251	Gamester, The Play of the	65	Open-Air Entertainments	463, 447
Charlton Hunt, The	86	Goldsmith's Rooms in the Temple	154	Origin of Hamlet	173
Cheesewring, Cornwall	365	Goodwood House	90	Out-of-door Entertainments	447, 463
Chivalric Swords	273	HACKNEY Coaches	185	PACIFIC to the Atlantic on Tramp	277, 299
Christmas Art and Science	33	Hamlet, The Origin of	173	Packs of Cards, Old and New	38
Christmas Literature	12	Hamlet, The Play of	188	Panama, the Isthmus of	277, 299
Christmas Presents	12, 33	Hard Times in Cottonopolis	520	Paris Fte in the Fourteenth Century	207
Coleridge, Poetry of	10	Haunted Precinct, The	153	Paris Theatres	570
Columbus in a Storm	150	Holy Wells in Cornwall	354	Paris, The Old French Stage 160, 390	390
Comdie Franaise	570	Hotel, A Women's	112	Parliamentary Elections in Old Times	303
Copper Ship, A	403	How Surnames Grow	842	Picture of Spanish Life and Character	54, 77
Cornish Miners	353	Hunt, The Charlton	88		
Cornwall, Off the Beaten Track in	362	IDLE Women	274		
Cotche, Cornwall	354	Ireland, Forced Marriages	228		
Cottonopolis, Hard Times in	520	Irish Legends	473, 563		
Cremorne Gardens	467	Isthmus of Panama	277, 299		
		JANE Shore, The Tragedy of	65		

	PAGE		PAGE		PAGE
Pistol-Practice in America . . .	535	Ships' Shops by Dock and Quay . . .	197	Toys at Christmas . . .	33
Play-bills, A Bundle of Old . . .	64	Some Popular Cures . . .	250	Trade, Depression of . . .	520
Play, Hamlet . . .	138	Something New at Sea . . .	324	Tramp from the Pacific to the	
Play, The "Two Gentlemen"		South Downs, Fox Hunting . . .	90	Atlantic . . .	277, 290
and the Players . . .	102	Spanish Life and Character . . .	54, 77	Transfusion of Blood, Experi-	
Plays Adapted from the French . . .	296	Sports on a Sea Voyage . . .	148, 543	ments . . .	402
Poets' League, The. A Story . . .	254	Spring Gardens, Charing Cross . . .	448	Trout Fishing in Kent . . .	488
Poets, Mistakes of . . .	11	Spring Trouting in Kent . . .	488	Twenty Years' Captivity in	
Poets, Town-Bred . . .	8	Stone Circles . . .	355	Ceylon . . .	442
Popular Cures . . .	250	Stories : . . .		"Two Gentlemen" and the	
Postage, Old Rates of . . .	186	An "Escroquerie" . . .	178	Players . . .	102
Precinct, The Haunted . . .	183	Love Me, Love My Dog . . .	59, 83, 106	Two Gentlemen of Verona . . .	102
Pre-historic Stones, Cornish . . .	355	Medical Mystery, A . . .	133		
		Mr. Bowker's Courtship . . .	395	VAUXHALL Gardens . . .	449
QUEEN'S County, Fairy Legends . . .	473	My Land of Beulah. 877, 406, 428,		Villa Pottier. A Story . . .	333, 357
Queen's County, Folk-Lore . . .	583	453, 476, 500, 523, 546, 572, 596, 615		Vixen. A Serial Story, by Miss	
		Poets' League . . .	254	Braddon 1, 25, 49, 73, 97, 121, 145,	
RAILWAYS, Opposition when		Villa Pottier . . .	333, 367	169, 183, 217, 241, 265, 289, 313, 337,	
First Proposed . . .	187	Wilhelmina's Grand Coup . . .	307	301, 385, 409, 433, 468, 494, 514, 539,	
Rambling in Cornwall . . .	352	Strode (William), The Poet . . .	9	565, 586, 610	
Ranelagh Gardens . . .	465	Superstitions, Popular Cures . . .	250	WATCHMEN, The Old . . .	185
Regimental Nicknames . . .	399	Surnames, Origin and Growth of . . .	343	Watts (Dr.), Poetry of . . .	10
Reminiscences of London Fifty		Surrey Zoological Gardens . . .	453	White Conduit House . . .	467
Years Ago . . .	185	Swords of Celtic Romance and		Wild Irish Weddings . . .	228
Revolver-Practice in America . . .	535	Chivalry . . .	271	Wilhelmina's Grand Coup . . .	307
Richard the First made Prisoner		TEETH, Artificial . . .	320	Wishing Customs, A Few . . .	608
in Austria . . .	366	Teeth, Sealing Deeds with . . .	321	Witchcraft, the Belief in . . .	250
Royal Hide and Seek . . .	365	Tempest, an Old Play-bill of the	65	Women, Employment of . . .	274
Royalty in Disguise . . .	366	Tempest, Play of the . . .	421	Women, Idle Lives of . . .	274
Russia, Old English Travellers in	511	Temple Gardens . . .	158	Women's Hotel . . .	112
		Temple, My Chambers in the . . .	153	YOUNG Deaf and Dumb at	
SAILORS' Prayers to the Virgin . . .	150	Tenth Hussars and the Cabul		Lessons . . .	371
Sailors' Punishments . . .	149, 544	River . . .	559	Young Pretender Hiding in the	
Sailors' Shops, Literature, &c. . .	201	Theatre, Variety of Entertain-		Highlands . . .	988
Sailors' Sports . . .	148, 543	ments in Old Times . . .	66	Young Shakespeare's Hamlet . . .	138
Sailors, Superstitions of . . .	152	Theatrical Papers : . . .			
St. Cleer, Cornwall . . .	355	A Bundle of Old Play-bills . . .	64	POETRY.	
St. Neot's, Cornwall . . .	355	Adapted from the French . . .	293	DAISIES.	494
Saints' Days and Seamen . . .	151	French Theatricals . . .	570	Hope	447
Sardines, a Night with the . . .	326	Mademoiselle Gansain . . .	160	In the Conservatory . . .	106
School, Deaf and Dumb at . . .	371	Mademoiselle Mars . . .	390	Maid and the Leaf . . .	395
School in Revolt . . .	480	Old Drury . . .	346	Middle Age	12
Sea Customs . . .	143, 543	Origin of Hamlet . . .	173	Parting	254
Seafaring Usages . . .	143, 543	Two Gentlemen of Verona . . .	102	Sea's Answer	277
Sea, Something New at . . .	324	Shakespeare's Tempest . . .	431	Song	564
Sebastian Strome. A Serial		Young Shakespeare's Hamlet . . .	138	Sonnet	163
Story 457, 481, 505, 529, 553, 577,		Tin Mines in Cornwall . . .	952	Sonnet	538
601 . . .		Toothache, Charms to Cure . . .	322	Sonnet	228
Shakespeare, Poetry of . . .	9	Torpedo Boat, The Destroyer . . .	824	Unspoken	340
Shakespeare's Tempest . . .	421	Town-bred Poets	8		
Ship-Breaking	593				

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No. 525. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1878.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAP. XVI. WHERE THE RED KING WAS SLAIN.

MAY had come. The red glow of the beech branches had changed to a tender green: the oaks were amber: the winding forest-paths, the deep inaccessible glades where the cattle led such a happy life, were blue with dog-violets and golden with primroses. Whitsuntide was close at hand, and good Mr. Scobel had given up his mind to church decoration, and the entertainment of his school-children with tea and buns in that delightful valley, where an iron monument, a little less artistic than a pillar post-office, marks the spot where the Red King fell.

Vixen, though not particularly fond of school-feasts, had promised to assist at this one. It was not to be a stiff or ceremonious affair. There was to be no bevy of young ladies, oppressively attentive to their small charges, causing the children to drink scalding tea in a paroxysm of shyness. The whole thing was to be done in an easy and friendly manner; with no aid but that of the school mistress and master. The magnates of the land were to have no part in the festival.

"The children enjoy themselves so much more when there are no finely-dressed people making believe to wait upon them," said Mrs. Scobel; "but I know they'll be delighted to have you, Violet. They positively adore you!"

"I'm sure I can't imagine why they should," answered Violet truthfully.

"Oh, but they do. They like to look at you. When you come into the school-

room they're all in a flutter; and they point at you awfully; don't they, Miss Pierson," said Mrs. Scobel, appealing to the school-mistress.

"Yes, ma'am. I can't cure them of pointing, do what I will."

"Oh, they are dear little children," exclaimed Violet, "and I don't care how much they point at me if they really like me. They make me such nice little bob-curties when I meet them in the Forest, and they all seem fond of Argus. I'm sure you have made them extremely polite, Miss Pierson. I shall be very pleased to come to your school-feast, Mrs. Scobel; and I'll tell our good old Trimmer to make no end of cakes."

"My dear Violet, pray don't think of putting Mrs. Trimmer to any trouble. Your dear mamma might be angry."

"Angry at my asking for some cakes for the school-children, after being papa's wife for seventeen years! That couldn't be."

The school-feast was fixed, three weeks in advance, for the Wednesday in Whitsun week, and during the interval there were many small meteorologists in Beechdale school intent upon the changes of the moon, and all those varied phenomena from which the rustic mind draws its auguries of coming weather. The very crowing of early village cocks was regarded suspiciously by the school-children at this period. It happened that the appointed Wednesday was a day on which Mrs. Tempest had chosen to invite a few friends in a quiet way to her seven o'clock dinner; among the few Captain Winstanley, who had taken Mrs. Hawbuck's cottage for an extended period of three months. Mrs. Tempest had known all about the school-

feast a fortnight before she gave her invitations, but had forgotten the date at the moment when she arranged her little dinner. Yet she felt offended that Violet should insist upon keeping her engagement to the Scobels.

"But, dear mamma, I am of no use to you at our parties," pleaded Vixen; "if I were at all necessary to your comfort, I would give up the school-feast."

"My dear Violet, it is not my comfort I am considering; but I cannot help feeling annoyed that you should prefer to spend your evening with a herd of vulgar children—playing oranges and lemons, or kiss-in-the-ring, or some other ridiculous game, and getting yourself into a most unbecoming perspiration—to a quiet home-evening with a few friends."

"You see, mamma, I know our quiet home evenings with a few friends so well. I could tell you beforehand exactly what will happen, almost the very words people will say—how your jardinières will be admired, and how the conversation will glance off from your ferns and pelargoniums to Lady Ellangowan's orchids, and then drift back to your old china; after which the ladies will begin to talk about dress, and the wickedness of giving seven guineas for a summer bonnet, as Mrs. Jones, or Green, or Robinson has just done; from which their talk will glide insensibly to the iniquities of modern servants; and when those have been discussed exhaustively, one of the younger ladies will tell you the plot of the last novel she has had from Mudie's, with an infinite number of you knows and you sees, and then perhaps Captain Winstanley—he is coming, I suppose—will sing a French song, of which the company will understand about four words in every verse, and then you will show Mrs. Carteret your last piece of art needlework—"

"What nonsense you talk, Violet. However, if you prefer the children at Stony Cross to the society of your mother and your mother's friends, you must take your own way."

"And you will forgive me in advance, dear mamma?"

"My love, I have nothing to forgive. I only deplore a bent of mind which I can but think unladylike."

Vixen was glad to be let off with so brief a lecture. In her heart of hearts she was not at all sorry that her mother's friendly dinner should fall on a day which she had promised to spend elsewhere. It

was a treat to escape the sameness of that polite entertainment. Yes, Captain Winstanley was to be there of course, and prolonged acquaintance had not lessened her dislike to that gentleman. She had seen him frequently during his residence at the Hawbuck cottage, not at her mother's house only, but at all the best houses in the neighbourhood. He had done nothing to offend her. He had been studiously polite; and that was all. Not by one word had he reminded Violet of that moonlight walk in the Pavilion garden; not by so much as a glance or a sigh had he hinted at a hidden passion. So far she could make no complaint against him. But the attrition of frequent intercourse did not wear off the sharp edge of her dislike.

Wednesday afternoon came, and any evil auguries that had been drawn from the noontide crowing of restless village cooks was set at naught, for the weather was peerless; a midsummer sky and golden sunlight upon all things; upon white-walled cottages and orchards, and gardens where the pure lilies were beginning to blow, upon the yellow-green oak leaves and deepening bloom of the beech, and the long straight roads cleaving the heart of the forest.

Violet had arranged to drive Mr. and Mrs. Scobel in her pony-carriage. She was at the door of their snug little vicarage at three o'clock; the vivacious Titmouse tossing his head and jingling his bit, in a burst of pettishness at the aggravating behaviour of the flies.

Mrs. Scobel came fluttering out, with the vicar behind her. Both carried baskets, and behind them came an old servant, who had been Mrs. Scobel's nurse, a woman with a figure like a hogshead of wine, and a funny little head at the top, carrying a third basket.

"The buns and bread have gone straight from the village," said the vicar's wife. "How well you are looking, Violet. I hope dear Mrs. Tempest was not very angry at your coming with us."

"Dear Mrs. Tempest didn't care a straw," Vixen answered, laughing. "But she thinks me wanting in dignity for liking to have a romp with the school-children."

All the baskets were in by this time, and Titmouse was in a paroxysm of impatience; so Mr. and Mrs. Scobel seated themselves quickly, and Vixen gave her reins a little shake that meant Go, and off

went the pony at a pace which was rather like running away.

The vicar looked slightly uneasy.

"Does he always go as fast as this?" he enquired.

"Sometimes, a good deal faster. He's an old fencer, you know, and hasn't forgotten his jumping days. But of course I don't let him jump with the carriage."

"I should think not," ejaculated the vicar; "unless you wanted to commit suicide and murder. Don't you think you could make him go a little steadier? He's going rather like a dog with a tin-kettle at his tail, and if the kettle were to tip over——"

"Oh, he'll settle down presently," said Vixen coolly. "I don't want to interfere with him; it makes him ill-tempered. And if he were to take to kicking——"

"If you'll pull him up I think I'll get out and walk," said Mr. Scobel, the back of whose head was on a level with the area which the pony's hoofs would have been likely to describe in the event of kicking.

"Oh, please don't!" cried Vixen. "If you do that, I shall think you've no confidence in my driving."

She pulled Titmouse together, and got him into an unobjectionable trot; a trot which got over the ground very fast, without giving the occupants of the carriage the uncomfortable sensation of sitting behind a pony intent on getting to the sharp edge of the horizon and throwing himself over.

They were going up a long hill. Half-way up they came to the gate of the kennels. Violet looked at it with a curious half-reluctant glance that expressed the keenest pain.

"Poor papa," she sighed. "He never seemed happier than when he used to take me to see the hounds."

"Mr. Vawdrey is to have them next year," said Mrs. Scobel. "That seems right and proper. He will be the biggest man in this part of the country when the Ashbourne and Briarwood estates are united. And the duke cannot live very long—a man who gives his mind to eating and drinking, and is laid up with gout twice a year."

"Do you know when they are to be married?" asked Vixen, with an unconcerned air.

"At the end of this year, I am told. Lady Jane died last November. They would hardly have the wedding before a

twelvemonth was over. Have you seen much of Mr. Vawdrey since he came back?"

"I believe I have seen him three times: once at Lady Southminster's ball; once when he came to call upon mamma; once at kettledrum at Ellangowan, where he was in attendance upon Lady Mabel. He looked rather like a little dog at the end of a string; he had just that meekly-obedient look, combined with an expression of not wanting to be there, which you see in a dog. If I were engaged, I would not take my fiancé to kettledrums."

"Ah, Violet, when are you going to be engaged?" cried Mrs. Scobel, in a burst of playfulness. "Where is the man worthy of you?"

"Nowhere; unless Heaven would make me such a man as my father."

"You and Mr. Vawdrey were such friends when you were girl and boy, I used sometimes to fancy it would lead to a lasting attachment."

"Did you? That was a great mistake. I am not half good enough for Mr. Vawdrey. I was well enough for a playfellow, but he wants something much nearer perfection in a wife."

"But your tastes are so similar."

"The very reason we should not care for each other."

"In joining contrasts lieth love's delight." I can't quite believe that, Violet."

"But you see the event proves it true. Here is my old playfellow, who cares for nothing but horses and hounds and a country life, devotedly attached to Lady Mabel Ashbourne, who reads Greek plays with as much enjoyment as other young ladies derive from a stirring novel, and who hasn't an idea or an attitude that is not strictly æsthetic."

"Do you know, Violet, I am very much afraid that this marriage is rather the result of calculation than genuine affection?" said Mrs. Scobel solemnly.

"Oh, no doubt it will be a grand thing to unite Ashbourne and Briarwood, but Roderick Vawdrey is too honourable to marry a girl he could not love. I would never believe him capable of such baseness," answered Violet, standing up for her old friend.

Here they turned out of the Forest, and drove through a peaceful colony consisting of half-a-dozen cottages, a rustic inn where reigned a supreme silence and sleepiness, and two or three houses in old-world gardens.

Vixen changed the conversation to buns and school-children, which agreeable themes occupied them till Titmouse had walked up a tremendously steep hill, the vicar trudging through the dust beside him; and then the deep green vale in which Rufus was slain lay smiling in the sunshine below their feet.

Perhaps the panorama to be seen from the top of that hill is absolutely the finest in the Forest—a vast champaign, stretching far away to the white walls, tiled roofs, and ancient abbey-church of Romsey; here a glimpse of winding water, there a humble village—nameless save for its inhabitants—nestling among the trees, or basking in the broad sunshine of a common.

At the top of the hill, Bates, the grey-headed groom, who had attended Violet ever since her first pony-ride, took possession of Titmouse and the chaise, while the baskets were handed over to a lad, who had been on the watch for their arrival. Then they all went down the steep path into the valley, at the bottom of which the children were swarming in a cluster, as thick as bees, while a pale flame and a cloud of white smoke went up from the midst of them like the fire beneath a sacrifice. This indicated the boiling of the kettle, in true gipsy fashion.

For the next hour and a half tea-drinking was the all-absorbing business with everybody. The boiling of the kettle was a grand feature in the entertainment. Cups and saucers were provided by a little colony of civilised gipsies, who seem indigenous to the spot, and whose summer life is devoted to assisting at picnics and tea-drinkings, telling fortunes, and selling photographs. White cloths were spread upon the short sweet turf, and piles of bread-and-butter, cake, and buns, invited the attention of the flies.

Presently arose the thrilling melody of a choral grace, with the sweet embellishment of a strong Hampshire accent. And then, with a swoop as of eagles on their quarry, the school-children came down upon the mountains of bread-and-butter, and eat their way manfully to the buns and cake.

Violet had never been happier since her return to Hampshire than she felt this sunny afternoon, as she moved quickly about, ministering to these juvenile devourers. The sight of their somewhat bovine contentment took her thoughts away from her own cares and losses; and presently, when the banquet was concluded—

a conclusion only arrived at by the total consumption of everything provided, whereby the hungry-eyed gipsy attendants sunk into despondency—Vixen constituted herself Lord of Misrule, and led off a noisy procession in the time-honoured game of Oranges-and-Lemons, which entertainment continued till the school-children were in a high fever. After this they had Kiss-in-the-Ring; Vixen only stipulating, before she began, that nobody should presume to drop the handkerchief before her. Then came Touchwood—a game charmingly adapted to that wooded valley, where the trees looked as if they had been planted at convenient distances, on purpose for this juvenile sport.

“Oh, I am so tired,” cried Violet, at last, when church clocks—all out of ear-shot in this deep valley—were striking eight, and the low sun was golden on the silvery beech-boles, and the quiet half-hidden water-pools under the trees yonder; “I really don’t think I can have anything to do with the next game.”

“Oh, if you please, miss,” cried twenty shrill young voices, “oh, if you please, miss, we couldn’t play without you—you’re the best on us!”

This soothing flattery had its effect.

“Oh, but I really don’t think I can do more than start you,” sighed Vixen, flushed and breathless; “what is it to be?”

“Blindman’s-buff,” roared the boys.

“Hunt-the-Slipper,” screamed the girls.

“Oh, Blindman’s-buff is best,” said Vixen. “This little wood is a splendid place for Blindman’s-buff. But mind, I shall only start you. Now then, who’s to be blind man?”

Mr. Scobel volunteered. He had been a tranquil spectator of the sports hitherto; but this was the last game, and he felt that he ought to do something more than look on. Vixen blindfolded him, asked him the usual question about his father’s stable, and then sent him spinning amongst the moss-grown beeches, groping his way fearfully, with outstretched arms, amidst shrillest laughter and noisiest delight.

He was not long blindfold, and had not had many bumps against the trees, before he impounded the person of a fat and scant-of-breath scholar, a girl whose hard breathing would have betrayed her neighbourhood to the dullest ear.

“That’s Polly Sims, I know,” said the vicar.

It was Polly Sims, who was inconti-

nently made as blind as Fortune or Justice, or any other of the deities who dispense benefits to man. Polly floundered about among the trees for a long time, making frantic efforts to catch the empty air, panting like a human steam-engine, and nearly knocking out what small amount of brains she might possess against the grey branches, outstretched like the lean arms of Macbeth's weird women across her path. Finally Polly Sims succeeded in catching Bobby Jones, whom she clutched with the tenacity of an octopus; and then came the reign of Bobby Jones, who was an expert at the game, and who kept the whole party on the qui vive by his serpentine windings and twistings among the stout old trunks.

Presently there was a shrill yell of triumph. Bobby had caught Miss Tempest.

"I know'd her by her musling gownd," he roared.

Violet submitted with a good grace.

"I'm dreadfully tired," she said, "and I'm sure I shan't catch anyone."

The sun had been getting lower and lower. There were splashes of golden light on the smooth grey beech-boles, and that was all. Soon these would fade, and all would be gloom. The grove had an awful look already. One would expect to meet some ghostly Druid, or some witch of eld among the shadowy tracks left by the forest wildlings. Vixen went about her work languidly. She was really tired, and was glad to think her day's labours were over. She went slowly in and out among the trees, feeling her way with outstretched arms, her feet sinking sometimes into deep drifts of last year's leaves, or gliding noiselessly over the moss. The air was soft and cool and dewy, with a perfume of nameless wild flowers—a faint aromatic odour of herbs, which the wise women had gathered for medicinal uses in days of old, when your village sorceress was your safest doctor. Every where there was the hush and coolness of fast-coming night. The children's voices were stilled. This last stage of the game was a thing of breathless interest.

Vixen's footsteps drifted lower down into the wooded hollow; insensibly she was coming towards the edge of the treacherously green bog, which has brought many a bold rider to grief in these districts, and still she had caught no one. She began to think that she had wandered ever so far away, and was in danger of

losing herself altogether, or at least losing everybody else, and being left by herself in the forest darkness. The grassy hollow in which she was wandering had an atmosphere of solitude.

She was on the point of taking off the handkerchief that Mr. Scobel had bound so effectually across her eyes, when her outstretched arms clasped something—a substantial figure, distinctly human, clad in rough cloth.

Before she had time to think who it was she had captured, a pair of strong arms clasped her; she was drawn to a broad chest; she felt a heart beating strong and fast against her shoulder, while lips that seemed too familiar to offend, kissed hers with all the passion of a lover's kiss.

"Don't be angry," said a well-known voice, "I believe it's the rule of the game. If it isn't I'm sure it ought to be."

A hand, at once strong and gentle, took off the handkerchief, and in the soft woodland twilight she looked up at Roderick Vawdrey's face, looking down upon her with an expression which she presumed must mean a brotherly friendliness—the delight of an old friend at seeing her after a long interval.

She was not the less angry at that outrageous unwarrantable kiss.

"It is not the rule of the game amongst civilised people; though it possibly may be among ploughboys and servant-maids!" she exclaimed indignantly. "You are really a most ungentlemanlike person! I wonder Lady Mabel Ashbourne has not taught you better manners."

"Is that to be my only reward for saving you from plunging—at least ankle-deep—in the marshy ground yonder? But for me you would have been performing a boggy version of Ophelia by this time."

"How did you come here?"

"I have been to Langley Brook for a day's fly-fishing, and was tramping home across country in a savage humour at my poor sport, when I heard the chatter of small voices, and presently came upon the Scobels and the school-children. The juveniles were in a state of alarm at having lost you. They had been playing the game in severe silence, and at a turn in the grove missed you altogether. Oh, here comes Scobel, with his trencher on the back of his head."

The vicar came forward, rejoicing at sight of Violet's white gown.

"My dear, what a turn you have given us!" he cried; "those silly children, to let

you out of their sight! I don't think a wood is a good place for Blindman's-buff."

"No more do I," answered Vixen, very pale.

"You look as if you had been frightened, too," said the vicar.

"It did feel awfully lonely; not a sound, except the frogs croaking their vespers, and one dismal owl screaming in the distance. And how cold it has turned now the sun has gone down; and how ghostly the beeches look in their green mantles; there is something awful in a wood at sunset."

She ran on in an excited tone, masking her agitation under an unnatural vivacity. Roderick watched her keenly. Mr. and Mrs. Scobel went back to their business of getting the children together, and the pots, pans, and baskets packed for the return-journey. The children were inclined to be noisy and insubordinate. They would have liked to have made a night of it in this woody hollow, or in the gorse-clothed heights up yonder by Stony Cross. To go home after such a festival, and be herded in small stuffy cottages, was doubtless trying to free-born humanity, always more or less envious of the gipsies.

"Shall we walk up the hill together?" Roderick asked humbly, "while the Scobels follow with their flock?"

"I am going to drive Mr. and Mrs. Scobel."

"But where is your carriage?"

"I don't know. I rather think it was to meet us at the top of the hill."

"Then let us go up together and find it—unless you hate me too much to endure my company for a quarter of an hour—or are too angry with me for my impertinence just now."

"It is not worth being serious about," answered Vixen quietly, after a little pause. "I was very angry at the moment, but after all—between you and me—who were like brother and sister a few years ago, it can't matter very much. I daresay you may have kissed me then."

"I think I did—once or twice," admitted Rorie with laudable gravity.

"Then let your impertinence just now go down to the old account. But," seeing him drawing nearer her with a sudden eagerness, "mind, it is never to be repeated. I could not forgive that."

"I would do much to escape your anger," said Rorie softly.

"The whole situation just now was too

ridiculous," pursued Vixen, with a spurious hilarity. "A young woman wandering blindfolded in a wood all alone—it must have seemed very absurd."

"It seemed very far from absurd—to me," said Rorie.

They were going slowly up the grassy hill, the short scanty herbage looking grey in the dimness. Glow-worms were beginning to shine here and there at the foot of the furze-bushes. A pale moon was rising above the broad expanse of wood and valley, which sank in gentle undulations into distant plains, where the young corn was growing, and the cattle were grazing in a sober agricultural district. Here all was wild and beautiful—rich, yet barren.

"I'm afraid when we met last—at Lady Southminster's ball—that I forgot to congratulate you upon your engagement to your cousin," said Violet by-and-by, when they had walked a little way in perfect silence.

She was trying to carry out an old determination. She had always meant to go up to him frankly with outstretched hand, and wish him joy. And she fancied that at the ball she had said too little. She had not let him understand that she was really glad. "Believe me, I am very glad that you should marry someone close at home—that you should widen your influence among us."

"You are very kind," answered Rorie with exceeding coldness. "I suppose all such engagements are subjects for congratulation, from a conventional point of view. My future wife is both amiable and accomplished, as you know. I have reason to be very proud that she has done me so great an honour as to prefer me to many worthier suitors; but I am bound to tell you—as we once before spoke of this subject, at the time of your dear father's death, and I then expressed myself somewhat strongly—I am bound to tell you that my engagement to Mabel was made to please my poor mother. It was when we were all in Italy together. My mother was dying, and Mabel's goodness and devotion to her had been beyond all praise; and my heart was drawn to her by affection, by gratitude; and I knew that it would make my poor mother happy to see us irrevocably bound to each other—and so—the thing came about somehow, almost unawares, and I have every reason to be proud and happy that fate should have favoured me so far above my deserts."

"I am very glad that you are happy," said Violet gently.

After this there was a silence which lasted longer than the previous interval in their talk. They were at the top of the hill before either of them spoke.

Then Vixen laid her hand lightly upon her old playfellow's arm, and said, with extreme earnestness:

"You will go into Parliament by-and-by, no doubt, and have great influence. Do not let them spoil the Forest. Do not let horrid grinding-down economists, for the sake of saving a few pounds or gaining a few pounds, alter and destroy scenes that are so beautiful and a delight to so many. Let all things be as they were when we were children."

"All that my voice and influence can do to keep them so shall be done, Violet," he answered in tones as earnest. "I am glad that you have asked me something to-night. I am glad, with all my heart, that you have given me something to do for you. It shall be like a badge in my helmet, by-and-by, when I enter the lists. I think I shall say: 'For God and for Violet,' when I run a tilt against the economic devastators who want to clear our woods and cut off our commoners."

He bent down and kissed her hand, as in token of knightly allegiance. He had just time to do it comfortably before Mr. and Mrs. Scobel, with the children and their master and mistress, came marching up the hill, singing, with shrill glad voices, one of the harvest-home processional hymns.

All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above,
Then thank the Lord, oh thank the Lord,
For all His love.

"What a lovely night!" cried Mr. Scobel. "I think we ought all to walk home. It would be much nicer than being driven."

This he said with a lively recollection of Titmouse's performances on the journey out, and a lurking dread that he might behave a little worse on the journey home. A lively animal of that kind, going home to his stable, through the uncertain lights and shadows of woodland roads, and driven by such a charioteer as Violet Tempest, was not to be thought of without a shudder.

"I think I had better walk home, in any case," said Mr. Scobel thoughtfully. "I shall be wanted to keep the children together."

"Let us all walk home," suggested

Roderick. "We can go through the plantations. It will be very jolly in the moonlight. Bates can drive your pony back, Violet."

Vixen hesitated.

"It's not more than four miles through the plantations," said Roderick.

"Do you think I am afraid of a long walk?"

"Of course not. You were a modern Atalanta three years ago. I don't suppose a winter in Paris and a season at Brighton have quite spoiled you."

"It shall be as you like, Mrs. Scobel," said Vixen, appealing to the vicar's wife.

"Oh, let us walk by all means," replied Mrs. Scobel, divining her husband's feelings with respect to Titmouse.

"Then you may drive the pony home, Bates," said Violet; "and be sure you give him a good supper."

Titmouse went rattling down the hill at a pace that almost justified the vicar's objection to him. He gave a desperate shy in the hollow at sight of a shaggy donkey, with a swollen appearance about the head, suggestive, to the equine mind, of hobgoblins. Convulsed at this appalling spectre, Titmouse stood on end for a second or two, and then tore violently off, swinging his carriage behind him, so that the groom's figure swayed to and fro in the moonlight.

"Thank God we're not sitting behind that brute!" ejaculated the vicar devoutly.

The pedestrians went off in the other direction, along the brow of the hill, by a long white road that crossed a wide sweep of heathy country, brown ridges and dark hollows, distant groups of firs standing black against the moonlit sky, here and there a solitary yew, that looked as if it were haunted—just such a landscape as that Scottish heath upon which Macbeth met the three weird women at set of sun, when the battle was lost and won. Vixen and Rorie led the way; the procession of school-children followed, singing hymns as they went with a vocal power that gave no token of diminution.

"Their singing is very melodious when the sharp edge is taken off by distance," said Rorie, and he and Violet walked at a pace which soon left the children a good way behind them. Mellowed by a quarter of a mile or so of intervening space, the music lent a charm to the tranquil, perfumed night.

By-and-by they came to the gate of

an enclosure which covered a large extent of ground, and through which there was a near way to Beechdale and the Abbey House. They walked along a grassy track through a plantation of young pines—a track which led them down into a green and mossy bottom, where the trees were old and beautiful, and the shadows fell darker. The tall beech branches shone like silver, or like wonderful frozen trees in some region of eternal ice and snow. It was a wilderness in which a stranger would incontinently lose himself; but every foot of the way was familiar to Vixen and Rorie. They had followed the hounds by these green ways, and ridden and walked here in all seasons.

For some time they walked almost in silence, enjoying the beauty of the night, the stillness only broken by the distant chorus of children singing their pious strains—old hymn-tunes that Violet had known and loved all her life.

“Doesn't it almost seem as if our old childish days had come back?” said Roderick by-and-by. “Don't you feel as if you were a little girl again, Vixen, going for a ramble with me—fern-hunting or primrose-gathering?”

“No,” answered Vixen firmly. “Nothing can ever bring the past back, for me. I shall never forget that I had a father—the best and dearest, and that I have lost him.”

“Dear Violet,” Roderick began, very gently, “life cannot be made up of mourning for the dead. We may keep their images enshrined in our hearts for ever, but we must not shut our youth from the sunshine. Think how few years of youth God gives us; and if we waste those upon vain sorrow——”

“No one can say that I have wasted my youth, or shut myself from the sunshine. I go to kettledrums and dancing-parties. My mother and I have taken pains to let the world see how happy we can be without papa.”

“The dear old squire,” said Rorie, tenderly; “I think he loved me.”

“I am sure he did,” answered Vixen.

“Well, you and I seem to have entered upon a new life since last we rode through these woods together. I daresay you are right, and that it is not possible to fancy oneself back in the past, even for a moment. Consciousness of the present hangs so heavily upon us.”

“Yes,” assented Vixen.

They had come to the end of the en-

closure, and stood leaning against a gate, waiting for the arrival of the children.

“And after all, perhaps, it is better to live in the present, and look back at the past, as at an old picture which we shall sooner or later turn with its face to the wall.”

“I like best to think of my old self as if it were someone else,” said Violet. “I know there was a little girl whom her father called Vixen, who used to ride after the hounds, and roam about the Forest on her pony; and who was almost as wild as the Forest ponies herself. But I can't associate her with this present me,” concluded Violet, pointing to herself with a half-scornful gesture.

“And which is the better, do you think,” asked Rorie; “the wild Violet of the past, or the elegant exotic of the present?”

“I know which was the happier.”

“Ah,” sighed Rorie, “happiness is a habit we outgrow when we get out of our teens. But you, at nineteen, ought to have a year or so to the good.”

The children came in sight, tramping along the ratty green walk, singing lustily, Mr. Scobel walking at their head, and swinging his stick in time with the tuneful choir.

TOWN-BRED POETS.

THE landscape school of poetry—that which delights in celebrating the charms, the glories, and the sublimities of rural scenery, of the sea, of the mountain, of the forest, of the meadow, and of the garden, of the beauty and freshness of the flowers, and of the music of the groves—is almost peculiar to the British Isles. The ancient Greeks and Romans did not excel in, and scarcely cultivated, this branch of the poetic art. Their poets delighted in describing the actions of men and women, and in the portrayal of the emotions and passions, the loves, the hatreds, the joys and sorrows of the human heart; being of the opinion expressed by Alexander Pope in a later day that “The proper study of mankind is man,” or, as a cynic might say, “the hardest study.” The Italian, French, Spanish, and German poets display more of the antique than the modern spirit in this respect, and draw but few of their illustrations from what is erroneously called “inanimate nature.” The French poet Beranger, for instance, never saw or

cared to see a mountain or the ocean, and was quite content to draw such little rural knowledge as he possessed from the trees and the gardens of the Tuileries, or St. Cloud, or the Champs Elysées of his beloved Paris. The poets who write in the English language have different ideas, and without neglecting the dramatic and historic sources of inspiration, indulge more frequently than those of any other nation in the descriptive, the picturesque, and the reflective, or what may be called the landscape department of their art. They are, for the most part, lyrical rather than heroic; and were it not for the roses and the lilies, and the ever-varying beauties or grandeurs of nature in her gentlest or wildest moods, would run the risk of starving the Muse for want of her accustomed sustenance.

But our landscape poets bred in towns do not always imitate the conscientious example of the landscape painters, who are the glory of the English school. They too often make mistakes as egregious as would be those of a painter, who should introduce into the same picture the bare oak branches of January with the roses of June and the ripe grapes of October. This mistake is constantly made by versifiers, who take nature at secondhand, and do not use their own eyes for the purpose of seeing, but repeat, in parrot fashion, what has been said before, however incorrect it may be. Sir Walter Scott set a praiseworthy example. He took observations of nature on the spot; and if he wished to describe a landscape, noted what he saw, and nothing more. He never introduced the snowdrop at midsummer, nor the ripe peach in April.

Shakespeare himself may be now and then caught tripping in this respect. "See," says Leigh Hunt in his Indicator, "what a noble brief portrait of April Shakespeare gives us:

"Proud pied April, dressed in all his trim.

Nor did I wonder at the lilies white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but patterns of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those."

"Shakespeare," adds his critic, "was fond of alluding to April. He did not allow May to have all his regard because she was richer." But if the rose in the "deep vermilion" of her beauty flourished in April in the days of Shakespeare, there has either been a change in the rose or in the seasons, or Shakespeare drew upon his imagination for a supposed fact, which

would not bear the ordeal of cross-examination. Again, he speaks in the song, elegantly set to music by Dr. Arne, commencing, "When daisies pied and violets blue," of a white flower which he calls the lady's smock, which he describes as in full bloom at the time of the cuckoo. What is now called the lady's smock is the beautiful wild white convolvulus, which clambers over our English hedges in September, months after the cuckoo has taken her final departure from our shores. But perhaps Shakespeare had some other flower in his mind, which was known in his time by the name of the lady's smock. In Mr. Thomas Wright's Archaic and Provincial Dictionary of the English Language, the lady's smock is described as the great bindweed or convolvulus, while Mr. Halliwell calls it Canterbury bells. But Canterbury bells are usually blue, and do not belong to the class of meadow flowers which Shakespeare desired to celebrate. Possibly, Shakespeare's remembrances of country life in the neighbourhood of Stratford-upon-Avon or the old Forest of Arden may, when he wrote, have been somewhat dimmed and blurred by his town life in the purlieus of the Globe Theatre and Southwark.

Drayton, another poet of the Shakespearian era, has also made allusion to the lady's smock. He says:

This maiden, in a morn betime,
Went forth when May was in the prime
To get sweet setywall,
The honeysuckle, the harlock,
The lily and the lady-smock,
To deck her summer hall.

In this passage setywall is the common wild valerian of the fields. The lily of May is the little flower known as the lily of the valley, which flourishes in this month. But if the lady's smock be the great white convolvulus, he brings it into his poem, as Shakespeare did, about three months before its proper time.

William Strode—who wrote a beautiful poem, *In Praise of Melancholy*, which seems to have given Milton the first idea of his *Il Penseroso*—was so little acquainted with country life, as to have considered that the bat was a bird. He talks of:

Places which pale passion loves,
Moonlight walks when all the fowls
Are warmly housed save bats and owls.

But of all the town-bred poets—if poet can be truly called—the greatest offender against the truths of natural history

is Isaac Watts, the celebrated author of Divine and Moral Songs, who has for several generations been known to the young mothers, as well as to the nurses and young children, of England. In one of his celebrated ditties, called *The Ant or Emmet*, wherein he inculcates lessons of thrift and foresight, he says of these remarkable little creatures—so well studied in our day by Sir John Lubbock—that “they wear not their time out in sleeping or play.” Watts did not know that, in common with bees, flies, and countless other insects, the ants hibernate or sleep all the winter; neither did he know, when he affirmed that “they gathered up corn on a sunshiny day, and laid up a store for the winter,” that what he considered to be grains of corn, were no other than their pupæ, or young, which, with maternal and paternal solicitude, they carried to places of safety whenever their nests were disturbed by the rude hands of too inquisitive man. He adds:

They manage their work in such regular forms,
One would think they foresaw all the frosts and the
storms,
And so brought their food within doors.

A little observation of the nature he attempted to describe would have saved Dr. Watts from these errors, and prevented him from going so ingeniously wrong. Nor is the good doctor (a thorough Cockney) more correct when he speaks of the gentle, faithful animals, dogs, “as foul and fierce in their nature;” and when he asserts that “birds in their little nests agree,” he evidently thought, not only that birds lived habitually in their nests—which they don’t, the nest being chiefly used for the purpose of incubation, and deserted as soon as that grand maternal process is completed—but also that birds, in their nest and out of it, never quarrelled. The fact is that birds are about as quarrelsome as men—as everyone who has studied their habits can testify; whether the birds be the domestic fowl, or the turkey, or the swan, or even the cantankerous and most pugnacious little blackguard, the sparrow, the very pariah of the feathered creation.

Robert Burns, in whose poetry no traces of such inaccuracies are to be found, and who attentively observed and faithfully described all the natural appearances amid which his life was passed, says in a letter to George Thomson: “The Banks of the Dee, you know, is literally Langoole to slow time. The

song is well enough, but has some false imagery in it, for instance:

“And sweetly the nightingale sang from the tree.

In the first place, the nightingale sings from a low bush, never from a tree; and in the second place, there never was a nightingale seen or heard on the banks of the Dee, or any other river in Scotland.”

Yet Scottish poets of inferior note constantly speak of the nightingale—as do some of the modern American versifiers, who re-echo the blemishes as well as the beauties of English song, though neither nightingale nor lark was ever heard on the American continent. Even Mr. Longfellow, who is wiser in this respect than many of his countrymen, speaks of “swallows singing down each wind that blows.” Swallows may twitter or chirp, but they cannot sing any more than a sparrow.

Coleridge, who lived long enough in town to forget the country, says in his beautiful poem of *Christabel*:

’Tis a month before the month of May,
The night is chill, the forest bare,
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light and hanging so high
On the topmost twig that looks up to the sky.

“A month before the month of May” is clearly the month of April, at which time the forest is no longer “bare,” as the poet describes, but has put forth either the tender green leaflets of the spring, or the early buds, which have pushed away all the verdure of the previous year, and left no red leaf of the long past autumn to tremble in the breeze.

Dr. Blacklock, of Edinburgh, one of the early friends of Burns, and who was conspicuously instrumental in bringing the genius of that great and unfortunate poet to the notice of the literary and aristocratic society of the Scottish capital—a man who could judge of poetry much better than he could write it, a by no means uncommon case—was the author of a once much admired song entitled *Absence*. In this composition he says:

Ye harvests that wave in the breeze.
As far as the view can extend,
Ye mountains umbrageous with trees,
Whose tops so majestic ascend.
Yon landscape what joy to survey,
Were Marg’ret with me to admire,
Then the harvest would glitter, how gay!
How majestic the mountains aspire!

This poor gentleman was blind, or possibly he would have thought twice before he celebrated the “umbrageous trees” of the

aspiring mountains of Scotland. His blindness must be pleaded in excuse for his incorrectness as a word-painter; but a very town-bred poet, the late Thomas Haynes Bailey, the author of many hundreds of mediocre songs—very popular in their day—had, at all events, his eyesight, and could not, like Dr. Blacklock, urge in extenuation of his inaccuracies that he could not see. One of his songs, that took the unripe fancy of our grandfathers and grandmothers in the days when they were young and foolish, expressed his desire to be a butterfly:

I'd be a butterfly, born in a bower
Where roses and lilies and violets meet.

But butterflies are not born in bowers, whether roses and lilies meet there or not; for truth compels the admission that they are born in cabbages, and that in their youthful state as caterpillars—before they have attained to the dignity of wings—they commit very serious deprecations on those useful vegetables, as every gardener knows to his sorrow. Nor is the poet, if a poet he be, which is doubtful, more correct when he says that the butterfly

Sportive and airy,
Sleeps in a rose when the nightingale sings.

Butterflies do not sleep in roses, in the petals of any other flower, or in other unsheltered places, but take refuge in nooks and crannies, instinctively afraid of the nightingale, who would be very likely to make a meal of them if they came within his sphere of vision.

There was a time in the history of poetry when unreality was its distinguishing characteristic, and when French and English writers vied with each other in producing lyrics that had no touch of nature about them, and when all lovers were made to masquerade as shepherds and shepherdesses, of a kind that have never been seen except on the stage and in the pictures of Watteau. Chloe, Phyllis, or Amanda was always represented with short petticoats, silk stockings, high-heeled shoes—with ribbons on them, with a brocade tunic of green, sky-blue, crimson, or innocent white, holding a crook garlanded with flowers; while Corydon, Lubin, or Aminto kept her company in a similar costume, though with nether garments of satin or velvet, casting glances now and then at the sheep, which had ribbons round their necks like ladies' lap-dogs, but devoting the greater part of their attention to themselves, as

was proper to people in love. Out of a thousand or even ten thousand specimens of this kind of literature with which the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were inundated, the following brick may serve to show of what the temple was constructed. It is the composition of Gilbert Elliott, first Earl of Minto, and dates from the year 1740:

My sheep I neglected—I lost my sheep-hook,
And all the gay haunts of my youth I forsook;
No more for Augusta fresh garlands I wove;
For ambition, I said, would soon cure me of love.
Oh, what had my youth with ambition to do?
Why left I Augusta? why broke I my vow?
Oh, give me my sheep, and my sheep-hook restore,
And I'll wander from love and Augusta no more.

A quarter of a century before this rubbish made its appearance, Alexander Pope—a true poet, though not of the very highest rank of the immortals, like Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, or Shelley—shot a bolt of much-needed satire against the too-prevalent inanities which a silly age persisted in recognising as poetry. The whole composition is too long to quote; but a couple of stanzas will suffice to show its spirit and its sting:

Mild Arcadians, ever blooming,
Nightly nodding o'er your flocks,
See my weary days consuming
All beneath yon flowery rocks.

Thus when Philomela, drooping,
Softly seeks her silent mate,
See the birds of Juno stooping,
Melody resigns to Fate!

The shaft was well aimed; but stupidity has a long life, and it was not until the publication of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, and the rise of the school of natural poetry, of which Wordsworth was the chief apostle and bard, at the end of the eighteenth, and beginning of the nineteenth century, that the vast army of the versifiers began to be even dimly aware of the fact that nonsense does not cease to be nonsense merely because it is written in rhythm and rhyme, or because it masquerades under the guise of poetry. This particular delusion is not yet wholly dispelled, or the "Poet's Corner" of provincial newspapers would not continue to be so constantly filled, and such countless volumes of rhymed trash would not be annually published at the expense of their authors. The truest poets are always the most correct. Nothing is too great, and nothing is too small, for their observation. Their genius, as has been said of the elephant's trunk, can pick up the pin as well as rend the oak. "They ransack the

broad heavens for new illustrations, or turn over the minutest pebble in the sand for new facts. Nothing escapes them. Everything becomes tributary to their genius." But in all their airy flights between the real and the ideal, their imagination is always true to the laws of imagination—laws that are subservient to those of nature, and which do not permit the poet to outrage truth by the creation of unreal monstrosities, or denials of palpable and universally recognised facts. Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well, in poetry as in everything else; and before the town poet attempts to describe rural nature, he ought to study it in all its details. And, in like manner, the poet who has lived all his life among forests, or in the valleys of the mountain slopes, should know something of the life of cities, and the fermentation of human life in multitudes, before he begins to trace the lines of heroic or dramatic composition. Nature herself is an artist, and if the poet be not one he has mistaken his vocation.

MIDDLE AGE.

ALL over; aye, I look at mine own hand,
That quite has lost the lissom grace of youth,
But if its living pulse I understand,
Fit yet to hold its own for love or truth;
Scarce meet for pretty pledge or kiss of lover,
Yet fond and firm for clasping in another.

Over and done; I sit before the glass,
Drawn full into the sunshine's ruthless glare,
I see the crowsfoot where the soft bloom was,
The silver threads set in the bright brown hair;
My mirror never flashed me beauty back,
So now, perchance, I have the less to lack.

And yet for all it's over, in the face,
That gazes sad and patient back on me,
I fancy love might read some quiet grace,
Some touch of matron calm serenity.
The eyes that live on children's life for years,
Gain something surely from their smiles and tears.

Must it be over? one by one they flash,
To their own place, these cherished stars of ours,
During the storm in courage blind and rash,
Seeing no serpent coiled among the flowers;
Leaving us stranded on the lonely shore,
Where the long waves chant, "Never, never more."

They will not, may not, cannot come again;
The bond is snapped, and the great current sweeping
Each little boat on to the mighty main,
Over each barrier in its fury leaping,
Bears them in its resistless might along,
For wreck or haven, gain, loss, prize, or wrong.

For us, it all is over; though sometimes,
We feel old power pulse our being yet.
"Past, past!" the voice of fate around us chimes,
Past, aim and dream, vain struggle, or regret!
Put by the mirror, let the hand alone,
The last card has been dealt, the game is done.

CHRISTMAS LITERATURE.

It is curious how one's views alter as time rolls on. There is Dick Coppresse, now, who came, in most strikingly unexpected fashion, last spring into all his grandfather's property. I remember well how, at the time the succession duty was first proposed, Dick came all the way to my chambers expressly to borrow a couple of pounds to qualify himself to vote as a "forty-shilling freeholder" for the inventor of that admirable impost. It was only last week he informed me he was going to join the Afghan Committee, and when I asked him why: "That vagabond Dizzy!" he broke out. "Two thousand pounds, sir, for his infernal succession duty! I'll never forgive him—never!" I have not seen any cause to alter my own views on that particular subject. I wish I had. But there are points on which my opinions have undergone almost as decided a modification. And Christmas is one of them. I remember when boxing-day was the great festival of the year. It does not appear to me in that light now by any means. And yet my position is in some respects not so much changed. I was one of six then. I am one of six now. Only then I was the youngest of the six, now I am the eldest—very much the eldest; as the other five painfully remind me when the Christmas bills come in.

However, needs must when the—when the "festive season" comes round. Another week, and Charlie and Cis and little Tommy will be clamouring for their Christmas-boxes, much as, I am afraid, I used to clamour, never mind how many years ago. Edith will not clamour, of course. She has grown much too stately a young person for that. But she will push back her fringe, and make big eyes as she wishes me "A merry Christmas, papa!" and I know what that means just as well as she does. So I may as well make up my mind for it at once, and see what the publishers have done for us in this year of grace, 1878.

And a terrible sight it is.

Facile princeps in the gorgeous array comes Messrs. Bickers' gigantic volume on Switzerland, with its four hundred and eighteen for the most part admirably executed engravings, by a score and more of different artists, and its five hundred glossy pages of descriptive letterpress, by Herr Woldemar Raden. Seasonable chiefly from its splendour, no doubt. The con-

nection between Christmas and Switzerland, if you come to think of it, is, on the whole, distinctly of the *lucus a non lucendo* character. But, then, why should one come to think of it? As the plaintive critic said after a classical "first night:" "It is so easy not to write five-act tragedies in blank verse;" and there is really something very like pure perverseness in objecting to having our dear old lakes and mountains and glaciers and waterfalls brought to us at Christmas-time, merely because it doesn't happen to be summer, and so we can't go to them. And if we are to be once more personally conducted from Geneva to the Bodensee, and from the Jura to the very verge of the Italian lakes, without the trouble of stirring from our own comfortable Christmas fireside, it would be difficult to put ourselves into better hands than those of Herr Raden and his quarter of a century of artistic coadjutors.

We make our start, after a little preliminary trifling with "Alpine roads and passes," in their more general aspect, with the Lake of Constance, working our way by "the realm of the Säntis"—by which somewhat fantastic title our author intends the cantons of Appenzell and St. Gallen—the Lakes of Wallenstadt and Zurich, the Forest Cantons, the mountains of Uri and Unterwalden, to Lucerne and the inevitable Rigi. Thence leaping back to Basle, we work our way through the Bernese Oberland and its dependencies to the Western Lakes.

Then from Geneva to Chamounix and the Mer de Glace, over the Tête Noire to the Valais, and so—darting off every now and then up the Gemmi or the Great St. Bernard, or away to Zermatt or Leuk, or through the picturesque windings of the Simplon—away through the long Rhone Valley and over the Furka and the Ober Alp, we zigzag our way by the Splügen and the St. Gothard and the Italian cantons to the Engadine, and so finally back to our starting-point in the far east. A line of route, by-the-way, to be followed more or less with advantage, not only on paper at Christmas-time, but in the more practical operations of the summer, if for no other reason than that it enables you altogether to avoid that most detestable of all railways, the Paris-Lyon-Mediterranée.

The precise road taken by Herr Raden would perhaps be a little complicated for the summer tourist; but it has the advan-

tage of pretty thoroughly exhausting the subject, and of this advantage Herr Raden and his coadjutors have conscientiously availed themselves. There were great men besides Agamemnon, of course, and there are, no doubt, more than four hundred and eighteen picturesque views in Switzerland; but he will be a tourist of tenacious mind who shall carry away a better general memento of, let us say, a three months' pilgrimage than is supplied him in the gorgeous crimson and gold volume Messrs. Bickers and Co. offer him as a Christmas-box.

Among the best of the pictures, whether for the beauty of the scene itself, or the skill with which it is portrayed, are, perhaps, the group of Siberian pines in the opening part, a curious wild sketch of a Lacustrine village, a delicious old bridge at Lauffenburg, a very spirited fancy scene of chamois overtaken by an avalanche, a good bold sketch of the Handeck, where the effect of the falling water, though not quite perfect, is more nearly so than mere black and white often succeeds in rendering it, and two charming interiors, one from the castle of Wülflingen near Winterthur, the other from Winkelried's house at Stanz.

Then, if the Christmas traveller wishes to go yet farther afield, he can go under the auspices of the same enterprising firm right away out of winter altogether, and see what Christmas is like down among the sunny summer islands of the southern seas. Captain Cook's Voyages, by Dr. A. Kippis, with illustrations reproduced in exact fac-simile from the original drawings, ought to be a book after an English boy's own heart. Exactly a century ago this year, Captain Cook was spending his last Christmas off the coast of Owhyhee—or Hawaii, as we are now careful to call that pleasantest of wintering places—dining off salmon-pie instead of turkey and plum-pudding, and purchasing King Kamehameha's magnificent feather-embroidered robe of state—Ka-mea-mea Dr. Kippis calls him, by-the-way—for "nine iron daggers." In two months more the great discoverer's voyages had come to an end, and he was lying murdered on the shore of Kernegoah Bay, stabbed in the back by one of those very daggers he himself had put into the treacherous hands of his Hawaiian hosts.

Three times round about the world good Dr. Kippis takes us—or rather, to be accurate, twice and a half, the

worthy narrator's own account stopping short with the death of his hero, and leaving the remainder of the voyage to be finished in an appendix. A charmingly quaint old style is the doctor's, and quite worthy of the story he has to tell. I don't think poor Artemus Ward himself could have better recorded, for instance, the taking possession of Queen Charlotte's Sound. The explorer, having prepared his flagstaff, goes first to a neighbouring "hippah"—or "pah," as the more modern Maori hath it—where he meets with an old man who has maintained a friendly intercourse with the English. "To this old man, and several Indians besides, the lieutenant explained his design, which was to erect a mark upon the island, in order to show to any other ship which should come thither that our navigators had been there before. To this they readily assented, promising never to pull it down. He then gave something to everyone present; and to the old man a silver threepence, and some spike nails with the king's broad arrow cut deep upon them. After this he conveyed the post to the highest part of the island, and having fixed it firmly in the ground, hoisted upon it the union flag, and honoured the inlet with the name of Queen Charlotte's Sound. At the same time he took formal possession of this and the adjacent country in the name and for the use of his majesty King George the Third. The ceremony was concluded by the gentlemen's drinking a bottle of wine to her majesty's health; and the bottle being given to the old man, he was highly delighted with his present." Dear old man!

Mr. Warne heads his list of books with another good old tale of stirring adventure; hardly so authentic, perhaps, but what does that matter at Christmas-time? It is not quite a hundred years since the great Baron Munchausen first made his bow to an English public; but he has run through a good many editions since 1786, and in his present guise is not unlikely to run through a good many more. Monsieur Bichard's illustrations of the adventurous traveller's career would not be unworthy of Gustave Doré himself, and must surely carry conviction to the most sceptical mind. If any juvenile representative of what the irate preacher once stigmatised as "this so-called nineteenth century" should doubt, for instance, the feasibility of lifting yourself out of a pond by your own pigtail, let him turn to the picture

opposite page eighty-nine, and he will see at once what a simple and effective operation it is. If he still remain unconvinced, the only stronger proof I can suggest is to try the experiment in his own person. But perhaps he had better wait for that till the ponds are warmer.

As for the adventurous baron's reconnoitring ride through the air upon a cannonball, no one who has once seen M. Bichard's spirited sketch of that delightful journey can ever again doubt as to the one only use to which Krupps, and Rodmans, and Woolwich Infants, and the like, should ever be applied. I am afraid there are some kings and emperors among us who are "ower auld to learn;" but every little prince and princess, and, above all, every possible future premier, foreign secretary, or member of parliament, ought to be provided with a copy forthwith. From an artistic point of view, perhaps, the best picture in the book is that wherein the baron is depicted thrusting his arm down the wolf's throat, for the purpose of turning him inside out. The wintry forest, with its dull-red setting sun, and ghostly grey firs standing stiffly up under their burthen of snow, is rendered in a few broad touches with admirable effect.

From the baron to our no less familiar and no less valued old friends, the Swiss Family Robinson, is a short step, and I think I may say a merry one. Why are there no such islands nowadays? Why cannot we go and get wrecked among the monkeys and tigers, the lions and elephants, the tapers and bears, the ortolans and flamingoes, the ostriches and seals, and all the rest of the happy family? Since I last risked a caning by poring over the dear old volume at unhallowed hours by the carefully-shaded light of an unlawfully "conveyed" candle-end, I have had personal experience of a good many "desolate islands"—to say nothing of shipwrecks—and, as a rule, I have found them disappointing. But as I take the book up once more, I begin to feel the old adventurous spirit stir again, and have desperate notions of running away to sea upon the offchance of getting wrecked, when Mr. Plimsoll's attention shall, perchance, have been called off in some other direction.

As this tempting proceeding, however, might perhaps be inconvenient to my wife and family, I hasten to lay aside this too fascinating volume before the Berserker impulse grows too strong, and turn to the next book that comes to hand. But,

after all, I do not find *Left to Themselves* much safer reading than the *Swiss Family Robinson*. It is some five-and-twenty years or more since I was left to myself in an Australian bush, and I am bound to admit that, after the first day or two, the constantly-recurring absence of breakfast and dinner becomes, to say the least, monotonous. But Miss Marryatt's story of juvenile adventures in the bush almost deludes one into the belief that memory must be mistaken, and that losing all one's money and emigrating to the Antipodes must really be capital fun after all.

Mr. Engelbach's story, *The Danes in England*, which is the next that comes to hand, takes us back to the real old Berserker times. And a capital story it is—full of life and spirit, and with a thoroughly good tone about it. By which I do not mean "goody-goody." Quite otherwise. A real hearty, healthy story-book, with a sniff of the salt sea-breeze in it, to boot. Equally healthy, too, though for more juvenile students of, let us say, six or seven years old, is Miss Brockman's *Worth Doing*. Capital company are Master "Chump," and Master "Duff," and young Master "Cookey," and all the rest of them; and if they do talk and act like schoolboys instead of like pattern young gentlemen, why, on the whole, perhaps schoolboys will not like them much the worse, or profit by the liking much the less for it.

The moral tendency, perhaps, on the other hand, of the two pleasantly-told stories, *Englefield House*, and *Straight Paths and Crooked Ways* is rather more pronounced. If you will not be scandalised, I don't mind confiding to you, in the strictest confidence, that from my youth up until now, I have always had a decided objection to "moral stories," and have resented their administration in the form of a Christmas-box as a distinct fraud upon that festive institution. Mrs. Paull's stories, however, are not moral stories in this obnoxious sense of the word. They are only stories with a moral, or, perhaps, I should say, with several morals; and as none of those morals are ever allowed to make themselves in the least obtrusive, I don't know that, after all, one can ask for much more. And so we come in due course to the baby books. Aunt Louisa's *Favourite Toy Book*, with its gorgeously-coloured pictures of the various incidents in the never-failing histories of *Cinderella* and *Little Red Riding-hood*, *Old Mother Hubbard* and *Little Bopeep*, and the same beneficent relative's

Golden Gift, a real baby-book de luxe, with its prettily drawn and prettily coloured pictures, printed on a solid golden ground, like mediæval saints. I must protest, however, against the wanton carelessness of the artist who took the portrait of *Little Dame Crump*. That fortunate young matron is much too pretty to be brought before the public without her wedding-ring. I am a married man myself, so, of course, beyond the reach of temptation; but it is very hard upon inflammatory bachelors. As for little *Lavender Blue*, I quite own to being in love with him. A more perfect little gentleman surely never made love before even in a picture.

Messrs. Ward and Lock seem to cater exclusively for the little ones, but their three pretty little volumes, *Chats about Animals*, *Chats about Birds*, and the *Children's Picture Annual*, are admirably illustrated with engravings which would do no discredit to works of a much more ambitious character.

Messrs. Dean and Son, on the other hand, appear to go in chiefly for eccentricities in the way of illustration. Here, for instance, is *The New Puss in Boots*, with all the pictures clustered in the middle of the volume, and all cut transversely into three equal slices. This ingenious device enables the dramatis personæ, by the simple process of turning over one or other portion, and leaving the rest untouched, to change not only their coats and nether garments, but their very heads themselves. The Miller's Son, whom puss is in the first scene endowing with the somewhat unauthentic title of the Marquis of Carabas, has only to turn over the mere third of a new leaf, to become the very king himself, crown and all. En revanche, a couple more turns converts him into an ogre; whilst the ladies of the court think nothing of donning the propriâ quæ maribus, or the queen of accepting the attentions of puss in topboots suspiciously like his own. In the "panoramic" version of the Queen of Hearts, Johnny Gilpin, Poor Cock Robin, and so forth, the same principle is applied in somewhat different fashion; while in the little book of *Living Nursery Rhyme*, a new and ingenious device is employed with really dramatic effect. "The maid was in the garden," the legend tells us, "banging out the clothes; down came a blackbird and picked off her nose." And down at the critical moment the blackbird pounces, just as, in another artfully constructed picture, the cow actually

performs her famous feat of super-lunar saltation, or the mouse runs up the clock-case and down again as the solemn bell tolls one. When I was a little boy, and every year said—or was supposed to say—"Do, papa, buy me Peter Parley's Annual," I should have clamoured vigorously for one of these "dodgy" little books. And when I had pulled it to pieces, to see how it was done you know, I should have clamoured vigorously for another.

Messrs. Kegan, Paul and Co. appeal to the more serious-minded among our juveniles. Mr. Thurston's *History of the Steam Engine* is just the sort of book to delight a boy of a mechanical turn, and is not without interest even for children, thus disposed, of a larger growth. I wonder, by-the-way, how many people there are who would be other than "surprised to learn" that there was a regular steam launch on the "Collect Pond," in New York, just eighty-two years ago. There is its portrait, however, at page two hundred and forty, and a very remarkable little craft she seems to have been. Mr. Rodwell's *Etna*, too, an elaborate and learned disquisition, which, as its author informs us, took its rise from a discovery on his part, whilst engaged upon an article for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, that there was actually no existing English work upon the subject, is a capital book for any lad that way disposed; whilst the *Canterbury Chimes* is an attempt to bring within the reach of children no less a story-teller than the great father of English literature himself. Translated into modern prose, and pruned to the requirements of modern propriety, the *Canterbury Tales* in their new guise lose, perhaps, a little of their original raciness; but the adapters have taken old Izaak Walton's advice, and handled their victim as tenderly as they could, and the illustrations, taken from the Ellesmere MS., are very good.

Messrs. Rivington have only two quiet little volumes; one a brief juvenile biography of the Duke of Wellington, with a roughly executed but effective portrait from the picture by Sir Thomas Laurence in the Royal Academy of 1826, and a considerable number of maps, plans of towns, battles, &c., the other, a small quarto selection from the never dying *Pensées de Pascal*, translated by H. L. Sydney, and handsomely printed on thick old-fashioned paper, with the broad margin in which bibliomaniacs delight; while Messrs.

Cassell appear to have expended their energies on a single volume, entitled, *Pleasant Spots Round Oxford*, by Alfred Rimmer, author of *Ancient Streets and Homesteads, &c.* On the whole, I am inclined to think that if Mr. Rimmer could manage to apply a pair of mental glove-stretchers to his sympathetic faculty he would perhaps get a more comprehensive grasp of his subject. I think someone has already remarked upon the difficulty of adapting round men to square holes. But the "Oxford" hole, if it can be fitly described as of any shape at all, is distinctly pantagonal; while Mr. Rimmer, I am afraid, is, on his sympathetic side, no less distinctly monogonic. Still, the book is interesting, and the illustrations excellent; altogether a capital Christmas-box for the son and heir of a married "fellow," or for a young gentleman going up for an "exam."

Messrs. Routledge, on the other hand, have celebrated the Christmas rites with a perfect furor of devotion. If all our hairs were children, their enterprise would find Christmas-boxes for them all. And for children of all ages too; as indeed, under such circumstances, they probably would be. Here we have a batch of poetry for the grown-up ones, well on their way towards the time when they will cease to be boxees, and become boxers on their own accounts. A handsome little quarto of Will Carleton's *Farm Ballads*, beautifully printed on thick glossy paper and with manifold illustrations, some of them very good. Homely verses for so rich a dress, yet not without quaintness or without vigour either. There is a good deal of love poetry, for instance, which won't beat this:

If you to me be cold,
Or I be false to you,
The world will go on, I think,
Just as it used to do;
The clouds will flirt with the moon,
The sun will kiss the sea,
The wind to the trees will whisper
And laugh at you and me.
But the sun will not shine so bright,
The clouds will not seem so white,
To one as they will to two,
So I think you had better be kind
And I had better be true,
And let the old love go on
Just as it used to do.

Baby Bell, by T. B. Aldrich, is another dainty little quarto, for the most part exquisitely illustrated, and telling its little tale of the little baby who came, and was welcomed, and loved, and lost again, with much simple pathos. Dodd's *Beauties of Shakespeare* is an old friend with a very

handsome new face, the most prominent features of which, after good paper and clear type, are some hundred and twenty illustrations, by Sir J. Gilbert, Birket Foster, and others. So, too, are *Excelsior*, and the general works of the same poet; the former, another hotpressed quarto, uniform with *Baby Bell* and *Farm Ballads*, but superior to both in respect of illustration; the latter a compact little library of eleven tiny but beautifully printed little volumes, neatly packed up in a handsome gilded box about six or seven inches cube. Then comes *Paul and Virginia*, beautifully printed, profusely illustrated, and with an admirable portrait of the author by way of frontispiece. *Picciola*, with ten spirited illustrations by Leopold Flameng; and Mr. Davenport Adams's *Book of Epigrams*, with its neatly arranged rows of "jewels five words long," from the various workshops of the last three hundred years and more, from Sir John Harington to Mr. Ashby-Sterry, bring us to the end of our grown-up books and land us pleasantly in a little batch of regular boys' stories. Foremost, of course, amongst which we welcome our glorious old friend *Robinson Crusoe*; a handsome but not too gorgeous edition, such as Tom or Harry can take back to school with him, and pore over by firelight in the winter evenings before the lamps are lit. Then another *Swiss Family Robinson*; then a new edition of that fine breezy old sea-yarn, *The Green Hand*, and a capital story by Madam Colmet, called *Uncle Chesterton's Heir*. As for the annual, *Mysterious Disappearance of Mr. Redworth*—which, by-the-way, does not mean that Mr. Redworth disappears annually under mysterious circumstances—that is a story for readers of any age. A real sensation novel, boiled down to one short volume instead of three long ones, and with the mystery well sustained throughout. I can't help thinking someone ought to have been hanged, though of course I am not going to betray confidence by even a hint as to the quarter in which the suspensory process should be applied. But I suppose at Christmas-time this would be incongruous.

After which we come to a batch of more distinctly seasonable books still. If *Every Boy's* and *Every Girl's Annuals* do not find their way into the hands of every boy and girl, so much the worse for the girls and boys neglected in the distribution. Let us hope, however, that they will at all events be compensated by a copy of Pro-

fessor Hoffman's *Drawing-room Amusements*, a book in which everyone who proposes—as, of course, every conscientious *paterfamilias* does propose—giving a juvenile party during the ensuing festive season, should invest without a moment's delay. Am I going to tell you how to make raisin tortoises and lemon pigs; how to "slip" cards and "palm" cards, and guess the card thought of, and work the "alternate card trick," and deal all the trumps into your own hand, and other delightfully wicked devices of the kind; how to engineer waxwork exhibitions and shadow pantomimes; how to leave the room with two legs and come back with six; how to select your charade or your play; how to construct your stage, to paint your scenery, or to make-up your face to any age from nine years old to ninety-and-nine? Let me assure you that I have not the slightest intention of doing anything whatever of the kind. I know all about it myself after studying Professor Hoffman, of course, and a great deal more. If you have any desire to be equally learned, you cannot do better than consult Professor Hoffman for yourself.

If this should not satisfy you, and you want to be learned in more sedate fashion, or perhaps to instil such learning pleasantly into your juvenile clientèle, get Mr. Woods' volume of *Picture Natural History*. I have learned one thing from it at all events. I always used to think—didn't you?—that the famous Snapping Turtle had his habitat only in the truthful pages of the great Bon Gualtier. Look at page six of Mr. Woods' second part, and there you will find him. Not altogether as large as life, perhaps, but quite as natural.

If you don't want to learn anything at all, but only wish to be amused—and really at Christmas-time there is something to be said in behalf of such a desire—here are story-books galore, of all sorts and sizes, true tales and fanciful tales, Sunday tales and workday tales, fairy tales, and tales of everyday people like you and me. Here are the *Seven Champions of Christendom*, compiled from the most antient chronicles and records, and all other authentic and reliable sources of information. A capital story-book, none the worse—in my eyes, at all events—for the pleasant old crusted flavour that still hangs about it even in its modern guise. Then we have an entirely new batch of fairy tales in the shape of

Uncle Joe's Stories, by Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen. I don't find quite that delicious abandon about Mr. Hugessen's stories which forms the real charm of the good old-fashioned fairy tale. But there is plenty of fun about them all the same, and they are about the best I know nowadays. More Dolls, and Only a Cat are not fairy stories, but they are very good reading for all that; the latter, moreover, inculcating, in unobtrusive but not ineffectual fashion, the useful lesson of kindness to animals; while Golden Light, and The Picture History of England are not stories at all, but handsome spoonfuls of pictorial jam, in which the cunningly commingled powder of historical or scriptural lore may slip down comparatively untasted. Then should any faint suspicion of the doctor's shoptingler about the palate after all, here is a whole basin of sugar in the shape of Prinne's Fairy Library, a smart little green and gold casket containing no fewer than ten little volumes of real fairy tales without any hyperdidactic flavour about them at all.

As for Little Wideawake, who heads the list for the little ones, if I were a mamma—which I am happy to say I am not, finding papaship quite sufficient—I should assuredly buy him, if it were only for the sake of the little laddie on the cover. The interior would be worthy of the binding, if it could, and is in truth a pleasant mixture of old stories and new; among the former being our old friend Sindbad, the sight of whom arouses in my mind the question: How is it that in this forest of holiday volumes, ancient and modern, through which I am only just beginning at last to see my way, I have not come across a single Arabian Nights? There is something wrong here, or my youthful judgment must have been remarkably astray.

Happy Day Stories appears to be a re-issue of some spirited drawings of child-life by Mrs. Houghton, with new stories written to them; whilst The Child's Picture Scrapbook, and Little Snowdrop's and Little Violet's Picture Books consist simply of so many collections of pictures, small and large, of various kinds, with a few sentences or even a few words of illustrative letterpress. Taken in connection with a box of paints, these little volumes will no doubt find their uses on a rainy afternoon. Schnick Schnack, and Chimes and Rhymes, on the other hand, have their illustrations already coloured,

and very well coloured too. And finally, Aunt Effie's Rhymes strikes out an altogether new line, giving us not only amusing rhyme, appropriately illustrated in Hablot Browne's happiest vein, but the music—and very pretty music, too—to which to sing them.

And so we arrive at last at the paper toy-books, with their brilliant blue and red and green and yellow wrappers, and upon my word, I hardly know if they are not after all, from an artistic point of view, the gems of the whole library. The Children's Musical Cinderella, indeed, rejoices, not only in capital illustrations, quaintly and gorgeously coloured after the manner of the pope's guard or a glorified court suit of trumps, but in a regular musical score to its rhymed story. But John Gilpin and The House that Jack Built rely solely upon the artist's pencil, and very thoroughly is their confidence justified. That worthy linsdraper and gallant trainband captain must surely himself have sat to Mr. Caldecott for that inimitable portrait. And there are two—I might almost say three—characters in the tragi-comedy of the famous house which eclipse this altogether. I am not speaking of Jack himself, who, I confess, is not to my mind adequately represented by that old gentleman in drab shorts and a red waistcoat; nor do I refer to the priest, though he is a jovial old ecclesiastic enough; nor to the forlorn, but easily-consoled maiden; nor even to the very free-and-easy gentleman in the tattered and torn habiliments by whom she is consoled, and who, it must be admitted, has a pleasant air of debonaire vagabondism which suggests a capability of consoling any number of damsels under any combination of circumstances. These are the comic characters of the piece, and it is into the tragic element that the artist has thrown his full power. The three personages of the drama whose brief career is thus immortalised all come to an untimely end. The cat is, perhaps, the least striking of the three, though there is a grim humour pervading her earlier proceedings which is highly effective. But a more delightful villain than the rat never ran on four legs. The ineffable air of injured innocence with which he sits up upon the empty measure, and with moustache erect, and outspread palms, proclaims to men and cats his absolute ignorance of the very flavour of malt is simply admirable. As to the dog, I really doubt if the

great Van Dyck of dogdom himself could have improved upon his portrait, as we first catch sight of him under the corner of the wall, meditating what mischief he shall be up to next. He is a true pariah, that brindled rascal, with the demonstrative ribs, the ruefully hanging lip, and the backward look in his little twinkling eye; brought up from earliest puppyhood on a far more liberal allowance of kicks than of the bones and scraps which, as I take it, form the halfpence of canine currency. But all the kicks in Christendom won't knock the fun out of that young reprobate's cheery soul. I'll wager a pound—of greaves—that he is sore with his last drubbing even now; but if he is not already meditating some fresh means of deserving another, I am no reader of the canine countenance. And, sure enough, there sits puss, demurely licking her lips after her late conflict. Ha! ha! how he in his turn sits presently in the grassy path and grins with fatuous delight over his successful tussle with that deluded cat! And his face, as he culminates in mid-air, and casts a downward glance of horror upon the crumpled horn of the too swift Nemesis below! Yes; decidedly I shall have to expend another shilling for little Master Tommy's behoof, and keep that brindled reprobate for my own private gallery.

I have kept one especial volume till the last, not being quite sure whether it had not slipped accidentally into my batch of Christmas literature. Personally speaking; it has hitherto seemed to me that the subject with which it deals is one about which we have almost had enough for our Christmas needs in the columns of the daily papers. But this was when I only looked at the solid pages of closely-printed debate without attempting to read them. The result of that attempt has been, to convince me that Messrs. Routledge are right and I was wrong. There are a great many little people—and some big ones, I am afraid, now painfully occupied with unwonted holiday-tasks in the great class-rooms of St. Stephen's—to whom a nice little yellow volume about Afghanistan, its political and military history, geography, and ethnology, including a full account of the wars of 1839-42, and an appendix on the prospects of a Russian invasion of India, would be, if not a very acceptable Christmas-box, a very useful one indeed.

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHIEL HOBY.

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRIFTH'S DOUBLE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXV. THE BLUEBEARD BUREAU.

JANET was much grieved by the explanation that had taken place between herself and Sir Wilfrid Esdaile, and his sudden departure from Bevis added to her discomfiture. She had been so absolutely innocent of coquetry, of intention of misleading him, of perception of his feelings towards her and the extent to which he was misleading himself, that she could not take blame to herself in the matter, but was entirely given over to wonder and regret. To wonder, genuine and deep, that she should have been found so pleasing in the sight of a man of the world like Esdaile; that he should have come to love her so well as she could not doubt he did love her; and regret, very profound and poignant, for the pain that he must suffer, from which she could not save him. She could only hope that it would not last long; and that the future might hold within its possibilities a friendship with him, untroubled by the remembrance of this misplaced love. He had read her secret, he knew why it was that he must not hope, must not try, for a reversal of her sentence; and Janet shrank from that consciousness, not with any doubt of his honour and loyalty, but because of the additional sense which it gave her of having crossed and troubled his life. Esdaile's discovery had already deprived his friend of his company; if he were less high-minded than Janet took him to be, it would deprive Dunstan of his friendship also, and thus become a double misery to her. She would have been thrown into dismay and confusion if Sir Wilfrid had again spoken to her; and yet she sometimes wished that she could see him, and could make up her mind to ask him, if only because of what his quickened observation had enabled him to read in her face on that last evening, not to withdraw himself from Dunstan, Janet possessed the excellent gift of sympathy, and yet in this case she was entirely unable to understand and estimate the pain that the mere sight of Dunstan inflicted on Esdaile; and when Dunstan complained that Sir Wilfrid had "thrown him over," and bemoaned his own disappointment, Janet felt herself guilty in this too, that she had, however unwittingly, come between the friends whose

mutual regard she had invested with the loftiness, disinterestedness, and constancy which made up her own ideal of friendship.

In the keen distress which Janet suffered, the dispersion of her own illusion as to Julia's meaning, in the brief confidence that had marked their parting, had very little share. Julia had not made any allusion to this in writing, and she would divine the truth, most likely, when she should learn that Sir Wilfrid had left Bevis. Janet could not tell her; she well knew how much pained she would be; and now, when she fully understood Julia's meaning, she felt that Julia would be unable to forgive her. Sir Wilfrid Esdaile was in Julia's eyes what he was in those of John Sandilands—a fortunate prince of fairy-tale times—and that he should ask and not have, that there should exist anyone so foolishly and so ill disposed as to say No to him—would be intolerable in Julia's sight. He had loved her from the first; he had told her so, and Julia had seen it! But she had not seen it, had not dreamed of it; in her own absorption of mind and heart she had never thought that to others she seemed free and to be won. What a world of cross-purposes was this, thought Janet, who had but a glimpse of them; and how hard it seemed that the love of a kind and manly heart, which would have made another woman, for whom she was day by day learning to care more and more, profoundly happy, should be given to herself, who could not reward or prize it.

With this fresh access of her sorrow there came a resolution to Janet. Amabel should know the truth; there should be no additional delusion or heart-burning in this unhappy matter, if plain speaking on Janet's part, however painful to her, could avert it. The bright, odd, enthusiastic, hard-to-manage girl had become very dear to the friend who was so strangely unlike her, for other reasons than the almost worshipping affection with which Amabel regarded her. That it should fall to her lot to cross Amabel's path, Janet felt was also very hard; if she had not been there what would have been more likely than that Sir Wilfrid should have been attracted by Amabel; and now her unlucky presence had brought trouble and sorrow on two people who loved her—two of the very few in all the world to whom she meant anything.

Janet had not to wait long for an

opportunity of telling Amabel what was in her mind; her pale face and evident suffering brought quick questions from the impetuous girl.

"Something has happened to you Janet! What is it? You have been crying."

Amabel was on her knees with her arms round Janet in a moment, and Janet told her, as well as she could for her tears.

The girl's pretty face grew pale and fixed, but the clasp of her arms was tighter as she listened to Janet's broken words, and gathered from them that she dreaded the significance of them to her. She did not interrupt them once, but when they were ended she said:

"Poor Sir Wilfrid! I knew there was trouble before him; I saw it in his face from the first, and who knows better than I what a trouble this is! Janet! If I were a man and loved you, in his place I should kill myself."

She loosed her hold of Janet, and sank into her favourite attitude upon the floor, with her hands clasped on her knees, and her eyes fixed on Janet's face.

"And so my presentiment is out, and great harm has come to him."

"And to you, dearest, to you!" sobbed Janet.

"No," said Amabel, "not to me. I do care for him; I like him very much; I have the strangest feeling about him, as if I could see something dimly, through a veil, that is terrible in his life; I might have loved him well enough to have been the happiest woman in the world if he had loved me or the most wretched if he had not, but that I have always known——"

"What, Amabel?"

"That he loved you, dear, and that there would be no chance for him. I don't say I am quite happy, I don't say I can quite like my life now that he is gone away out of it—so far away and forever too—for he will never come to Bevis again; but there is no disappointment; remember that. I never made any mistake about it, and I am not broken-hearted."

"And you forgive me?"

"Forgive you! Because he loves you! Yes, indeed, for how could he help it? Because you don't love him? Well, that's another, and a harder matter; but neither can you help it. Don't fret about me, Janet; indeed you need not, for I only grieve for him, and like him all the better that he loves you."

"You have the most generous nature in the world."

"Not I. I am only reasonable, in spite of all my fancifulness, and I know some price must be paid for every blessing one has in this life. In sober seriousness you are my best blessing. And, Janet, I must tell you something; it is not only my presentiment about Sir Wilfrid that is fulfilled in this, it is a presentiment that I had about you also. It was the very first day I saw you; and you know"—here Amabel smiled, though with only a dim ghost of her usual brightness—"I, as well as poor Sir Wilfrid, fell in love with you on the spot; and it came over my mind, or my fancy, or my nerves, or whatever it is that receives those unaccountable impressions for which everybody except you scolds me or laughs at me, that either you would do me, or I should do you, some harm in days to come. It passed away immediately, just as a shiver—which that sort of thing is like in the mind—passes over one's body and is gone; but it had been, and now it comes back to me. This is the harm you were to do me, dearest Janet, you see it is not much."

"Ah, I do not think so. But at all events, it is I who have done you, however unintentionally, harm. As for you, you will do me nothing but good all the days of my life."

"I hope so," said Amabel.

The two friends said much more to one another, but Amabel did not explain to Janet why it was that she had known from the first there was no chance for Sir Wilfrid.

After this they discussed the matter no further, but they were even more drawn towards each other than before, and additionally companionable, if more silent. To both the inexorably bad weather was welcome; neither felt disposed to be subject just then to any scrutiny more discerning than that of Mrs. Ainslie, who recognised no ills except her own, and that of Mr. Ainslie, who held that the climate of England was enough to account for anything concerning anybody. The weather, which kept the dwellers at The Chantry in, did not however keep Captain Dunstan out. He came thither nearly every day, grumbled with Mr. Ainslie, sang with Miss Monroe, and made himself generally agreeable. So the year drew to its close.

Christmas had come and gone, with its pleasures of beneficence and its pains of memory, and the season, which she

especially dreaded, had proved a happy time, on the whole, for Janet. The schools, and the almshouse women, the old people in the village, to which Bevis stood in the relation of the "great house," all the claimants of those bounties which are so much enhanced by personal solicitude and kindness in the bestowal of them, were saved from the neglect she had feared, as a consequence of the death of Mrs. Drummond, by the active liberality of Captain Dunstan. Janet had returned to Bury House a few days before Christmas, but not until she had, at Captain Dunstan's request, furnished him with a statement of all that Mrs. Drummond had been wont to do for the benefit of her neighbours at Christmas-time, and arranged with Mrs. Manners—who was much mollified by Dunstan's amended behaviour with regard to Miss Monroe—for large benefactions of beef and pudding to the waifs and strays, towards whom Janet felt more kindness than the sternly-practical vicar altogether approved.

A hard frost in the beginning of January succeeded the wet weather of the close of December, and the hunting with which Edward Dunstan had hoped to beguile the tedium of his stay at Bevis was impossible. That tedium did not, however, greatly beset him. He made plans for the disposal of himself after the date up to which he meant to remain, and he even began to think with less reluctance than he would have believed possible a short time previously, about London in the season; but, apart from the curiosity with which he regarded the "Bluebeard bureau" as he called it, he was in no particular hurry for the interval to pass. His life was, as a matter of fact, a pleasant one, and even his hurt pride and baffled passion could not altogether resist the stubbornness of facts. He had thoroughly qualified himself to break the seals of the packet in the Bluebeard bureau. The long delayed message from the dead had received all respect and attention from him. It had made him regard Janet Monroe with additional curiosity, and enhanced the interest in her that he already felt. He remembered what Esdaile had once said about his sense of the arbitrariness of fate in its respective dealings with himself and with John Sandilands, and he applied it to the difference between Janet's destiny and his own.

Captain Dunstan liked the society of

women, and especially of such as were womanly. He was not to be won by fashion, or even by personal attractions—which, however, rarely exist in such anomalous individuals—to admire women who hunt, who “walk with the guns,” look on at the slaughter of pigeons, pretend to understand horse-racing, talk the slang of the gaming saloon, and offer at all points a melancholy and contemptible spectacle to those who wish well to the individuals and to the human race. He had too much good taste and too much sense of humour to be moved to any feeling save disgust and ridicule by the deplorable freaks of modern young ladyhood in these and other objectionable directions, and he had found a few specimens of the prevailing mode, in the neighbourhood of Bevis, very irksome and oppressive to him. Amabel and Janet were both, in their far different ways, on their different levels, essentially womanly, and much to Dunstan’s taste. It never occurred to him to ask himself whether, if he could have forgotten Laura and her treachery to him he should have fallen in love with either of them, because he could not forget Laura, and her treachery had closed the book of love for him, and put it away from among his studies; he simply liked the two girls, and sought their society, especially that of Janet, with a growing pleasure. Her thoroughness, her simplicity, her quiet courage, her utter ignorance of the world, which contrasted with the considerable knowledge she had acquired from books, invested her with a charm largely aided by her grace and beauty.

On the 10th of January, Captain Dunstan said to himself: “This is the day for the Bluebeard bureau. I will open the mysterious packet after breakfast.” And, while he ate that meal, he once more perused Mrs. Drummond’s letter of instructions.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Cathcart, at the vicarage, presiding over the vicar’s repast, which he, being a great reader of newspapers, rarely enlivened with conversation, was also thinking of the Bluebeard bureau, wondering at what time Dunstan would open the packet, how soon, and under what pretext he would reveal the secret of its contents to her.

Having waited until there should be little or no chance of his encountering an inquisitive housemaid in the Admiral’s Corridor, or Mrs. Manners herself on a

tour of inspection, Captain Dunstan proceeded to the unused rooms, in whose silent and speckless orderliness there was something oppressive to his fancy. Unlocking the little door of the central space of the old bureau for the second time, he took out the parchment-covered packet, on which his own name was written by Mrs. Drummond’s hand, carried it to the library, and began the examination of its contents.

These proved to be two documents; a narrow slip of paper was folded round each, and they were numbered respectively One and Two.

Number One was a more imposing document than the other, and even when folded, and before the labelled slip of paper was removed, it looked legal.

Number Two was simply a letter.

Captain Dunstan removed the slip of paper from Number One, which he unfolded and smoothed out upon the table before him. It needed only a glance to show him that he had under his eyes a will. With the usual preamble, in fair legal text, expressed with perfect distinctness, the document before him bequeathed to Janet Monroe—who was named in it in terms of the warmest affection—the estate of Bevis, and all the other property of every kind of which the testatrix should die possessed. The will was duly signed and attested; and with the first shock of an overwhelming surprise, there came over Dunstan a rush of desperate anger. He had then been mocked and fooled; made to believe himself the owner of Bevis for three months to gratify Mrs. Drummond’s fantastic spite, or her silly fancy! This thought was, however, but a lightning-flash; for the next instant his eye caught the date of the will. It was six months earlier than that of the document by which Mrs. Drummond had bequeathed Bevis to him. His own position was secure; her intention had changed, and at sufficient interval to do away with the idea of caprice; the sentiments she expressed in the letter which had been so long of reaching him were her final sentiments; again he had wronged her in his swift thoughts.

He reperused the will. There could be no mistake about it. Janet Monroe, she of whom Mrs. Drummond had said that she regarded her as a daughter, she who was in a manner committed to his care, had been designated as the future owner of all

that was now his by Mrs. Drummond, who had only, as she said, her own free will to consult. She was the one person in all the world whom Mrs. Drummond loved; why had she changed her purpose towards her? It was a righteous purpose. Janet deserved from Mrs. Drummond all that she had to give; Janet would have made good use of it; her claim was a sounder one than his own. So did the truth come home in a moment of clear-seeing to Edward Dunstan. Whence had come the change? Eagerly Dunstan turned from the document, Number One, to the letter, Number Two. In this he would find the explanation, no doubt.

The contents of Number Two were as follows:

"I address you, Edward, on the supposition that you will have acted in conformity with the communication from me that is to reach you with the notification of my death; that you will have acquired the right to read these lines, and to become acquainted with the secret which must never be known to anyone but yourself. I write on the supposition that you have resided three months at Bevis, that you have won the esteem and regard of Janet Monroe, and that you neither are, nor are intending to place yourself, under any engagement to marry. These things being so, the case in which it is my wish to make you acquainted with the fact to be revealed to you by the paper marked Number One has arisen, and you will now receive my last communication, which I make to you in the strictest and most solemn confidence, and which will have, when it reaches you, the additionally solemn sanction that the never-to-be-broken silence of death will have been for so long between us.

"It is to Janet Monroe—to her nobility of mind, her disinterestedness, her firmness—that you owe the possession of Bevis, and of all I have left to you. You see that it was all to have been hers, and you will readily believe the alteration did not originate with me. Made aware of my intention, she most earnestly entreated me to forego it; and, failing in that, she positively assured me that it would be useless for me to attempt to put it in force, as nothing should induce her to accept the legacy of the estate and fortune, that she persisted in believing to be your inheritance by right. She succeeded. I yielded to her earnest prayer; and, had she known that I had actually made the

will, of which I spoke to her only as a thing intended to be done, I have no doubt she would have insisted on my letting her destroy it with her own hands, so that you might never by any accident come to the knowledge that it had existed, and that in this, too, Janet would have succeeded. If you have gained the right to read these lines, you know by this time what manner of woman she is whom I would have had to fill my place here, and that there is none which she would not adorn. No one, however, but yourself and myself can ever know all the truth about Janet. And now I am going to tell you why I have recorded this truth, so that it should come to your knowledge after the preparation that I have contrived. It is because, having done you all the good in my power in one way for Janet's sake—there will be nothing due to my memory from you on that score—I would like to do you a far greater good for your own; and because, having renounced the dear hope that she would be here after me, in her own right, to keep up the remembrance of us and the tradition of the past, the same hope in another form has stolen back into my old heart. I believe that you, as you will be when you read this, in Janet's confidence, her friend, the witness of her good and blameless life, could win her for your wife, if you wish to do so; and that if you do wish it, and do win her, the good I am now doing you is as far beyond what I have already done you as blessedness is beyond wealth. Should this not be so—should there never be a closer tie than that of friendship between you and Janet Monroe, this that I am doing can be no wrong; for it will make you know how noble a heart is that in which you will have secured a friend's place; and for the rest, the fancy that is not to become fact, the hope that is not to be realised, they will remain for ever a dead secret with the dead."

Mrs. Cathcart remained at home the whole of the day on the 10th of January, in the expectation, which she did not quite admit to herself, of Captain Dunstan's calling at the Vicarage. He did not come; and the following day also passed without her seeing or hearing anything of him. It was not until the 12th that he presented himself, and she perceived a curious change in his look and manner. He entered at once upon the subject of which they were both thinking, and

with straightforward seriousness told Mrs. Cathcart that he found himself unable to reveal the nature of the disclosure which had been made to him. "It has no present concern," he added, "for anyone, and merely referred to a matter which Mrs. Drummond considered it necessary that I, as her heir, should be informed of. The delay in my receiving her first letter turns out to be of no consequence, and the whole affair is of absolutely no interest or importance."

"You look as if you had done more thinking over this absolutely unimportant affair than you ever did in your life before," was Mrs. Cathcart's mental comment upon this explanation which explained nothing; but she was too well-bred to let the slightest doubt or disappointment appear; and her smiling "How fortunate," and immediate easy introduction of some subject indefinitely removed from the topic under taboo, set her visitor at ease at once. In a few minutes she found that he was taking the lead in the conversation, and that its direction was towards Janet Monroe. Her love for the place that had been her home for so long; her quiet tastes, her refinement, and cultivation; of these things Dunstan spoke in a way that seemed to provoke a question. At last Mrs. Cathcart asked it, point blank.

"Have you anything particular to say to me about Janet? Has anything happened?"

"Yes," replied Dunstan; "and I wished to tell you myself, because you are such a good friend to her and to me. I have asked her to come back to Bevis. I know you will be glad. I have asked her to be my wife, and she has consented."

Mrs. Cathcart did not speak for a full minute; then she said: "I never was more glad of anything in my life." And then, with striking inconsistency, she burst into tears.

"And now for a bit of news"—so ran the closing paragraph of a letter from Edward Dunstan to Sir Wilfrid Esdaile, written that same night, to reach him just before he was to leave England on an excursion, of which nothing was settled except that it was to be a distant one—"which will interest you, and surprise you, too. I shall want the cats'-eyes after all, and Lady Esdaile shall have another set.

You can guess what I mean. I did not think of it when you were here; but I know it's the best thing I can do, and that you will think so. I have asked Miss Monroe to marry me—I asked her yesterday; she has said 'Yes,' and she is most anxious you should know, and sends you all sorts of pleasant messages. Don't you think I'm right? Of course, there's no nonsense about this; that is over—well over, too, no doubt, and the new leaf I have turned will have no follies writ large on it, I hope. Nothing is settled, of course; but there is nothing particular for us to wait for, and so you must not be long away," &c.

At the hour when Edward Dunstan was writing these lines, little thinking of the feelings of unavailing regret and pity they would arouse in Esdaile, Janet was kneeling in the deep bay of the window of her room at Bury House, her folded arms upon the window-sill, her face turned to the moonlight lying in silver bars upon the frost-bound earth, with radiant joy and peace and thankfulness in it not contradicted by the tears in her eyes. For Janet, in that quiet hour of unequalled happiness and hope, was not thinking only of her lover; not only of the great bliss that had come into her life, to glorify it for evermore; not only of the beauty and the sweetness and the wonder of life with love acknowledged and returned in it; but also of the friend who was gone, and the interpretation of her bright slow-falling tears was: "If she could but see me now! If she could only know how it is with me!"

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VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XVII. "SHALL I TELL YOU THE SECRET?"

FOR the rest of the way Violet walked with Mrs. Scobel, and at the garden-gate of the vicarage Roderick Vawdrey wished them both good-night, and tramped off, with his basket on his back and his rod on his shoulder, for the long walk to Briarwood.

Here the children separated, and ran off to their scattered homes, dropping grateful bob-cartsies to the last: louting, as they called it in their Forest dialect.

"You must come in and have some tea, Violet," said Mrs. Scobel. "You must be very tired."

"I am rather tired; but I think it's too late for tea. I had better get home at once."

"Ignatius must see you home, my dear," cried Mrs. Scobel. At which the indefatigable vicar, who had shouted himself hoarse in leading his choir, protested himself delighted to escort Miss Tempest.

The church clock struck ten, as they went along the narrow forest-path between Beechdale and the Abbey House.

"Ob," cried Vixen, "I do hope mamma's people will have gone home."

A carriage rolled past them as they came out into the road.

"That's Mrs. Carteret's landau," said Vixen. "I breathe more freely. And there goes Mrs. Horwood's brougham; so I suppose everything is over. How nice it is when one's friends are so unanimous in their leave-taking."

"I shall try to remember that the next time I dine at the Abbey House," said Mr. Scobel laughing.

"Oh, please don't," cried Violet. "You and Mrs. Scobel are different. I don't mind you; but those dreadful stiff old ladies mamma cultivates, who think of nothing but their dress and their own importance—a little of them goes a very long way."

"But, my dear Miss Tempest, the Carterets and the Horwoods are some of the best people in the neighbourhood."

"Of course they are," answered Vixen. "If they were not they would hardly venture to be so stupid. They take the full license of their acres and their quarters. People with a coat-of-arms found yesterday, and no land to speak of, are obliged to make themselves agreeable."

"Like Captain Winstanley," suggested Mr. Scobel. "I don't suppose he has land. But he is excellent company."

"Very," assented Vixen, "for the people who like him."

They were at the gate by this time.

"You shan't come any farther, unless you are coming in to see mamma," protested Vixen.

"Thanks, no; it's too late to think of that."

"Then go home immediately, and have some supper," said Vixen imperatively. "You've had nothing but a cup of weak tea since two o'clock this afternoon. You must be worn out."

"On such an occasion as to-day a man must not think of himself," said the vicar.

"I wonder when you ever do think of yourself," said Vixen.

And indeed Mr. Scobel, like many another Anglican pastor of modern times,

led a life which, save for its liberty to roam where he listed, and to talk as much as he liked, was but little less severe in its exactions upon the flesh and the spirit than that of the monks of La Trappe.

The Abbey House looked very quiet when Vixen went into the hall, whose doors stood open to the soft spring night. The servants were all at supper, treating themselves to some extra comforts on the strength of a dinner-party, and talking over the evening's entertainment and its bearings on their mistress's life. There was a feeling in the servants' hall that these little dinners, however harmless seeming, had a certain bent and tendency, and that one sinister to the household and household peace.

"He was more proper in his manner to-night than hever," said the butler, as he dismembered a duck which had been "hotted up" after removal from the dining-room. "He feels hisself master of the whole lot of us already. I could see it in his hi. 'Is that the cabinet 'ock, Forbes?' he says to me, when I was a filling round after the bait. 'No,' says I, 'it is not. We ain't got so much of our cabinet 'ocks that we can afford to trifle with 'em.' Of course I said it in a hundertone, confidential like; but I wanted him to know who was master of the cellar."

"There'll be nobody master but him when once he gets his foot inside these doors," said Mrs. Trimmer, the housekeeper, with a mournful shake of her head. "No, Porline, I'll have a noo pertato. Them canister peas ain't got no flavioir with them."

While they were enjoying themselves, with a certain chastening touch of prophetic melancholy, in the servants' hall, Violet was going slowly upstairs and along the corridor which led past her mother's rooms.

"I must go in and wish mamma good-night," she thought; "though I am pretty sure of a lecture for my pains."

Just at this moment a door opened, and a soft voice called "Violet, Violet," pleadingly.

"Dear mamma, I was just coming in to say good-night."

"Were you, darling? I heard your footstep, and I was afraid you were going by. And I want very particularly to see you to-night, Violet."

"Do you, mamma? I hope not to cold me for going with the school-children. They had such a happy afternoon; and

ate! it was like a miracle. Not so little serving for so many, but so few devouring so much."

Pamela Tempest put her arm round her daughter, and kissed her, with more warmth of affection than she had shown since the sad days after the squire's death. Violet looked at her mother wenderingly. She could hardly see the widow's fair delicate face in the dimly-lighted room. It was one of the prettiest rooms in the house—half boudoir half dressing-room, crowded with elegant luxuries and modern inventions, gipsy-tables, book-stands, toy-cabinets of egg-shell china, a toilet-table à la Pompadour, a writing-desk à la Sevigné. Such small things had made the small joys of Mrs. Tempest's life. When she mourned her kind husband, she lamented him as the someone who had bought her everything she wanted.

She had taken off her dinner-dress, and looked particularly fair and youthful in her cambric dressing-gown, which had as much lace upon it as would have bought a small holding on the outskirts of the Forest. Even in that subdued light Violet could see that her mother's cheeks were pinker than usual, that her eyes were clouded with tears, and her manner anxiously agitated.

"Mamma," cried the girl, "there is something wrong, I know. Something has happened."

"There is nothing wrong, love. But something has happened. Something which I hope will not make you unhappy—for it has made me very happy."

"You are talking in enigmas, mamma, and I am too tired to be good at guessing riddles, just now," said Violet, becoming suddenly cold as ice.

A few moments ago she had been all gentleness and love, responding to the unwonted affection of her mother's caresses. Now she drew herself away and stood aloof, with her heart beating fast and furiously. She divined what was coming. She had guessed the riddle already.

"Come and sit by the fire, Violet, and I will tell you—everything," said Mrs. Tempest coaxingly, seating herself in the low semicircular chair which was her especial delight.

"I can hear what you have to tell just as well where I am," answered Violet curtly, walking to the latticed window, which was open to the night. The moon was shining over the rise and fall of the woods; the scent of the flowers came

stealing up from the garden. Without, all was calm and sweetness; within, fever and smothered wrath. "I can't think how you can endure a fire on such a night. The room is positively stifling."

"Ah, Violet, you have not my sad susceptibility to cold."

"No, mamma. I don't keep myself shut up like an unset diamond in a jeweller's strong-box."

"I don't think I can tell you—the little secret I have to tell, Violet, unless you come over to me and sit by my side, and give me your hand, and let me feel as if you were really fond of me," pleaded Mrs. Tempest, with a little gush of piteousness. "You seem like an enemy, standing over there with your back to me, looking out at the sky."

"Perhaps there is no need for you to tell me anything, mamma," answered Violet, in a voice which, to that tremulous listener in the low seat by the fire, sounded as severe as the voice of a judge pronouncing sentence. "Shall I tell you the secret?"

There was no answer.

"Shall I, mamma?"

"I don't think you can, my love."

"Yes, I am afraid I can. The secret—which is no secret to me or to anyone else in the world—the secret is that, after being for seventeen happy honourable years the wife of the best and truest of men—the kindest, most devoted, and most generous of husbands—you are going to take another husband, who comes to you with no better credentials than a smooth tongue and a carefully-drilled figure, and who will punish your want of faith and constancy to my dead father, by making the rest of your life miserable—as you will deserve that it shall be. Yes, mother, I, your only child, say so. You will deserve to be wretched if you marry Captain Winstanley."

The widow gave a faint scream, half indignation, half terror. For the moment she felt as if some prophetic curse had been hurled upon her. The tall straight figure in the white gown, standing in the full flood of moonlight, looked awful as Cassandra, prophesying death and doom in the wicked house at Argos.

"It is too bad," sobbed Mrs. Tempest; "it is cruel, undutiful, disrespectful, positively wicked, for a daughter to talk to a mother as you have talked to me to-night. How can Miss McCroke have brought you up, I wonder, that you are capable of

using such language? Have you forgotten the Fifth Commandment?"

"No. It tells me to honour my father and my mother. I honour my dead father, I honour you, when I try to save you from the perdition of a second marriage."

"Perdition!" echoed Mrs. Tempest faintly; "what language!"

"I knew when that adventurer came here, that he intended to make himself master of this house—to steal my dead father's place," cried Vixen passionately.

"You have no right to call him an adventurer. He is an officer and a gentleman. You offer him a cruel, an unprovoked insult. You insult me still more by your abuse of him. Am I so old, or so ugly, or so altogether horrid, that a man cannot love me for my own sake?"

"Not such a man as Captain Winstanley. He does not know what love means. He would have made me marry him if he could, because I am to have the estate by-and-by. Failing that, he has made you accept him for your husband—yes, he has conquered you, as a cat conquers a bird, fascinating the poor wretch with its hateful green eyes. You are quite young enough and pretty enough to win a good man's regard, if you were a penniless unprotected widow, needing a husband to shelter you and provide for you. But you are the natural victim of such a man as Captain Winstanley."

"You are altogether unjust and unreasonable," exclaimed Mrs. Tempest, weeping copiously. "Your poor dear father spoiled you. No one but a spoiled child would talk as you are talking. Who made you a judge of Captain Winstanley? It is not true that he ever wanted to marry you. I don't believe it."

"Very well, mother. If you are wilfully blind—"

"I am not blind. I have lived twice as long as you have. I am a better judge of human nature than you can be."

"Not of your admirer's, your flatterer's nature," cried Vixen. "He has slavered you with pretty speeches and soft words, as the cobra slavers his victim, and he will devour you, as the cobra does. He will swallow up your peace of mind, your self-respect, your independence, your money—all good things you possess. He will make you contemptible in the eyes of all who know you. He will make you base in your own eyes."

"It is not true. You are blinded by prejudice."

"I want to save you from yourself, if I can."

"You are too late to save me, as you call it. Captain Winstanley has touched my heart by his patient devotion. I have not been so easily won as you seem to imagine. I have refused him three times. He knows that I had made up my mind never to marry again. Nothing was farther from my thoughts than a second marriage. I liked him as a companion and friend. That he knew. But I never intended that he should be more to me than a friend. He knew that. His patience has conquered me. Such devotion as he has given me has not often been offered to a woman. I do not think any woman living could resist it. He is all that is good and noble, and I am assured, Violet, that as a second father—"

Vixen interrupted her with a cry of horror.

"For God's sake, mamma, do not utter the word 'father' in conjunction with his name. He may become your husband—I have no power to prevent that evil—but he shall never call himself my father."

"What happiness can there be for any of us, Violet, when you start with such prejudices?" whimpered Mrs. Tempest.

"I do not expect there will be much," said Vixen. "Good-night, mamma."

"You are very unkind. You won't even stop to hear how it came about—how Conrad persuaded me to forego my determination."

"No, mamma. I don't want to hear the details. The fact is enough for me. If it would be any use for me to go down upon my knees and entreat you to give up this man, I would gladly do it; but I fear it would be no use."

"It would not, Violet," answered the widow, with modest resoluteness. "I have given Conrad my word. I cannot withdraw it."

"Then I have nothing more to say," replied Vixen, with her hand upon the door, "except good-night."

"You will not even kiss me?"

"Excuse me, mamma; I am not in a kissing humour."

And so Vixen left her.

Mrs. Tempest sat by the fading fire, and cried herself into a gentle slumber. It was very hard. She had longed to pour the story of this second courtship—its thrilling, unexpected joys, its wondrous surprises—into a sympathetic ear. And Violet, the

natural recipient of these gentle confidences, had treated her so cruelly!

She felt herself sorely ill-used; and then came soothing thoughts about her trousseau, her wedding dress, the dress in which she should start for her wedding tour. All things would, of course, be chastened and subdued. No woman can be a bride twice in her life; but Mrs. Tempest meant that the trousseau should, in its way, be perfect. There should be no rush, or excitement in the preparation; nothing should be scamped or hurried. Calmness, deliberation, and a faultless taste should pervade all things.

And so, comforted by these reflections, Mrs. Tempest sank into a gentle slumber, from which she was awakened by Pauline, who had discussed her mistress's foolishness over a heavy supper, and now came to perform the duties of the evening toilet.

"Oh, Pauline," cried the widow, with a shiver, "I'm glad you awoke me. I've just had such an awful dream."

"Lor, ma'am! What about?"

"Oh, an awful dream. I thought Madame Theodore sent me home a dinner-dress—bright yellow, trimmed with vivid orange. And when I asked her how she could suppose I would wear anything so hideous, she assured me it was the height of fashion."

THE CASE OF THE CURATES.

PROPERLY speaking, the word curate denotes any "spiritual person" who has the cure or care of a parish or ecclesiastical district, and exactly corresponds with the French *curé*. While this is the exact signification in the formularies of the Church of England, the conventional use of the word has become considerably restricted. It now denotes, not incumbent, but the whole body of unbeneficed clergy who are engaged in parish work. The number of them must amount to an army some six thousand strong. Of course, in such a large body of men there is room for every possible variety; but amid all variations, there is one matter which has a dull, monotonous uniformity. In the matter of pay there is a dead level, and the pay of a curate is rather less than that of a clerk or a collier.

As we have said, the curates of the Church of England exhibit an immense diversity in character and position. Many of them have, as Sir Peter Laurie said of

himself and Lord Chief Justice Tenterden, "sprung from the dregs of the people;" there are also various sons of peers and millionaires. Some of them are among the greatest scholars and thinkers in the land; some of them have just managed to scramble into the Church with the proverbial "little Latin and less Greek." Most of them move in the best society of their neighbourhoods; a few are found in the fashionable and intellectual circles in London; while in what is called The Church in the Mountains, that is, in districts of Wales and Westmoreland, it frequently happens that shepherds of men and shepherds of sheep are barely distinguishable. The great mass of the curates are gentlemanly, intelligent, well-educated, well-intentioned Christian men. To a large proportion of them even these terms would hardly render justice; in the case of a small proportion, unfortunately these terms would not be at all applicable. A considerable majority of them have received a university education, and as the supply of university men has not been adequate for the demand for curates, multitudes of men have entered the Church by other avenues or side-winds than the old and customary one of the universities. Mr. Trollope, who, in his novels, has devoted immense attention to the subject of curates, complains, with what degree of justice or injustice we will not now enquire, that there was a time when all curates were gentlemen, but that that time has ceased. The curate may not always be the conventional gentleman of society; but any man who does his sacred work honestly must, in the highest sense, be a gentleman in grain. It curiously happens that while a curate's education at school and college has been very fair, the weakest point in that education is frequently the theology. The Presbyterian Churches of Scotland give four years' distinct training to their ministers, and the Nonconformist bodies in England require a prolonged and complete course of education from their candidates. But it often happens that an English graduate, after passing his university examinations, devotes just a few months amid his fishing and shooting to preparing for his examination for orders. If he has been fortunate enough to obtain a fellowship of a college, he is ordained a clergyman upon his fellowship, without undertaking any cure at all.

A great deal has been done in recent

years in improving the theological education of the clergy. The standard of the bishops' examinations has been raised. There are theological colleges, such as at Wells and Cuddesdon, where men pass an interval of time between the university and their future parishes. Public examinations in theology have also been instituted both at Oxford and Cambridge in which honour class-lists appear. There are also theological colleges in which a special education is combined with the general education, and where the living—at least, until lately—was considerably cheaper than at the universities. But it must be clearly understood that in the Church of England ordination is strictly an episcopal act. No amount of learning, no amount of testimonials, can enable a man to be ordained as a matter of right. The bishops take the utmost care in obtaining suitable men. They have to produce testimonials, extending over three years, for character and conduct. They give several references, to whom the bishop may apply for further information. The bishop has one or more private interviews with the candidate, and the bishop's chaplains hold a public examination. It would be difficult to suggest any further safeguards.

A curacy is easily obtained. A young curate told the writer the other day, that when he advertised for a title he received between fifty and sixty applications from incumbents. On the other hand, an undesirable curacy may be vacant for years. This young gentleman was the kind of man whom a rector loves to get hold of—gentlemanly, well-educated, well-connected, and who frequently finds his fate in marrying the rector's daughter. Formerly incumbents used to have to pay their curates themselves, with what help—not very much—they could get from their friends and parishioners. The Established Church has vigorously coped with the vast increase of the population in providing curates for densely-populated parishes. Two curate-paying societies raise between them some hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year. Then there is the Bishop of London's Fund, diocesan funds exist in various parts of the country, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners frequently make grants for curates in populous places. There was formerly a peculiar kind of curacy, the curate being described as curate-in-charge, who took the entire charge of the absentee rector or vicar,

and resided in his parsonage. This kind of curacy was particularly prized, as being practically an incumbency; but, owing to the almost total abolition of pluralities, it is becoming very scarce. A good man, on his ordination as deacon, if he is prepared to work vigorously, can get his nomination to a fixed curacy with one hundred and twenty pounds a year. If he is "priested," and has some experience, his money value in the clerical market averages one hundred and fifty pounds a year; but when he has reached the latter figure, his pecuniary advance is totally checked. He seldom gets more, unless his incumbent is an exceptionally wealthy man, or the parishioners combine—which does not often happen—to raise his salary to something decent. Cases have been known in which very wealthy incumbents have given their curates three or even four hundred a year; at which these particular curates, and all other curates, stare in astonishment. Then, again, the curate has the happy liability of being what is known in mild clerical slang as "teapotted," the modest, useful, silver teapot being frequently filled with still more useful sovereigns.

In the early years the case of the curate is not at all a bad one. There are many exceptional points in his favour. His income, as a bachelor, is enough to enable him to live in modest comfort. He at once obtains a certain amount of income and position, for which other professional men have to wait, perhaps, long years. Then the young unmarried curate is generally a favourite in society. In many houses there is always a knife and fork for him. It is commonly said, and not without truth, that a curate has better matrimonial chances than any other man. There is a kind of curatology in many a gentle female bosom. Then the happy curate frequently is only a bird of passage to a more prosperous clime. He knows that there is a good living waiting for him. He is waiting for a family living, or his friends have gone into the market, and for "filthy lucre" have purchased for him—alas! that such a scandal should exist—"the cure of souls," or he has married the daughter of a bishop or a patron, or he may have really great merits which have fortunately earned an early recognition. This is the sunny side of a curate's case. Such facts represent only the minority of cases.

The obverse side of the case is that multitudes of curates never get promotion, or even the chance of it; that they marry, have large families, get into difficulties, occasion scandal to the Church, sink in the social scale, find themselves in a false position, are driven to all kinds of shifts and expedients. One would almost expect, from the poverty of the incomes, that the body of curates would represent a seething mass of poverty. This is not the case—though to a partial extent it is lamentably true. To the best of our knowledge and belief, the starving curate happily represents only a small minority of his order. Sydney Smith pointed out long ago that the clergy, though poor as a profession, are rich as a class. An immense number of the clergy have private means, sometimes of the most modest dimensions, but sometimes rising into colossal fortunes. Then the higher educational work of the country is very greatly in the hands of the unbeneficed clergy. The majority of college fellowships are clerical; the majority of the teaching staff of the universities are clerical. The masters in public schools are clerics. The inspectors of schools used to be mainly clerical, but now clergymen are not appointed. Many curates have schools, or, at least, take occasional pupils. A few curates actually engage in some sort of business. We have actually heard of some who have had an interest in shops, or have gone out as commercial travellers. This, however, is done only occasionally and surreptitiously, as it is "uncanonical." Some curates add to their slender pay by doing work for the booksellers, and some are considerable contributors to newspaper literature. All these would shelter themselves under the example of St. Paul, who followed the secular business of a tentmaker. Some time ago there was a movement for qualifying clergymen for the medical profession. The writer has known several clergymen with medical degrees; but they have either practiced gratuitously or have given up the clerical profession. Various curates have left the church and gone to the bar. They cannot enter parliament, if they have taken priests' orders, though Nonconformist ministers may sit there if they can get in. There is one more item which ought to be put to the good side of the curate, that, with the exception of the regular work of the church, he can arrange his hours and ways of working as he likes, and take a holiday as he chooses.

Many of them give themselves a great many holidays.

Now let us take the other side of things—the sad sight of the declension and degeneration of the curate's career. He marries, and very probably he marries imprudently, on the high principle that what is not enough for one is enough for two. When once he is married, a great deal of his social importance is gone. Very probably he and his wife were brought up in affluence, with little practical experience of the narrow ways of poverty. They cannot make the small income go as far as other people can. The children come on fast. The curate gets into debt. He gets deeper and deeper into debt. The more he plunges the deeper he sinks. All his expenses increase, but his stipend is stationary. By-and-by the children have other necessities which cannot be fairly met. They are ill-clothed and ill-educated. The poor curate often goes himself with holes in his boots and insufficient clothing, that his wife and children may fare better; for the same reason he sometimes half starves himself. In this way he frequently lays the seeds of disease and death. He suffers all the galling inconveniences of genteel poverty. The poor come to him for tickets for coal and candles, and he has not coal and candles for himself. While he is distributing parish doles to the poor he knows that there is none poorer than himself. He is gradually dropped by all the society of the neighbourhood—at least, so far as meeting on equal terms is concerned. He begs and borrows as he can. At last he goes to his brethren in the neighbourhood to obtain certificates of poverty, that he may get small donations of money and parcels of second-hand clothing. The church where he officiates has perhaps many wealthy attendants, but it does not enter into the mind of any of them to give any help beyond a pheasant or a goose at Christmas. Then come county-court summonses and compositions with creditors. The tragedies disclosed before the committees of our eleemosynary clerical societies are often of the most heartrending description. Sometimes the poor curate sinks beneath the burden of a life which is too hard for him. Ofttimes, we are glad to think, sustained by the faith that is in them, they struggle manfully under their burden for years, and very often glide into some quiet haven for the evening of their days.

We have just been taking an extreme case, but in nearly every case the working

ageing curate suffers hardship and inequality. The curacies of the church are full of all kinds of anomalies. There is no standard to measure either the work or the rewards. One man, for instance, spends many hours in elaborately constructing a sermon full of thought, feeling, and erudition; another for a quarter of an hour preaches indifferently what he has copied from a book or from a lithographed discourse. In either case the reward is precisely the same. In his week-day work, one man is a "squire of dames," and great at dinner-parties; another sedulously devotes the principal part of his time to the visitation of the sick and poor. In either case the remuneration is exactly the same. Of course, the broad fact remains that the man who fills a pulpit ably, and sedulously visits the poor, becomes recognised as a good man, and gets good chances. But his chances are not really much better than those of his idle brother, who makes himself socially acceptable, and perhaps gets a living by pleasing a great patron with his comic stories, or marries the daughter of some peer or prelate.

There are various other hardships in the curate's lot. One of these is insecurity of tenure. A recent writer in the *Times* charged the curates with wandering about. They have often to wander about through no fault of their own. Their position is sometimes that of the warm nest on the rotten bough. The curate, for instance, has established himself in a way; he has made many friends; his fibres have settled in the land; he thinks he sees the fruit of the labour of his hands. But his incumbent dies. The new incumbent may be able to do all the work himself, or he may desire to fill the post with some relative or friend, and the old curate has to go. Or some cause of difference between incumbent and curate may arise; and, right or wrong, the one who necessarily has to give way is the curate. He is at any time liable to six months' notice from his incumbent. Theoretically, the notice has to be approved by the bishop; but in some instances the bishop acts at once upon the vicar's notice, and never gives the curate the chance of a hearing. It is thus seen that a curate may be obliged to change much oftener than he wishes. The expenses of a removal, or of repeated removals, will often eat up a year's little income. Then the curate gets, as a rule, little of the good things which fall to a vicar. If a rich marriage-fee is given to the

officiating curate, he does not keep it himself, but it goes to the incumbent. Again, a curate never holds a cathedral appointment. Lord Liverpool's government, curiously enough, ran a danger of going to pieces on a curate's question. The Prince Regent wished to give Mr. Sumner a canonry while he was still a curate. Lord Liverpool said that it was impossible to give an unbene-ficed clergyman a canonry. A difficulty of this kind was easily got over, and that luckiest of curates was for forty years the prince-bishop of Winchester. Just as each French recruit has the bâton of field-marshal in his knapsack, and as every American may be President of the United States, so every curate has the remote chance of being an archbishop.

Every profession has its black sheep, and the Church is not exempt from them. Among the rest, some of the curates drop out of the ranks, and become sad stragglers in the rear of the black-coated army. Some men have never proceeded beyond deacons' orders, being unable to obtain the necessary testimonials. A man who has made a false step will, if sincere, succeed in recovering himself; but great numbers have no desire, and make no attempts, so to recover themselves. There is no doubt, also, that at times there are "sham" curates about—people making false pretences of being in holy orders. Some extraordinary stories are told to this effect, which often make incumbents insist on seeing the official documents called "letters of order," and having references, and not testimonials, which latter may be of old date and even forged. There are a great number of curates unattached, who are generically called "clerical backs." Some of these are discarded curates, who can obtain no other employment; but some, also, are gentlemen who cannot afford to take poor curacies, who mainly support themselves by tuition or other intellectual work, but are unwilling to sever themselves from the direct ministry of the Church. As the curate gets older, we are afraid, though he may pay his way, and make many friends, that in the multitude of instances his case becomes worse. What would operate to his advantage in another sphere is a positive disadvantage in the clerical sphere. The older and wiser and more experienced he is, the more is he likely to become a drug in the market. He has no better chance of a living in the twentieth year after his ordination than after his first year; indeed, the chance is not half so good towards the end

of his career as it was at the beginning. The old rector does not like to have a still older curate, who may be better than himself. The young daughters of the rector or squire do not care for the ancient curate, who may be married already, and would not be worth marrying from any point of view. There is just one chance for the oldest and feeblest of curates—and the older and feebler, the better the chance—he may become a "warming-pan." The position is not dignified, but it is comfortable. A man is wanted to hold a living for a youngster who may be still at college or at school. A curate may sometimes obtain the appointment on giving a bond of resignation on some future occasion. Another plan is that a very old curate should be appointed, with sufficient life to do the work, but not sufficient to do the work for long. Some curate, in a green old age, is discovered, who will hold the vicarage; and when he is past work he is able to employ a curate for himself for his remaining days. He dies off; the new vicar is appointed, the curate dismissed. Thus things move round in a vicious circle. It has been said that curates would be averse to a position which would involve a permanent settlement and graduated pay. This, however, is a mistake. The great mass of curates regard such a position as one of unattainable ambition. They would infinitely prefer it to the slender chance in a lottery which they at present possess.

A great many efforts are constantly being made to relieve the impecuniosity of that proverbial Church mouse, the stipendiary curate. The Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy is the oldest and most useful of these institutions. The corporation gives grants to necessitous clergymen, grants for the education and apprenticing of their children, annuities to their widows and daughters. There are several institutions for the reception of clergymen's widows with small annuities attached. Then there are two admirable societies: the Curates' Augmentation Fund and the Poor Clergy Relief Society. The latter gives grants of money to relieve urgent distress. The original aim of the former was to add fifty pounds a year to the income of every curate of fifteen years' standing. This is a well-devised plan, and is akin to the Sustentation Fund so successfully projected by Dr. Chalmers for the Free Church of Scotland, but we believe that it never received a sufficient amount

of support to be able to carry out its original programme. Each of these societies has been robbed, by its officials, of many thousand pounds, a robbery of a peculiarly heartless character, though it is difficult to suppose that such defalcations can have taken place if there had been adequate business supervision on the part of trustees and other officials. Nearly all the dioceses have societies to relieve the poor clergy, or at least their widows and orphans, and a great deal is also done by private benevolence. There are also Clergy Daughters' Schools, but those demand an expenditure quite beyond the means of the poorest clergy.

But still it is evident, that if a curate really discharges arduous duties of the greatest importance to the community, his proper food and clothing ought to be given to him, not as a matter of benevolence, but of right. It is lamentable to see the dignitaries of the Church of England absorbed in the elaborate trifles of Ritualism, agitated by matters of colours and postures, while there is a great and growing scandal existing within the borders of the Church itself which may be fraught with disastrous practical results. Already it is said that there is a great falling off in the number of highly-educated men in the service of the Church of England. There will always be men willing to enter the Church who would do worse when out of the Church, to whom the salary, low as it is, is a gain; to whom the position, moderate as it is, is a social advance. Such men, however, by no means represent the former high standard of the Church. No man of sense in the present day, unless possessed of great wealth or great influence, would advise his son to enter the Church, as a profession yielding a fair subsistence. If the son has an earnest desire to achieve the great objects of the Christian ministry, a right-minded father will place before him the almost certain penury and obscurity of his lot. In fact, for clergymen who do not wish to bring scandal on their profession, curates must practically become a celibate order. Human nature being what it is, it may be a long time before this may be the case, and in the meantime there is, and probably always will be, a large amount of clerical distress to be dealt with. Granted the imprudence of the curates in marrying and having large families, a true philanthropy will try to assist them. If we find a man diseased, we endeavour to

heal him without enquiring too nicely how far his illness may have been brought about by his unscientific neglect of sanitary laws.

It may be hoped that in course of time a re-distribution of clerical incomes, and an alteration of the laws of patronage, may do something. At the same time, a great deal of responsibility rests upon congregations themselves. They profess to be guided by the Book, which tells them that the labourer is worthy of his hire, and that those who preach are to live by their preaching. Yet they give to those who are charged with their highest interests less than they give to doctors and lawyers, or even what they give their clerks and servants—scanty wages, and no rise in them. Certainly the Church and its real well-wishers cannot allow things to remain as they are.

CHRISTMAS ART AND SCIENCE.

LITERATURE is not, as it once was, the only superior minister of the court of King Christmas. Science and art have now each their portfolio, and very zealously, it must be owned, are their respective departments administered.

Surely the most delightful offering ever laid by science at the feet of youth is the beautiful Cellini kaleidoscope of the London Stereoscopic Company. Nothing very new about a kaleidoscope, you say? Ah, but there you are wrong. There are kaleidoscopes and kaleidoscopes, just as there are faggots and faggots. And the Cellini is of "the other sort" altogether. Not that I mean anything at all disrespectful towards the good old tin tube with its little shifting mosaic of blue and green and red and yellow bits of glass, through which I used to peer with such delight in the days when life had still something to offer, if only at Christmas-time. There were some exceedingly pretty combinations to be got out of that, and if there were on the whole perhaps a certain sameness—a general suggestion as of a glorified floorcloth, or a church window from which all sorts of "denominational" subjects had been jealously excluded—that was the fault of circumstances, not of the instrument; and we were not hypercritical in those days, thank goodness.

Still, even in the unsophisticated youthful mind of that Plancian consulate, there was always a certain sense of unrealised potentialities in that pleasant little waif

of science. And now the latent faculties of the instrument have been developed, and the new Cellini kaleidoscope is the result. In mere personal appearance, indeed, the new instrument has made a marvellous advance upon its predecessor; looking much more like a microscope or some other scientific weapon of the kind than a mere plaything for the amusement of a winter's evening. But the great alteration is to be found in the objects themselves. Formerly you had to look through them at the light, so that little bits of glass were the only things possible. Now, the altered position of the little glass case, in which they are confined, enables the light to fall directly upon them, and so does away with all necessity for their being in any way transparent.

And accordingly, in the smart little brass object-box of the Cellini instrument now before me, I find all sorts of droll little odds and ends. Here is a small red rose with two tiny green leaves growing upon a golden stalk, apparently a fragment from some discarded article of Palais Royal jewellery. Here a Lilliputian onyx cross that has, no doubt, come from the too well furnished *châtelaine* of some careless doll. Here is a bright blue bead from some little girl's necklace; here a red bead, equally bright, but smaller; and two black pearls, and a golden star, and a tiny morsel of chain, and half-a-dozen twisted spikes of tinsel, and a bit of gilt-beading from a picture-frame, and an onyx waistcoat-button, and a mother-of-pearl shirt-button, and half-a-dozen similar and dissimilar waifs and strays beside. And the effects obtained out of these heterogeneous and not intrinsically very valuable elements is something really startling. I used to think that next to the quite unequalled collection at the old Rosenberg Palace, at Copenhagen, the most wonderful sight in the way of jewellery in the world was to be found in the shop-windows of the Palais Royal and Rue de la Paix. Indeed, as a mere question of glitter, and without reference to any comparative merit in respect of taste or design, I should say the Parisian exhibition had it pretty much its own way. But with this wonderful little instrument you may go on twisting out fresh combinations two or three hundred to the minute, for just as long as you like to keep your eye to the glass and your fingers on the screw. And you may turn for an hour, and not find half-a-dozen combinations either vulgar or commonplace, whilst many of

them will be unsurpassed in their way even by the gems of the Rosenberg itself.

And then—whisper now!—if you want to see what the Cellini can really do, get mamma to empty out the indigenous odds and ends for awhile, and supply their place with a little handful of the smaller articles in her jewel-box. If she has any unset stones, so much the better. But anything will do—rings, small brooches, bits of chain, studs, buttons, earrings, and so forth. Then take it to the candle and turn it slowly round, and you need not envy Aladdin any more.

Two suggestions, however, I would even yet venture to make to the inventors of this delightful toy. The first, which is the provision of some sort of screen round the eye-piece, may, indeed, be carried out by the observer himself, by grace of a small slice of brown paper. But the other is not so easily managed, and is, in fact, the more important of the two. It is the introduction of some appliance by which to enable the observer, when he has hit off some more than usually happy combination, to fix the object-box in that position until it is done with. If the Cellini is to be used, as it certainly ought to be used, by jewellers in designing brooches, stars, and such like ornaments, this is a very essential feature; and even for domestic use it is aggravating, when you have brought someone from one end of the drawing-room to another on purpose to look at some exquisite "arrangement in sapphire and pearl," to be greeted with the plaintive remonstrance: "Why, it's nothing but a great carbuncle set with emeralds, and I don't like it one bit."

Then, if you are tired of looking through one eye and want to vary the entertainment by operating with both at once, you may turn from optical to chemical science and revel in the feast of Living Colours provided by the same ingenious caterers. You will have to be a little more careful in your manipulation of this clever toy, and must not be disappointed if the first attempt or two prove comparative failures. But a little of the "three p's"—practice, patience, and perseverance—will bring you through triumphantly, and you will have the satisfaction of finding that in this case, at all events, virtue has not to be its own reward.

Next comes a very quaint little bit of science in the shape of a small circular slab of highly-polished walnut-wood, with a diminutive wooden beaver-hutch standing on one side, and projecting from the other

a little brass handle. When you turn this handle out come a couple of tiny mice, and the two chase one another round the little table till they disappear again into their house, staying there quietly if you let them alone, but popping out again the instant you move the handle, and scuttling backwards or forwards, just as you happen to turn it one way or the other. There are no strings or wires, be it understood. You may take the little fellows up if you like, and make sure of that. But, so long as you turn, they will run, and why they do it will be—if you are a little boy disposed that way—a very nice little puzzle for you to find out. So, too, will be the neat little boxwood paradox, whose head fits so loosely that you can't get it off. It evidently does come off somehow, for there is a coin of some sort inside, and you can hear it rattle. So there is something to look for besides the mere *mot de l'énigme*.

There is no such reward in the case of the more elegant and elaborate Bismarck Puzzle, unless, indeed, you find one in the fact, that when the pretty little box shall have been taken to pieces, you will find it just as great a puzzle to put it together again. Still, it will be something to have "found out Bismarck;" and you can pass the rest of the evening—if you have nothing better to do—in applying the same principle to any other diplomatic mysteries that may occur to you.

After Bismarck you will be no doubt in a fitting frame of mind to attack The Puzzle of the Day, or Who can Raise the Obelisk? Cleopatra's needle is not in this case quite so large as that with which Mr. Dixon had to deal, nor will you find the needful operations quite so elaborate as those carried out on the Thames Embankment. But if you think I am going to tell you what they are, you are egregiously mistaken.

Neither am I going to explain the mystery of Lucas's Paradox. That is, however, for a different reason. Why the four little bits of pink card ruled off with gilt lines into squares of about half an inch should, when placed side by side in one particular way, present an aggregate of sixty-five squares, when in another position they only make up sixty-four of, so far, at all events, as I can see, precisely the same size, is, I confess, as profound a mystery to me as it can fairly be to you. Eight times eight are certainly sixty-four, and though I don't feel quite so sure when I get beyond the magic boundary of

the duodecimal, I am by no means prepared to deny off-hand that five times thirteen may possibly be sixty-five. But it is easier to admit a point than to account for it. I wonder whether it has anything to do with squaring the circle.

And so having fairly puzzled not only you but myself, I think it about time to turn to the means of puzzling other people, with which the Stereoscopic Company provides us plentifully. Here is the Enchanted Coffin, whose body and lid you may see for yourself are both perfectly impervious, yet into which I will, without opening it, pass any number of coins it can hold. Here, again, is the Name Mystery, by the aid of which I will read your very inmost thoughts, dragging forth from them by briefest consultation of the magic cards the "Name" you would fain conceal in their profoundest depths. And here again is the Portfolio Bewitched, into the green envelope pasted on the cover of which I will place two photographs, say of Clown and Pantaloon, or Garibaldi and the Pope, or Mr. Gladstone and Lord Beaconsfield. Then I close the portfolio. Hey! presto! pass! The envelope is empty, and the photographs framed lovingly side by side.

About the next mystery there is, I am afraid, something not quite canny. I am not at all sure how far I may be justified in even speaking of such a thing in connection with the innocent recreations of Christmas. Yet here before me, an incontestable "scientific" fact, is that terrible machine, The Spirit Slate; and I am bound to admit, from personal investigation, that—with proper manipulation, of course—you have but to hold that simple-looking article under the table for half a minute to obtain from it a written reply to any questions you may please to ask. If you don't manipulate it properly the spirits of course will not answer. But what of that? Does anything ever answer that is not properly worked?

And so, with a new version of the famous confidence-trick, our list of scientific toys comes to an end. You would not take this little Prize Marksman, in his dapper little French uniform, who is taking most careful aim at a venerable forest tree full three inches off, to be a dishonest character, or one given to unprincipled jests of a practical description. But just test him by placing some coin of the realm—let us say, for economy's sake, a farthing—upon the breech-piece of his rifle, and see what will become of it. If that ingenious but

untrustworthy marksman does not forth-with fire it straight into the very heart of the tree, it will be—well, probably because his mechanism has got out of order.

Another and almost equally novel feature of modern Christmas observance in the shape of what may fairly be termed the *cosaque* invasion. "A soldier," the old story tells us, "loved a *Cosaque* maid;" but what that *cosaque* was made of, the authorities unfortunately do not inform us. I am sure I cannot tell you what *cosaques* are made of, or rather, to speak correctly, I should be sorely puzzled to tell you anything of which they may not apparently be made. I believe the latest novelties suggested in the way of valentines, before the craze for that remarkable social phenomenon began somewhat to die out, were a ton of coal and a pair of sixteen-shilling trousers. The *cosaque* mania has not quite arrived at that stage of development; but it is on the highway to it. Here, for instance, are a dozen boxes sent me by Messrs. Mead and Co., the first of which has a startling picture representing a young lady, in acrobatic attire, springing in a blaze of fire from a gigantic cracker. It is not without some trepidation that I consent to an experimental pull being given to one of the shiny blue, red, green, and yellow confections, with their white lace edges and their gay little adornments of bouquets, and cupids, and angels, and goodness knows what beside. Lady acrobats are admirable institutions in their way, no doubt, but the drawing-room is hardly their sphere, and if— However, long before the question has any chance of being thoroughly argued out, Miss Cis and Miss Edith have decided it for themselves, with the result that the shiny red, blue, and yellow crackers contain, not actual lady acrobats themselves, but a neat little selection from the various articles of ordinary feminine attire, which they have laid aside.

Why the Red, White, and Blue box, the contents of which are ornamented with little chariots and horses, Median and Persian, Greek and Roman, Egyptian, Assyrian, and so forth, should be presided over by H.M. the British Lion, robed and crowned, and leaning upon his sceptre in an evidently confirmed attack of chronic rheumatism and acute inflammation of the temper, is a question I can no more undertake to solve than I can that of why Mr. J. Bull, whom in the next pictorial label Britannia, with a flag-bearer and half-a-score juvenile

Britannias in her train, is welcoming with outstretched arms, on his return from the fatigues and dangers of a visit to the Paris Exhibition, should have deliberately sacrificed all his luggage in order to carry ashore under each arm a gigantic *cosaque* about the size of Britannia herself. Here he is, however, crackers and all. And here too are Comical Dogs, keeping guard over a monster dozen tastefully decorated in quiet greys and browns, relieved by gleaming golden fringe, and adorned with capital figures of storks, and cranes, and pelicans, and flamingoes, and various other long-legged long-billed fowl known and unknown. And the Lady's Trunk, with its gorgeous contents, glittering with gold, gay with colour, fairy-like with transparent glycerine, quaint with brightly coloured figures in correctest Chinese costume. And last, not least, the Forget-me-Not, most tasteful collection of all, with its bouquet on the white watered box, and its rows of green and purple crackers, each ornamented with its beautifully finished spray of violets or forget-me-nots, roses or lilies-of-the-valley. For the contents of all this battery of crackers, Messrs. Mead appear to have confined themselves in the present instance almost entirely to varieties of eccentric costume, dominoes, Japanese headdresses, and the like, artfully constructed in tissue-paper. Not very durable wear, perhaps, and suggestive on the whole rather of a trans- than a cis-equatorial climate at this precise season of the year. But admirable vehicles, no doubt, for fun and flirting—as indeed what is not, while one is happily still at the age for it.

Messrs. Tom Smith and Co., on the other hand, go in for internal as well as external variety. The dozen bright blue crackers, indeed, which form the contents of their Golden Dish, contain only a variety of "novel headdresses of mediæval design;" as also do those which, in the next packet that comes to hand, the kneeling slave is humbly offering—"from Tom Smith"—to a Cleopatra, whose somewhat transparent drapery will at all events be in keeping with them. But when I take up the next box of Puzzles, the venerable features of the inscrutable propounder of riddles on whose lid seem somehow strangely familiar to me, the first pink cracker on which Cis and Edith lay their irreverent young paws presents them, not with a fire-balloony garment, but with a pen-and-ink map of Europe.

Whereto is appended the mysterious instruction :

Search over stormy Europe and seek Britannia where
The vultures and the jackals are gathered to the
feast.

With warlike sons and shotted guns she bids the
Bear take care

Not to prowl a tail's-length nearer to her empire
in the East.

I forget exactly how long a bear's tail is, but unless I mistake, it is one to which Polonius himself would not refuse the praise of wit. Meanwhile, Miss Edith, who is a sedate and thorough-going young person, sits down deliberately to review her map, tail-length by tail-length, if need be, till the enigmatic Britannia be found. Whereon Cis, whose thorough-goingness runs on different lines, plunges two chubby fists into a box of Surprise Cosaques, and with a vehement tug fires off a double-barrelled shot, bringing to light two highly enigmatic scraps of tissue, each covered with cuneiform inscriptions of the most archaic appearance. Artfully manipulated, and held up to the light, these venerable cryptograms resolve themselves into very simple remarks in very modern English, and of a complimentary but somewhat personal character, at which Miss Edith, who has solved her own enigma by this time, and who has not the slightest idea of allowing any liberties to be taken even in print, tosses her head with an offended air and a haughty exclamation of "Stuff!" She is still at least half an inch taller than usual when Cis, who has pursued her researches diligently, appeals to her for information as to what telephone may spell. Then her young majesty marches up to me with the gorgeous box, each of whose cracker-contents encloses one of those useful wonders of science, and requests that I will order these. "And then, you know, if they must talk nonsense, papa, they can do it from the other end of the table."

As for Christmas and New Year's Cards, to say that their name is legion would be to use a very inadequate style of nomenclature. If I had, I won't say a whole Christmas number, but a whole Christmas volume or two at my disposal, I might, perhaps, be able to deal with the subject in something like detail. As it is, I must just pick out a few of the more characteristic, a "specimen brick" or two from each elaborate house of cards. Messrs. Dean and Son and Messrs. Rimmel seem to have laid themselves out more especially to meet the views of those with

whom economy is perforce a chief consideration. A few small cards—one of them, by-the-way, very pretty, with shiny blue forget-me-nots on rice paper—two or three cheap paper boxes of scent, a folding paper almanack with grotesque French figures, and a plaster-of-Paris lobster with a pill-box in his stomach containing a tiny bottle of scent, seem to constitute the contributions of the latter firm to the extravagances of the season. The former would appear to have been more inventive, having achieved the origination, not only of a novel idea in cards in the shape of a large silver initial letter prettily decked with flowers, but of some new games with cards. Not common wicked playing-cards, you will understand, but cards of that type beloved of school-girl circles, to many of which the new games of Snip Snap and A Friendly Party, the Bouquet Game and Fun and Flirtation, will afford plenty of harmless amusement during the long winter evenings.

Next comes the contribution of Messrs. Atterton and Mills, who have a very pretty taste in tender greens and blues; the apple-blossom exterior of one large folding card, and the graceful trellis-work of some climbing plant, of which my botanical knowledge does not supply the name, which decks the interior of another called "A Message through the Snow," being specially noteworthy. The lines too which accompany them are above the average. Messrs. S. J. Saunders, on the other hand, appear to have a speciality for choice pale greys and fawns for their backgrounds, whereupon gleam rich red and yellow roses and brilliant butterflies, and delicate quaker grass, and feathers from the wings of fairy birds. Inventive, too, are Messrs. Saunders, as is shown by the pretty little flower fan that opens out, as Cis delightedly observes, "when you pull him tail;" and an elegant little group of birds, that "cheep and twitter" when pinched artfully in the right place. But the gem of their collection is decidedly that delicious little group of the handsome tabby mamma and her round-eyed little family, neatly mounted on a gold card, and itself quite one of the best oleographs I have ever seen.

In Mr. Goode's liberal hands the ordinary Christmas greetings assume rather the form of elaborate Christmas Valentines—rich-scented sachets, in gorgeous array of white satin and purple velvet, glowing with bright flowers and gay plumaged birds, and sheeny with a profusion of glittering silver lace that makes the very

snow seem dusky and the moonlight dull white.

Mr. Bennett presents himself before us with an exceedingly pretty and really very appropriate novelty in the shape of a set of cards of various patterns, ingeniously besprinkled with a sort of glittering powder, which admirably imitates the effect of hoarfrost. The result, in the wintry scenes especially, is excellent. Mr. Daniel, on the other hand, gets the brilliancy of his effects from glowing tints and golden backgrounds. Quaintly grotesque, too, are some of his designs, as witness the young Puck of four years old, holly-branch in cap, and toys in either hand, riding triumphant through golden space on a glorified cabbage-leaf. Or, again, prettily fantastic, as in this whole series of baby idylls, where coquettish little ladies and gallant little gentlemen play through their little serio-comedy of baby-life under the burnished golden sky, and the dapper little robins chirp at them from out the crisp white snow. Mr. Sulman also cultivates the fantastic element, which is not often, for instance, more daringly represented than by this double-jointed Japanese damsel, who so skilfully balances on her uplifted toe the circular tablet which conveys the sender's wishes for "a happy new year." Mr. Sulman, too, besides an unusually rich and artistic collection of birds, flowers, and other subjects of the more ordinary class, has introduced a nautical type which would appear to be peculiarly his own; and which, besides being admirably executed, must have in many cases a special appropriateness.

Perhaps, though it is in some cases hard to choose, Messrs. Marcus Ward's are, on the whole, the most attractive of all. Here, for instance, is one charming little "triptych," with its solemn procession of tiny men and women filing daintily past against the golden background and singing as they go, both words and music being given at the foot. Here is another, similar in form, but with a glorious group of flowers in the place of the procession. Here is a tiny Japanese cabinet with its quaint gold and silver pattern on its black ground; here a dapper little baby-life-guardsmen of fifty years ago; here a life-like group of sheep ruefully wishing each other a merry Christmas in the snow; or Tabby Tom picking his cautious way along the snow-laden trunk of a fallen tree with unexpected greetings for some too jovial sparrow singing unguarded carols among

the leafless boughs. To one of the series there must surely be some story attached into the confidence of which the public is not taken. A coquettish damsel in dainty cap and apron, short skirts, and dapper crimson stockings, leans thoughtfully on the handle of her broom; and at the back is the legend:

Oh, when I am sweeping—sweeping,
My heart goes into a song,
And I fancy that I am breaking
All the fetters that do you wrong.
I am sweeping away the dreamlights
That dazzle your waking eyes;
I am scattering all the shadows
That keep you from winning the prize.
I am sweeping away the troubles
That hinder and fret the soul,
And am making a fresh fair pathway
To take you straight to the goal.

And so at last I come to the last batch upon my list, and find that in their preparations for Christmas Messrs. Delarue and Co. do not confine themselves to mere cards, but provide more substantial articles for the season's greetings. Some of the former, indeed, are very pretty; notably some exquisitely pale green cards with delicious little groups of birds fluttering irresponsibly in mid-air or among graceful sprays of flowers. The curious Peacock Cards, too, are a happy combination of the quaint and the gorgeous. But Messrs. Delarue's chief strength is in their natty almanacs and diaries; their neat little morocco calendars to stand on your writing-table and prevent you from misdating your letters; their compact little "finger-almanacs," neatly packed away in a natty little Russian leather card-case, half the size of that required for your visiting-tickets; their gorgeous satin-lined purses; their useful desk-diaries, and calendars of all sizes and designs for wall, or table, or pocket. Handsomer or more tasteful presents it would be hard to choose for Christmas or for any other time.

Certainly this matter of pretty and useful presents is ordered a good deal better in this present year of grace than in those far-off days when people gave *us* gifts, and we liked them, ugly as they generally were, more than we like most things nowadays.

PACKS OF CARDS, OLD AND NEW.

How many English families and social gatherings play at round games of cards about Christmas-time, would puzzle all our wise men to determine. Little, however, do card-players know of the many points of curious interest connected with these pieces of thickened paper.

Dr. Willsher, who has prepared by authority a description of the extensive and valuable collection of playing-cards in the British Museum, reminds us that five hundred years have passed away since what may be called the positive history of such cards commenced. "We now find them spread all over the world, and forming one of the most seductive allurements of all classes of society. The hold thus widely and strongly secured depends, no doubt, on the varied and ready way in which cards may be made to administer both to lawful amusement and to that which is condemned as the exciting vice of gambling. The vicissitudes of chance have ever had a powerful hold on mankind." These vicissitudes, as we all know, lead by a well-beaten path to gambling. The convenience of cards for use is one of the reasons why they are so much adopted in playing games of hazard. They appeal, moreover, to a class of combinations and calculations quite beyond the range of dice and dominoes; while at the same time they may be made to afford, in a simplicity of use, amusement and excitement to illiterate persons, and, by a more complicated application of powers, a pastime to more cultivated intellects.

Three theories are afloat concerning the origin of playing-cards. First, that they had their birth in the East, whence they were brought to Europe. Secondly, that no satisfactory evidence exists to show that they were ever anything else than of European origin. Thirdly, that although there may be sufficient evidence that they were of very ancient origin in India and China, European nations probably invented them independently, without borrowing from the East. As the learned pundits are not agreed on this knotty question, we may pass it by—simply remarking that unquestioned specimens are extant dated as far back as the middle of the fourteenth century. The British Museum Collection is valuable for archaeological study, irrespective of mere amusement. It comprises packs of cards, and portions of packs, of English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Flemish, Dutch, Hindoo, and Chinese origin. Dr. Willsher, who prepared the descriptive catalogue by order of the trustees, has added coloured representations of some of the cards, obtained by Goupil's photozincographic and polychrome process.

Few of us are aware that the old playing-cards were more numerous and more complicated than those with which we are now

familiar. Many of them, now wholly disused in Europe (except possibly among gipsy fortune-tellers), were called Tarots; they were used for divination long before their combination with number or numeral cards (pip-cards, as we usually call them), and long before either were used for gambling. There were generally twenty-two tarots in the ancient packs, usually emblazoned with whole-length figures or other symbolical emblems of various conditions of life, or vicissitudes contingent to human nature. Some packs comprised tarots only, and ranged to forty or fifty in number. They were mostly numbered at the top, and inscribed at the bottom; the inscription being more frequently in French than in any other language.

By about the end of the fourteenth century, the two kinds began to be combined in one pack for purposes of amusement, more frequently than for fortune-telling or for gambling. One combined pack described by Dr. Willsher contains emblematical figures of a pope, an emperor, a king, a jester, the sun, the moon, temperance, and many other personified subjects; together with a few depicting the danger and bad effects of gambling. In addition there are sixteen of what we should now designate court-cards, and four suit or number cards of ten in each suit.

In playing with compound packs the tarots were superior in power to each and all of the other cards, and had also some kind of precedence among themselves, difficult now to determine. Venice appears to have set the example of using seventy-eight cards altogether, tarots and the others combined. Then followed Spain, France, and Germany, each making many alterations, mostly in the number of tarots. By degrees players wished for a smaller total number of cards in each pack; and the makers accordingly got rid of the emblematical tarots representing the virtues, &c.

There are many varieties of size and shape in the old cards. Some are nearly square, some very oblong, but nearly all stiff and inflexible. The French have in most ages adopted smaller cards than ourselves. One pack, specially described, less than two inches long by one inch in width, are made of such delicate card-board that the whole pack could be slipped into a glove, or held concealed in the palm of the hand. Hindoo and Persian cards, quite circular, two inches and a half in diameter, are extant. One dainty little pack has been made in thin sheet

silver, not larger than a lady's finger-nail. Among the engraved figures on a pack of tarot-cards in the British Museum, one represents La Papesse, or Pope Joan—a female occupant of St. Peter's chair whose real existence was once believed in, but who is now consigned to the limbo of exploded traditions. Other tarot figures, briefly adverted to above, were emperors and empresses, betrothed lovers, charioteers, wheels of fortune, hermits, the devil with a pair of imps, the Last Judgment—three nude figures rising from graves, and looking up to a radiant being. What part such cards could subservise in necromancy or divination it is not difficult to see. One old German pack, with Latin inscriptions at the top and German at the bottom, includes a queer tarot-card representing a man in a drunken sleep after dinner, and a woman lifting to her lips a flagon of half-gallon capacity—doubtless a pictorial stab at the vice of tipping.

The suits which are now so important in a pack of cards have incidentally been noticed; but something more is necessary to be said concerning them. The suits from the very first appear to have been four in number. In Italian cards they have usually been called *coppe*, *danari*, *bastone*, and *spade*; that is, acorn-cups, coins, clubs or batons, and swords. Hearts and diamonds afterwards superseded acorn-cups and coins. The French, so early as the middle of the fifteenth century, had *œurs*, *carrioux*, *tréfles*, and *piques*, pretty much as at present; and these designations, with the requisite translations in languages, gradually spread from one country to another; but Germany long retained *herzen*, *schellen*, *laube*, and *eicheln*—hearts, bells, leaves, and acorns. The names for our clubs have been more numerous than for any other of the suits—*tréfle*, *fiore*, *palos*, *kreuze*, in France, Italy, Spain, and Germany. There was something like a distinction into two groups in the character of the suits: i.e. southern, comprising Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and South German; and northern, comprising French, Swiss, and North German; but the classification is not very well sustained.

More curious are the details of information concerning the honours or court-cards—those pictures so marvellous in their absurdity.

In the first place we must state that the modern king, queen, and knave were never regarded as tarots; they always belonged to the larger number of cards which were not tarots. The knight or *cavallo* used

to be represented on horseback. The Spaniards, not willing to admit a lady in the pack, withdrew the queen, and had first and second knights, one of whom was cancelled when the court-cards in each suit were reduced to three in number. The Germans had at one period upper servant and lower servant as two of the designations. For two centuries or more the French were accustomed to print under each court-card the name of the personage it represented—such as Alexander, Pallas, Judith, &c. This was at a time when a resemblance to some real persons was attempted; but by degrees came into favour those specimens of the grotesque in gesture and costume which have continued ever since in English cards, and to a great degree on the Continent. The double bust in some modern cards, intended to facilitate identification by the players without reversing the position of the card in his hand, is still more extravagant and absurd.

Skilful artists were occasionally employed to design and paint the honour cards. Specimens are still preserved, remarkable for the grace and delicacy of the figures, and the good taste of the decorative ornaments which encircled the centre picture. It is on record that Filippo Visconti, Duke of Milan, as much as four centuries and a half ago, paid fifteen hundred pieces of gold for a pack of cards painted with allegorical figures of the gods, and emblematical figures of animals and birds. Packs painted wholly by hand were produced in England so late as the end of the last century.

The king has been known by the proper characteristic designation in the several countries of Europe—such as *roi*, *rey*, *re*, *king*, *könig*, *kong*. The queen, as stated above, has for some reason or other not been much sanctioned in Spain. The Germans, as we have said, at one time used *obermann*, or upper servant, instead of queen. As to the third member of the honour or court-card group, he has been known by the diverse names of *fante*, *soto*, *untermann*, *valet*, *jester*, *knave*, and *jack*.

Facts of a most curious kind are on record concerning the court-cards or honours in France, during the eventful series of years when king, republic, and emperor took the lead in turn. In effacing the signs and emblems of royalty at the commencement of the Revolution, the change did not destroy the passion for play, either in intention or in effect. By granting freedom of trade to the card-

makers (the manufacture having been till then a state monopoly), more facilities for play than ever were afforded. But the passion for persecuting royalty extended to bits of pasteboard as well as to more important matters; kings and queens of all the suits were proscribed. The kings were supplanted by sages, savans, and emblematical personages; the queen had to make room for ladies emblematical of freedom of marriage, of worship, of the press, and of commerce; while the valets or knights were displaced by Roman heroes, warriors, and even sans culottes, according to the taste of the artist. When the military achievements of the first Napoleon had given a new turn to the revolutionary fever, card-players evinced a revived liking for the old-fashioned court-cards. Napoleon, when he became emperor, turned his eagle glance to the pictures on playing-cards as well as to the conquest and annexation of kingdoms. The painter David was commissioned to prepare new designs; and during a few years many artistic packs were produced. For some reason or other, those designs did not become popular; card-players asked for the old patterns, and their demand was complied with. The Bourbons, after the fall of Napoleon, had little other alteration to make in the current style of playing-cards than substituting the fleur-de-lys of their house for the eagle of the empire. Some attempts have been made in France during the last sixty years to introduce new and more graceful designs, but in vain; the winners of four by honours at whist still cling fondly to their dear old absurdly grotesque picture-cards. The backs are often very beautiful in colour and artistic in design; but king, queen, and knave retain their nondescript character.

Over and over again have attempts been made in England, as in France, to wean card-players from their odd and old preferences in this matter. Large sums of money have been expended in obtaining improved designs, and improved arrangements for engraving and printing them. But all in vain; public taste is obstinate, and card-makers preforce bow to it.

In illustration of the efforts made by enterprising firms to induce card-players to encourage artistic design, we may advert to a pack brought before the public by Messrs. Delarue four or five years ago. Dr. Willsher describes one of these packs in the British Museum; but the Times gave a more detailed and animated

description. The pack bears the name of Benben Townroe as the immediate designer, but that of Felix Summerly as the real originator of the idea. The designer has endeavoured to retain as much as he could (without spoiling his design) of the original appearance of the picture-cards with which card-players are so familiar, and which they show such a settled determination to retain. The backs are deep blue, printed in gold with the royal arms of England and the ducal arms of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha; below which are St. George and the dragon, and the Prussian double-headed eagle; the whole surrounded by an ornamental design of roses, oak-leaves, acorns, thistles, and shamrocks. The special characteristics of the several cards, as belonging to what is called an international pack, we will give in the language of the Times: "At first glance, if we overlook the aces, the cards have the appearance of the modern familiar packs; but on closer inspection we find H.R.H. the Prince of Wales doing duty as the king of diamonds, the King of the Belgians as king of hearts, the Crown Prince of Prussia as king of spades, and the King of Italy as king of clubs. The likenesses are fairly good, especially that of the King of Italy. The aces are allotted to still more powerful and distinguished personages; thus Her Majesty, as Empress of India and Queen of England, appears as ace of hearts, the President of the United States as ace of spades, the Emperor of Russia as ace of diamonds, and the German Emperor as ace of clubs. But Mr. Felix Summerly, with perhaps a pardonable penchant to pay an irreproachable compliment, has allotted to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales the high office of queen of hearts, while to the Crown Princess of Germany he assigns the dignity of queen of clubs; the Queen of Greece appears as queen of diamonds, and the Empress of Austria as queen of spades. The four knaves have a more original character about them than the other court-cards. A Scotch piper with distended cheeks vigorously blowing his pipes, the utmost determination of purpose showing in his features, appears as knave of hearts; an officious and splendid functionary, obviously a gendarme, is the knave of spades; a yellow-bearded Swiss guide, with his rope on his shoulders, and clutching a spiked staff, is the knave of clubs; while Spain is represented by a keen-eyed and careful matador as knave of diamonds." Thus England, Scotland,

Ireland, Russia, Prussia, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Greece, Switzerland, Spain, and the United States, all come in for a share of honour.

Not the least interesting among the cards in the British Museum are those packs which are intended to subserve some additional purpose besides the playing of ordinary games. There is a grammatical pack, for instance, made in the time of Charles the Second; in which the suits are denoted in the upper left-hand corner, the pips or numbers in Roman numerals in the upper right-hand corner, and the honours (also at or near the top) by engraved busts of kings, queens, and valets. The main portion of each card is printed with the rules of grammar, &c. A supplementary card tells us that "These cards are ingeniously contrived for comprising the general rules of Lillie's grammar for the four principal parts thereof; viz. Orthographia, Prosodia, Etymologia, and Syntaxis; thereby rendering it very useful to all persons that have already the Latine tongue, for the recollecting their memories; and also for the better improvement of such as have made some beginning in the study thereof; beside the diversions they afford in all our English games as in other common cards." Geography in like manner has been taken into account by the old card-makers. In another pack, about the same date as those just noticed, the lower half of each card contains a description of some one country; while on the upper half are symbols denoting suits, honours, and numerals. Each symbol is supported by two figures representing the inhabitants of that part of the world, and a view of some town. The ace of hearts is appropriated to Europe, the king of hearts to London; while the other picture-cards are assigned to other countries and cities.

History also came in for a share of attention, sometimes combined with biography. In one old pack the usual four suits are presented, but with swords and acorns instead of stakes and clubs. England is represented in suit by spades, and in national emblems by oak leaves; Scotland by diamonds and the thistle; Ireland by hearts and the shamrock; Wales by spades or swords and the leek. Twelve of the cards contain so-called portraits of personages renowned in our history or tradition; the other forty by local and national emblems. In order to give variety to the costumes and ornamentation, a knight is substituted for a knave in each suit, as being more courtly

and consistent. King Arthur, Queen Elizabeth, and Sir John Falstaff; King Achajus, Mary Queen of Scots, and Merlin the astrologer; King Gathelus, his queen—or some other Irish queen—and Oasian; King Camber, Queen Elfrida, and Taliessen represent the honours of the four suits respectively; clubs for England, diamonds for Scotland, hearts for Ireland, and spades for Wales. Whether modern readers of history would recognise each and all of the above-named kings and queens is more than doubtful.

Political packs made their appearance at various dates. One relates to the Spanish Armada, and some of the other events in Elizabeth's reign. The upper part of each card is marked with the suit, the honour (if any), and the number of pips. The main portion of each card presents a picture of some historical scene or event, with descriptions underneath. The Pope and Philip of Spain of course got the worst of it in this particular pack. Other European personages, who did not happen to be in favour with the English at the time, received scant courtesy from the card designers.

Emblematical packs were once in considerable favour. There is one example, about a century old, in which the honours, suits, and pips are briefly denoted at the top; the main portion of space being occupied by whole-length allegorical figures, with printed directions underneath. The ace of hearts, for instance, has an allegorical figure of religion; and the inscription tells the players that it means thus: "A woman veiled, a book in her right, and flaming fire in her left hand. The veil informs us that religion has its mysteries; the book expresses the Divine law, and the flaming fire the utmost ardency of devotion." And so, on the other cards, are emblems of good powers and wicked; all of which seem to require a glossary to render their recondite meaning clear.

But what will the reader think of a pack of cards, which besides serving its usual purpose, teaches the art of carving at table? Such a pack is extant, produced a little under two hundred years ago. The pack is called "The Genteel Housekeepers' Pastime." The suit of hearts is devoted to flesh, diamonds to fowl, clubs to fish, and spades to baked meats or meat-pies. The king of hearts presides over a sirloin of beef, the king of diamonds over a turkey, the king of clubs over a pickled herring, and the king of

spades over a venison pasty—and so on. We are informed that “Any ordinary capacity may learn (by printed directions) to cut up or carve in mode all the most usual dishes of flesh, fish, fowl, and baked meats, with the several sauces and garnishes proper to each dish.” A capital hint this to materfamilias, who with one single pack of cards could enable her guests to play at some round game, and at the same time to learn to carve the goodly comestibles which she places before them.

We may refer the reader to a past volume of *ALL THE YEAR ROUND* (December 9th, 1876) for an account of the manufacturing and commercial aspects of playing-cards, containing a large amount of information which does not come within the scope of the present article. The manufacture of cards purposely intended for cheating, or the modification of them after being manufactured, is treated in the sheet for June 29th, 1861.

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY,

AUTHOR OF “A HOUSE OF CARDS,” “GRIFFITH’S DOUBLE,”
&c. &c.

CHAPTER XXVI. A GRANTED PRAYER.

“Of course I am delighted. Of course I have most heartily wished that it might be so ever since I found out that Janet cared for him, and I saw that very soon; but if you ask me to believe that the luck is on Janet’s side, then I can’t, and don’t.”

“What is luck, then, you impracticable creature, if it is not in all that has happened to Janet? She cares for the one man in all the world who can restore her to her old home, and he asks her to marry him; the match is a splendid one for her, and a perfect love-match as well. I must say I think there never was a case of greater luck, or rather good fortune, for I don’t like the word you are so fond of; and you will not find people taking your view of it, Amabel. The world in general will think Captain Dunstan has done a very romantic, and not a very wise thing, and that Janet is a favourite of destiny.”

Mrs. Cathcart spoke a little irritably; for the truth was, she was almost as much puzzled as she was pleased by the unexpected realisation of her own wishes. She had never felt more certain of the correctness of any impression, than she felt of the correctness of that which Captain Dunstan left on her mind when he brought

her Mrs. Drummond’s letter to read—that he was not in love with Janet. She had previously hoped he was: then he comes and tells her that Janet is to be his wife, and she, though genuinely glad, feels that there is something wanting. This visit which she is going to make at Bury House does not afford her the unqualified pleasure that it ought to afford her, and she vents her own contradiction of feeling upon her companion, who has also a shady side to her sentiments on the subject.

Amabel turned her head sharply to look at her cousin, and jerked the mouths of Jack and Jill—the ponies were taking the two ladies to Bury House over the frost-bound ground at a cheery rate—and burst out with an indignant remonstrance.

“I do believe you are going to be as worldly-minded as the rest of them!” she exclaimed; “and that you, who were the very person to make me look for the peerlessness of Janet, actually think the accident of Captain Dunstan’s being the owner of Bevis and a lot of money puts him on a level with her. Of course it is very charming and delightful, so charming and delightful that it is the greatest possible miracle it should have happened; but she’s a thousand times too good for him, even if there had not been the other woman.”

“The other woman! What do you mean?”

“I don’t know,” said Amabel, and here Jack and Jill got another jerk. “At least, I do know; I mean the other woman whom he was in love with before he went out to India, and whom he could not marry, for some reason or other. I told you about her.”

“You told me about your own idea that such a person existed; but you did not know it as a fact. And besides, what has that to do with the matter? If there really was such a person, nothing can be plainer than that Captain Dunstan has got over it, whatever it was that came between them: he would not be going to marry Janet if he had not.”

“Of course not; but do you really not think Janet too good for him? Do you really think they will see things alike, and take life on the same level?”

Mrs. Cathcart did not reply. She did not distinctly hear—she was thinking. Presently she said, with great animation:

“Amabel, what if the other woman, as you call her, were Janet herself, after all? May you not be right, and my notion be right also?”

"I never thought of such a thing," said Amabel dubiously. "He had seen so little of Janet before she went to India."

"That is no argument against it. Love at first sight is at least very common, if it is not the rule; and there are several things that make me think I have hit upon the truth. Janet has captivated him now, why should she not have captivated him then, when he certainly could not have married her, when her position with his own relatives would have made it very unpleasant for her had she suspected or returned his feelings, when, in fact, the whole thing would have seemed to him an impossibility? What a game of cross-purposes it was, if, indeed, this was the case?"

Here Mrs. Cathcart left off rather abruptly, for the sense of cross-purposes that struck her so strongly was derived from her own perception of the meaning that underlay Mrs. Drummond's letter to Dunstan, and this, she remembered in time, must not be divulged to her companion. Without imparting the knowledge of it she could not make Amabel see from her point of view, so she wisely said no more, and was not annoyed when Amabel said she could not take that view; she was sure Dunstan had not felt any interest in Janet beyond the merest polite goodwill when they met at Bury House. Mrs. Cathcart felt much relieved by her own new idea; she parted readily with her impression in its favour, and was ready to think that Dunstan's manner was only prompted by the coolness and self-repression of a man of the world before he is quite certain of the success, his gladness and triumph in which he does not hesitate afterwards to evince. Under the influence of this conviction, Mrs. Cathcart allowed herself to be thoroughly happy, and listened to Amabel without unremoved complacency.

"It is not that I don't like him," said Amabel, "for indeed I do; there's perhaps nobody I know, except Janet, that I should not grudge him to. But I'm going to get over that, and to think of nothing but her views of the case."

They were met on their arrival at Bury House by the two old ladies, whose pleasure and importance under the novel circumstances were very great. Janet had just gone down to the gardener's house, where there was a sick child to be seen to; she would return presently—an intimation which sent Amabel off to find her there—and they were very glad to have an opportunity of telling Mrs. Cath-

cart how very nicely Captain Dunstan had behaved.

"Just as if our dear Janet had had two mothers, and we were them both," said Miss Susan, "he came to us, and told us she had done him the great honour of accepting him for her husband, and he hoped we should not object, but would feel satisfied that in placing her in his hands we might be sure of her happiness and welfare. So sensible, my dear madam, so unlike the young men one hears of. I assure you he might have been her brother, speaking to us on behalf of a third party, he was so quiet, and so respectful. What could we say, you know, except that we were delighted, and more than sensible of Janet's good fortune, as indeed we are, for it is quite wonderful."

"So is his," interposed Miss Sandilands. "No man in the world, let his position be what it may, could have any better gift from Providence than such a wife as Janet, and so we told him. He seemed quite sensible of that, and said in the kindest way that he had an old acquaintance with her excellence."

"And his chief anxiety"—here Miss Susan struck in again—"was that there should be very little delay about their marriage. I must say he is as impatient on that point as any of the lovers I have ever read of—I never had any experience of them myself," added Miss Susan, with a pleasant smile—"and he is as reasonable as he is impatient, because, as he says, the sooner Janet is back again in her old home, and everything is as Mrs. Drummond would have wished it to be, the better for everyone."

"That is all as it ought to be, and what does Janet say?"

"Here she comes to answer for herself," said Miss Susan, and at that moment Janet and Amabel passed the window. Mrs. Cathcart went out quickly, met Janet at the porch, and told her by a silent embrace how much she rejoiced in her happy prospect. The older woman looked with astonished admiration at the girl when she had gone back into the drawing-room with her, and stood in the midst of the group of friends, the very picture of beautiful pure happiness and hope. The steady light in her serene grey eyes, the lovely colour on her cheek, the smile that hovered about her lips, were all like herself, indeed, but like herself intensified. She said a few words of her gratitude for all their kindness, but they were not very distinctly said.

"My kindness, Janet," said Mrs. Cath-

cart, "has a strong dash of the benevolence that begins at home in it. I am so rejoiced to think of you at Bevis, that I cannot express my feelings. And the vicar charges me to express his sentiments also."

"I am so glad Mr. Cathcart does not—that he is not—dear Mrs. Cathcart, it is all so much too good for me; you are all so much too kind to me."

The motherless girl burst into a passion of happy tears, which was allowed to exhaust itself by the wise management of Mrs. Cathcart, who left her to Amabel, while she talked business with the Misses Sandilands.

Captain Dunstan, it appeared, had pleaded successfully with Janet for a short engagement. The marriage was to take place in six weeks, and the first peep of the world beyond a circuit of twenty miles which Janet had ever had for so long as she could remember, was to be her wedding trip. The wedding was to be as quiet as possible, and Julia Carmichael the only person to be invited, except Amabel, Mrs. Cathcart, and one friend of Dunstan's.

The old ladies and Mrs. Cathcart formed one group, Janet and Amabel formed another, and these practical matters were discussed in the first; but the girls heard most of what was said by their elders, and when Miss Susan told Mrs. Cathcart that Captain Dunstan's most particular wish was that Sir Wilfrid Esdaile should be with him on the occasion, Janet's hand pressed Amabel's nervously, and received a strong pressure in return.

"He will not come," whispered Amabel.

"No, I am sure he will not, and I don't know what to do. Ought I to tell—him, or not?"

"I don't know. I think he will tell him when he refuses to come; he will if he's the man I take him to be, and then he will live it down."

It distressed Janet that even so much allusion as this to the fact that she was loved and had been sought by another was necessary. She would have liked to know that the mere possibility that she could ever have been anything except Edward Dunstan's wife had never presented itself to the mind of anyone; she would have liked to feel that the words in which he had asked her for the heart that had been his ever since she had known that love existed among the pains, and might be the one sole joy of life, its savour, its prize, its help, and its reward, were the only words with such a meaning that

had ever reached her ears. But this could not be; that it could not was the one little particle of alloy in the measureless wealth of her great blessedness.

Captain Dunstan was to arrive at Bury House that evening, the old ladies told Mrs. Cathcart; and he talked of having to go to London in a few days to make some necessary arrangements. This was rather a pity, they thought, as the engagement was to be so short, for they had several old-fashioned notions on the subject of courtship, and held that the time it lasted was the happiest time of a girl's life, that in which she enjoyed most of the happy and innocent triumphs of girlhood. It seemed to be the modern notion to cut all this beautiful sweet-hearthing-time as short as possible; and they could only suppose people knew best what suited themselves.

"Of course, it's very different when there's a beautiful home ready to bring a bride to, and there's nothing to be thought of in the way of furniture, and servants, and how things are to be done for the best; of course, there's no comparison at all between Janet's case and our John's; but still we could wish Captain Dunstan were not in quite such a hurry."

"And I could not forgive him if he granted Janet a single day's extension of leave, for I want her back at Bevis quite desperately," gaily answered Mrs. Cathcart; and then, Janet having recovered her composure, she turned to her, and the friends conversed long and earnestly. Mrs. Cathcart had not seen Dunstan since he brought her the good news, but that was by no means surprising: he was, of course, very much occupied, and at Bury House daily.

"Did you ever see such a picture of perfect happiness in your life?" Amabel asked Mrs. Cathcart when they were on their way home.

"I really do not think I ever did. And what a blessing it is to think that it is such well-founded happiness, with everything in his character, and position, and circumstances to make it lasting."

"Except her innocence of life and the world's ways, and her wonderfully high ideals, and her belief not only that her geese are swans, for she thinks that of us, you know—of you and me—but that this particular goose—Captain Dunstan, I mean—is a swan of more than earthly swannishness, a phoenix among swans. I wish she did not worship him quite so devoutly."

"Nonsense, Amabel; if Janet did not worship, as you call it, the man she loves,

she would not love him at all, it's in her nature; anything else wouldn't be Janet. Besides, when was any man the worse of being overrated by his wife, or any woman the worse of overrating her husband; the risk and the evil is all the other way it seems to me."

"When they get found out, you mean," said Amabel, "when the joss-sticks are pulled up, and the incense is put away with the pepper and the pickles."

They were right; Janet did look the perfect picture of happiness, and she felt the perfect reality. The variety of her feelings, the wonder, the pride, the humility, the deep thankfulness, the new horizon of life, the boundless gratitude and devotion, the almost awful sense of a fulfilled hope which she had hardly ventured to admit as a hope at all, the many memories of the past with the sting taken out of them all, the sense of a great peace; all these absorbed her when her lover was not with her, and formed, when he was, an accompaniment as of entrancing music to the unspeakable delight of his presence.

She looked back into her short life no farther than to the time when she had seen him first and loved him—it might have been with her fancy, but she took it for her heart—that summer-time when he came to Bevis, and like a sunbeam lighted up the staid and quiet house, where she lived so sombre though so happy a life. He had been only a couple of weeks at Bevis, and she knew vaguely that the admiral and he did not get on together very well, but what had that to do with her? She knew, afterwards, that Mrs. Drummond did not like him; but Mrs. Drummond never alleged that there was anything in her case except a matter of taste, and what had that to do with her? All the conditions, circumstances, influences of Janet's life cohered to make of what might have been at first but a passing fancy, the one great truth, the central meaning of her life. On three occasions only, with long intervals between, and for a short period, she had been in his society; and while he had hardly taken any real heed of her, the courtesy of his always-winning manner had prevented her from feeling that it was so. It was quite impossible that any woman could have been slighted or neglected where Edward Dunstan was; she was "the young lady of the house" to him, though to others she might be only "Mrs. Drummond's companion;" and, his own heart and mind full all the time of Laura Chumleigh, and of the contending

hopes and fears of his position with his uncle, he won the heart of the young girl, who had no one with whom to compare him, and was absolutely innocent of every art of flirtation and prompting of self-consciousness. When the time came at which Janet knew that Mrs. Drummond had determined to bequeath to her the estate and fortune which she had never thought of otherwise than as Dunstan's, the shock of terror and grief which the knowledge caused her revealed to her loving friend the secret she had not herself discovered. That there was anything noble, anything generous in her immediate renunciation of the intended bequest, never crossed Janet's mind for a moment.

Had the admiral's nephew been nothing to her, instead of being all her world, she would have done just the same. But the delight, the sweetness of the secret sense that she had so done this thing that he should never know there had been any thought of another but himself in the admiral's place, were exquisite indeed. If she had not known; if the will had been read after Mrs. Drummond's death, and she had either been obliged to renounce the legacy, or, perhaps—for she could not tell whether her renunciation would have handed it over to the admiral's nephew—to accept it and then make it over to him, it would have been so miserable, so distressing; there might have been some foolish anger and hurt pride on his part; perhaps, horrible thought! he might not have been able to forgive her for the mortification, in the infliction of which she would have been so guiltless; he might have had some sort of sense as if she were his enemy! She allowed herself to dwell in imagination upon this possibility for the sake of the delightful sense of certainty and safety which the manner of her discovery and defeat of Mrs. Drummond's cruel kindness had brought to her; it had sustained her under the keen grief of parting from the place and the innumerable objects that had been so dear to her; it had been present with her while she carried out all Mrs. Drummond's directions, and waited for the communication from Dunstan which never came. Dreadful as it would have been to her had this imagined danger been realised, it was not the only one she would have feared, had Mrs. Drummond's temporary intention ever found expression; she would have feared the possibility of his gratitude, feared that it might have occurred to him as possible she could have accepted such a gift, and

therefore that it might have also occurred to him as possible to feel grateful, and under some sort of obligation to her. With the repugnance of a nature in which every feeling was thorough, absolute, complete in all its consequences, Janet shrank from such a possibility; for she loved him with a strength and depth of love which could have brooked nothing from him but love.

Nothing but love! And it had come! All was changed. The earth was suddenly turned into heaven, all the future was irradiated with joy. If Janet gave a thought to her past fancies and fears at all, it was only because they crossed her memory when she was busy with the thought of how strange a fulfilment of that intention which she had frustrated her happy fate had brought about. She had never known her parents, but it seemed to her that the veil was rent that hid them from her in the land of light, and that they knew she was happy and were happy with her. The music that her heart made found utterance in her voice, the perfect trust and love that filled that heart touched her face with a richer and a rosier beauty.

Captain Dunstan's demeanour in the character of an accepted suitor was very graceful, and the brief period of their engagement passed over without any untoward incidents to mar its pleasantness. This pair of lovers never quarrelled, there never arose any little jealousies or distrusts between them; one lived in a dream which drew its beautiful illusion from her own pure, passionate, inexperienced, absolutely surrendered heart; the other lived in a pleasant enough sort of reality, seeing that he had laid by dreams and illusions, and was pleased with the consciousness that he had done the right thing. After all, he must have married and settled at some time, and one time was just as good as another, when none could make any real difference. It might have been another matter if he had gone up to town for the season, and once more met Laura; it would not then have been so easy by any means. And Janet was very nice—charming, indeed, in her way, very handsome, very clever, with all her ignorance, which her intelligence would speedily remove, and which was, at all events, infinitely better than the detestable knowingness of most girls; very refined, if unlike other people; and then so exquisitely good. He would not have thought of her as a wife but for the peculiar circumstances, indeed; but then he

would not have thought of anyone as a wife, at least, for a long time. In her calm profound way, Dunstan thought, she certainly loved him, and she had behaved splendidly; he was almost sorry that he must never tell her that he knew that, but it would never do, even if he were not bound; there was something about her that made him sure of that—well, she should never have any reason to regret it, and it was most fortunate she was of the quiet-minded sort. Quand on n'a pas ce qu'on aime il faut aimer ce qu'on a—or, if not love—well, like, it comes to the same in the end. He wondered what Laura would think—Laura who would not wait for him, when nobody could have known that he had no chance of Bevis, who would not stand a little bullying from her mother for his sake—he believed she had married Thornton as much to get away from Lady Rosa as for his wealth—if she knew that there was a girl, quite without friends or position, who had renounced a large fortune for his sake, and so that it never should be known to him? Would the contrast with her own conduct humiliate her in her own sight? At all events, though she could not know anything about that part of the matter, Laura would soon learn that he was not breaking his heart about her any longer. Julia Carmichael would tell her, whether with or without the consciousness that the information would have any special interest, and she would be sure to add that Janet was handsome. No one in the world, least of all Laura, would ever dream of any motive except or beside love in his marriage. And so the old lady would have her way, after all. The posthumous matchmaking would succeed. Now, if Laura had only kept her promise to him, that will would have gone unread into the fire, Janet's renunciation would never have been known to him; and Janet herself, what would have become of her? Would she have gone on living, or rather vegetating, at Bury House with her old friends, or would she, too, have adopted the frank philosophy of the maxim he had just remembered, and liked somebody else?

Captain Dunstan was thinking desultorily on these general lines, when the answer to his letter to Sir Wilfrid Esdaile reached him. It bore a Spanish post-mark.

"Spain! eh!" said Dunstan. "That accounts for the delay."

He read the letter, and his face fell; Sir Wilfrid Esdaile had justified Amabel's opinion of him. Very frankly and simply

he told Dunstan why it was that, while wishing him every happiness, he could not be present at his wedding. "I know Miss Monroe will not tell you," he added; "and as no estrangement shall come between us if I can help it, I tell you I would rather not meet her again until she is your wife. You know how one gets over a thing of this kind, and of course it is easier where one never had a chance; but I never mean to get over my belief that you are the luckiest fellow in the world, and that there's nobody in it to compare with Miss Monroe."

"Esdaile will not come to our wedding," said Dunstan that evening to Janet, "and he tells me why. I must have been very stupid not to see it; it is plain enough now."

"I hope," she answered, trembling and blushing, "I shall not cost you your friend. It never occurred to me for one moment until he spoke to me."

"Ah, but you are not in the least vain; I remember now, he was never easy unless he was coming here or to the Chantry. We shall not lose him; he's the best fellow in the world. Here's the song."

Janet sang, and Dunstan turned the pages, and no more was said, but Dunstan's memory was busy with those days at Southampton, when Esdaile had thought him so unreasonable, and he had thought Esdaile so insensible. On Janet's white arm was the bracelet, with the softly, shiftily gleaming cats'-eyes; the bracelet he had first meant for Laura, and then for Esdaile's wife. Janet looked at it, and touched it now and then lovingly, almost reverently; it was his first gift.

"I never saw jewels of this kind before," said Janet when she had finished her song. "Tell me about them."

He told her, and the old time when he had bought them at Ceylon seemed wonderfully distant.

The next day he went to London, and between that time and the date appointed for the marriage, only one vexatious circumstance occurred.

The individual who troubled the even current of events was Colonel Chumleigh. He got an attack of gout, and Lady Rosa resented his conduct so severely that Julia felt it impossible to leave her uncle to the tender mercies of his indignant wife; so

that she sent only good wishes and a marriage gift to Janet, who could not help suspecting that Jalia was angry with her.

On a bright cold day, at the end of February, the quiet wedding took place; and as the vicar joined the hands of the bride and bridegroom, the wintry sun shone out, and a streak of its light touched the marble tablet on the wall of the church which was inscribed with Mrs. Drummond's name. Janet's glance followed the ray, and her heart went with it, in a great thrill of love and gratitude for the past, and hope, unsullied and boundless, for the future.

Captain and Mrs. Dunstan were to begin their journey from Bury House, but it was at the vicarage, whither the little party had gone from the church to luncheon, that Amabel took leave of Janet.

"Do you remember what you promised me?" she said eagerly, holding back Janet yet another minute, while Dunstan and the vicar stood patiently by the carriage door, "that, come what would, nothing should ever part you and me."

"Of course I remember, and now, when I come back, we shall be more together than ever."

"Did you ever see a lovelier bride?" asked Mrs. Cathcart of the vicar, as she and Amabel drew their chairs up to the fire, and he was preparing to leave them to their tea and talk.

"Only once," said the vicar. His wife smiled and shook her head at him.

"And," he continued, "I never saw, even once, so perfectly self-possessed a bridegroom. A handsome and a happy pair."

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XVIII. WEDDING GARMENTS.

AFTER that night Vixen held her peace. There were no more bitter words between Mrs. Tempest and her daughter, but the mother knew that there was a wellspring of bitterness—a Marah whose waters were inexhaustible—in her daughter's heart, and that domestic happiness, under one roof, was henceforth impossible for these two.

There were very few words of any kind between Violet and Mrs. Tempest at this time. The girl kept herself as much as possible apart from her mother. The widow lived her languid drawing-room life, dawdling away long slow days, that left no more impression behind them than the drift of rose-leaves across the velvet lawn before her windows. A little point-lace, deftly worked by slim white fingers flashing with gems; a little Tennyson; a little Owen Meredith; a little Browning—only half understood at best; a little scandal; a great deal of orange pekoe, sipped out of old Worcester teacups of royal blue; an hour's letter-writing on the last fashionable note-paper; elegantly worded inanity, delicately penned in a flowing Italian hand, with long loops to the Y's and G's, and a serpentine curve at the end of every word.

No life could well have been more useless or vapid. Even Mrs. Tempest's charities—those doles of wine and soup, bread and clothing, which are looked for naturally from the mistress of a fine old house—were vicarious. Trimmer, the housekeeper, did everything. Indeed, in the eyes of the surrounding poor Mrs.

Trimmer was mistress of the Abbey House. It was to her they looked for relief; it was her reproof they feared; and to her they louted lowest. The faded beauty, reclining in her barouche, wrapped in white raiment of softest China crape, and whirling past them in a cloud of dust, was as remote as a goddess. They could hardly have realised the fact that she was fashioned out of the same clay that made themselves.

Upon so smooth and eventless an existence Captain Winstanley's presence came like a gust of north wind across the sultry languor of an August noontide. His energy, his prompt, resolute manner of thinking and acting upon all occasions, impressed Mrs. Tempest with an extraordinary sense of his strength of mind and manliness. She must always be safe where he was. No danger, no difficulty, could assail her while his strong arm was there to ward it off. She felt very much as Mary Stuart may have done about Bothwell; when, moved to scornful aversion by the silken boy-profligate Darnley, her heart acknowledged its master in the dark freebooter who had slain him. There had been no Darnley in Pamela Tempest's life, but this resolute, clear-brained soldier was her Bothwell. She had the Mary Stuart temperament, the love of compliments and fine dresses, dainty needlework and luxurious living, without the Stuart craft. In Conrad Winstanley she had found her master, and she was content to be so mastered; willing to lay down her little sum of power at his feet, and live henceforward like a tame falcon at the end of a string. Her position, as a widow, was an excellent one. The squire's will had been dictated in fullest

confidence in his wife's goodness and discretion; and doubtless also with the soothing idea common to most hale and healthy men, that it must be a long time before their testamentary arrangements can come into effect. It was a holograph will, and the squire's own composition throughout. He would have no lawyer's finger in that pie, he had said. The will had cost him many hours of painful thought before he rang the bell for his bailiff and his butler, and executed it in their presence.

Mrs. Tempest was mistress of the Abbey House for her life; and at her death it was to become Violet's property. Violet was not to come of age until she was twenty-five, and till then her mother was to be her sole guardian, and absolute mistress of everything. There was no question of an allowance for the maintenance of the heiress, no question as to the accumulation of income. Everything was to belong to Mrs. Tempest till Violet came of age. She had only to educate and maintain her daughter, in whatever manner she might think fit. At Violet's majority the estate was to pass into her possession, charged with an income of fifteen hundred a year, to be paid to the widow for her lifetime. Until her twenty-fifth birthday, therefore, Violet was in the position of a child, entirely dependent on her mother's liberality, and bound to obey her mother as her natural and only guardian. There was no court of appeal nearer than the Court of Chancery. There was no trustee or executor to whom the two women could make their complaints or refer their differences.

Naturally, Captain Winstanley had long before this made himself acquainted with the particulars of the squire's will. For six years he saw himself sole master of a very fine estate, and at the end of six years reduced to an income which seemed, comparatively, a pittance, and altogether inadequate for the maintenance of such a place as the Abbey House. Still, fifteen hundred a year and the Abbey House were a long way on the right side of nothing; and Captain Winstanley felt that he had fallen on his feet.

That was a dreary June for Vixen. She hugged her sorrow, and lived in a mental solitude which was almost awful in so young a soul. She made a confidante of no one, not even of kind-hearted Fanny Scobel, who was quite ready to pity her and condole with her, and who was secretly indignant at the widow's folly.

The fact of Mrs. Tempest's intended marriage had become known to all her friends and neighbours, with the usual effect of such intelligence. Society said sweet things to her; and praised Captain Winstanley; and hoped the wedding would be soon; and opined that it would be quite a nice thing for Miss Tempest to have such an agreeable stepfather, with whom she could ride to hounds as she had done with the dear squire. And the same society, driving away from the Abbey House in its landaus and pony-carriages, after half an hour's pleasant gossip and a cup of delicately-flavoured tea, called Mrs. Tempest a fool, and her intended husband an adventurer.

Vixen kept aloof from all the gossip and tea-drinking. She did not even go near her old friends the Scobels, in these days of smothered wrath and slow consuming indignation. She deserted the schools, her old pensioners, even the little village children, to whom she had loved to carry baskets of good things, and pocketful of halfpence, and whose queer country dialect had seemed as sweet to her as the carolling of finches and blackbirds in the woods. Everything in the way of charity was left to Mrs. Trimmer now. Vixen took her long solitary rides in the woods, roaming wherever there was a footway for her horse under the darkening beeches, dangerously near the swampy ground where the wet grass shone in the sunlight, the green reedy patches that meant peril; into the calm unfathomable depths of Mark Ash, or Queen's Bower; up to the wild heathy crest of Boldrewood; wherever there was loneliness and beauty.

Roderick had gone to London for the season, and was riding with Lady Mabel in the Row, or dancing attendance at garden-parties, exhibitions, and flower-shows.

"I wonder how he likes the dusty days, and the crowded rooms, the classical music, and high-art exhibitions?" thought Vixen savagely. "I wonder how he likes being led about like a Pomeranian terrier? I don't think I could endure it if I were a man. But I suppose when one is in love——"

And then Vixen thought of their last talk together, and how little of the lover's enthusiasm there was in Roderick's mention of his cousin.

"In the bottom of my heart I know that he is going to marry her for the sake of her estate, or because his mother wished it, and urged it, and he was too weak-

mind to go on saying No. I would not say it for the world, or let anyone else say it in my hearing, but, in my heart of hearts, I know he does not love her."

And then, after a thoughtful silence, she cried to the mute unresponsive woods :

"Oh, it is wicked, abominable, mad, to marry without love !"

The woods spoke to her of Roderick Vawdrey. How often she had ridden by his side beneath these spreading beech boughs, dipping her childish head, just as she dipped it to-day, under the low branches, steering her pony carefully between the prickly holly bushes, plunging deep into the hollows where the dry leaves crackled under his hoofs.

"I fancied Rorie and I were to spend our lives together—somehow," she said to herself. "It seems very strange for us to be quite parted."

She saw Mr. Vawdrey's name in the fashionable newspapers, in the lists of guests at dinners and drums. London life suited him very well, no doubt. She heard that he was a member of the Four-in-hand Club, and turned out in splendid style at Hyde Park Corner. There was no talk yet of his going into Parliament. That was an affair of the future.

Since that evening on which Mrs. Tempest announced her intention of taking a second husband, Violet and Captain Winstanley had only met in the presence of other people. The captain had tried to infuse a certain fatherly familiarity into his manner; but Vixen had met every attempt at friendliness with a sullen disdain, which kept even Captain Winstanley at arm's length.

"We shall understand each other better by-and-by," he said to himself, galled by this coldness. "It would be a pity to disturb these halcyon days by anything in the way of a scene. I shall know how to manage Miss Tempest—afterwards."

He spoke of her, and to her, always as Miss Tempest. He had never called her Violet since that night in the Pavilion garden.

These days before her wedding were indeed a halcyon season for Mrs. Tempest. She lived in an atmosphere of millinery and pretty speeches. Her attention was called away from a ribbon by the sweet distraction of a compliment, and oscillated between tender whispers and Honiton lace. Conrad Winstanley was a delightful lover. His enemies would have said that he had done the same kind of thing so often, that

it would have been strange if he had not done it well. His was assuredly no 'prentice hand in the art. Poor Mrs. Tempest lived in a state of mild intoxication, as dreamily delicious as the effects of opium. She was enchanted with her lover, and still better pleased with herself. At nine-and-thirty it was very sweet to find herself exercising so potent an influence over the captain's strong nature. She could not help comparing herself to Cleopatra, and the captain to Antony. If he had not thrown away a world for her sake, he was at least ready to abandon the busy career which a man loves, and to devote his future existence to rural domesticity. He confessed that he had been hardened by much contact with the world, that he did not love now for the first time; but he told his betrothed that her influence had awakened feelings that had never before been called into life, that this love which he felt for her was to all intents and purposes a first love, the first pure and perfect affection that had subjugated and elevated his soul.

After that night in Mrs. Tempest's boudoir, it was only by tacit avoidance of her mother, that Vixen showed the intensity of her disapproval. If she could have done any good by reproof or entreaty, by pleading or exhortation, she would assuredly have spoken: but she saw the captain and her mother together every day, and she knew that, opposed to his influence, her words were like the idle wind which bloweth where it listeth. So she held her peace, and looked on with an aching, angry heart, and hated the intruder who had come to steal her dead father's place. To take her father's place; that in Violet's mind was the unpardonable wrong. That any man should enter that house as master, and sit in the squire's seat, and rule the squire's servants, and ride the squire's horses, was an outrage beyond endurance. She might have looked more leniently on her mother's folly, had the widow chosen a second husband with a house and home of his own, who would have carried off his wife to reign over his own belongings, and left the Abbey House desolate, a temple dedicated to the dead.

Mrs. Tempest's manner towards her daughter during this period was at once conciliatory and reproachful. She felt it a hard thing that Violet should have taken up such an obnoxious position. This complaint she repeated piteously, with many variations, when she discussed Violet's

unkindness with her lover. She had no secrets from the captain, and she told him all the bitter things Violet had said about him.

He heard her with firmly-set lips and an angry sparkle in his dark eyes, but his tone was full of paternal indulgence presently, when Mrs. Tempest had poured out all her woes.

"Is it not hard upon me, Conrad?" she asked in conclusion.

"My dear Pamela, I hope you are too strong-minded to distress yourself seriously about a wilful girl's foolishness. Your daughter has a noble nature, but she has been spoiled by too much indulgence. Even a racehorse—the noblest thing in creation—has to be broken in; not always without severe punishment. Miss Tempest and I will come to understand each other perfectly by-and-by."

"I know you will be a second father to her," said Mrs. Tempest tearfully.

"I will do my duty to her, dearest, be assured."

Still Mrs. Tempest went on harping upon the cruelty of her daughter's conduct. The consciousness of Violet's displeasure weighed heavily upon her.

"I dare not even show her my trousseau," she complained; "all confidence is at an end between us. I should like to have had her opinion about my dresses—though she is sadly deficient in taste, poor child! and has never even learnt to put on her gloves perfectly."

"And your own taste is faultless, love," replied the captain soothingly. "What can you want with advice from an inexperienced girl, whose mind is in the stable?"

"It is not her advice I want, Conrad; but her sympathy. Fanny Scobel is coming this afternoon. I can show her my things. I really feel quite nervous about talking to Violet of her own dress. She must have a new dress for the wedding, you know; though she cannot be a bridesmaid. I think that is really unfair. Don't you, Conrad?"

"What is unfair, dearest?" asked the captain, whose mind had scarcely followed the harmless meanderings of his lady's speech.

"That a widow is not allowed to have bridesmaids or orange-blossoms. It seems like taking the poetry out of a wedding, does it not?"

"Not to my mind, Pamela. The poetry of wedlock does not lie in these details—

a sugared cake, and satin favours; a string of carriages, and a Brussels' veil. The true poetry of marriage is in the devotion and fidelity of the two hearts it binds together."

Mrs. Tempest sighed gently, and was almost resigned to be married without bridesmaids or orange-blossoms.

It was now within a month of the wedding, which was to be solemnised on the last day of August—a convenient season for a honeymoon tour in Scotland. Mrs. Tempest liked to travel when other people travelled. Mountain and flood would have had scarcely any charm for her "out of the season." The time had come when Violet's dress must be talked about, as Mrs. Tempest told the vicar's wife solemnly. She had confided the secret of her daughter's unkindness to Mrs. Scobel, in the friendly hour of afternoon tea.

"It is very hard upon me," she repeated—"very hard that the only drawback to my happiness should come from my own child."

"Violet was so fond of her father," said Mrs. Scobel excusingly.

"But is that any reason she should treat me unkindly? Who could have been fonder of dear Edward than I was? I studied his happiness in everything. There never was an unkind word between us. I do not think anyone could expect me to go down to my grave a widow, in order to prove my affection for my dearest Edward. That was proved by every act of my married life. I have nothing to regret, nothing to atone for. I feel myself free to reward Captain Winstanley's devotion. He has followed me from place to place for the last two years; and has remained constant, in spite of every rebuff. He proposed to me three times before I accepted him."

Mrs. Scobel had been favoured with the history of these three separate offers more than once.

"I know, dear Mrs. Tempest," she said somewhat hurriedly, lest her friend should recapitulate the details. "He certainly seems very devoted. But, of course, from a worldly point of view, you are an excellent match for him."

"Do you think I would marry him if I thought that consideration had any weight with him?" demanded Mrs. Tempest indignantly. And Mrs. Scobel could say no more.

There are cases of physical blindness

past the skill of surgery, but there is no blindness more incurable than that of a woman on the verge of forty who fancies herself beloved.

"But Violet's dress for the wedding," said Mrs. Scobel, anxious to get the conversation upon easier ground. "Have you really said nothing to her about it?"

"No. She is so headstrong and self-willed, I have been absolutely afraid to speak. But it must be settled immediately. Theodore is always so busy. It will be quite a favour to get it done at so short a notice, I daresay."

"Why not speak to Violet this afternoon?"

"While you are here? Yes, I might do that," replied Mrs. Tempest eagerly.

She felt that she could approach the subject more comfortably in Mrs. Scobel's presence. There would be a kind of protection in a third person. She rang the bell.

"Has Miss Tempest come home from her ride?"

"Yes, ma'am. She has just come in."

"Send her to me at once then. Ask her not to stop to change her dress."

Mrs. Tempest and Mrs. Scobel were in the drawing-room, sitting at a gipsy-table before an open window; the widow wrapped in a China-crape shawl, lest even the summer breeze should be too chill for her delicate frame; the Worcester cups and saucers, and antique silver teapot and caddy, and kettle set out before her, like a child's toys.

Violet came running in, flushed after her ride, her habit muddy.

"Bogged again!" cried Mrs. Tempest, with ineffable disgust. "That horse will be the death of you some day."

"I think not, mamma. How do you do, Mrs. Scobel?"

"Violet," said the vicar's wife gravely, "why do you never come to our weekday services now?"

"I—I—don't know. I've not felt in the humour for coming to church. It's no use to come and kneel in a holy place with rebellious thoughts in my heart. I come on Sundays for decency's sake; but I think it's better to keep away from the week-day services till I am in a better temper."

"I don't think that's quite the way to recover your temper, dear."

Violet was silent, and there was a rather awkward pause.

"Will you have a cup of tea, dear?" asked Mrs. Tempest.

"No, thanks, mamma. I think, unless you have something very particular to say to me, I had better take my muddy habit off your carpet. I feel rather warm and dusty. I shall be glad to change my dress."

"But I have something very particular to say, Violet. I won't detain you long. You'd better have a cup of tea."

"Just as you please, mamma."

And forgetful of her clay-bespattered habit, Violet sank into one of the satin-covered chairs, and made a wreck of an antimaccassar worked in crewels by Mrs. Tempest's own hands.

"I am going to write to Madame Theodore by this evening's post, Violet," said her mother, handing her a cup of tea, and making believe not to see the destruction of that exquisite antimaccassar; "and I should like to order your dress for—the—wedding. I have been thinking that cream-colour and pale blue would suit you to perfection. A cream-coloured hat—the Vandyke shape—with a long blue ostrich—"

"Please don't take any trouble about it, mamma," said Vixen, whose cheek had paled at the word "wedding," and who now sat very erect in her chair, holding her cup and saucer firmly. "I am not going to be present at your wedding, so I shall not want a dress."

"Violet!" cried Mrs. Tempest, beginning to tremble. "You cannot mean what you say. You have been very unkind, very undutiful. You have made me perfectly miserable for the last seven weeks: but I cannot believe that you would—grossly insult me—by refusing to be present at my wedding."

"I do not wish to insult you, mamma. I am very sorry if I have pained you; but I cannot and will not be present at a marriage the very idea of which is hateful to me. If my presence could give any sanction to this madness of yours, that sanction shall not be given."

"Violet, have you thought what you are doing? Have you considered what will be said—by the world?"

"I think the world—our world—must have made up its mind about your second marriage already, mamma," Vixen answered quietly. "My absence from your wedding can make very little difference."

"It will make a very great difference; and you know it," cried Mrs. Tempest, roused to as much passion as she was capable of feeling. "People will say that

my daughter sets her face against my marriage—my daughter, who ought to sympathise with me, and rejoice that I have found a true friend and protector.”

“I cannot either sympathise or rejoice, mamma. It is much better that I should stop away from your wedding. I should look miserable, and make other people uncomfortable.”

“Your absence will humiliate and lower me in the sight of my friends. It will be a disgrace. And you take this course on purpose to wound and injure me. You are a wicked undutiful daughter.”

“Oh, mamma!” cried Vixen, with grave voice and reproachful eyes—eyes before whose steady gaze the tearful widow drooped and trembled; “is duty so one-sided? Do I owe all to you, and you nothing to me? My father left us together, mother and daughter, to be all the world to each other. He left us mistresses of the dear old home we had shared with him. Do you think he meant a stranger to come and sit in his place—to be master over all he loved? Do you think it ever entered his mind that in three little years his place would be filled by the first-comer—his daughter asked to call another man father?”

“The first-comer!” whimpered Mrs. Tempest. “Oh, this is too cruel!”

“Violet!” exclaimed Mrs. Scobel reprovingly; “when you are calmer you will be sorry for having spoken so unkindly to your dear mamma.”

“I shall not be sorry for having spoken the truth,” said Violet. “Mamma has heard the truth too seldom in her life. She will not hear it from Captain Winstanley—yet awhile.”

And after flinging this last poisoned dart, Vixen took up the muddy skirt of her habit and left the room.

“It was rather a pity that Arion and I did not go to the bottom of that bog and stay there,” she reflected. “I don’t think anybody wants us above ground.”

“Did you ever know anything so humiliating, so shameful, so undutiful?” demanded Mrs. Tempest piteously, as the door closed on her rebellious daughter. “What will people say if Violet is not at my wedding?”

“It would be awkward, certainly; unless there were some good reason for her absence.”

“People are so ill-natured. Nobody would believe in any excuse that was made. That cruel girl will disgrace me.”

“She seems strongly prejudiced against Captain Winstanley. It is a great pity. But I daresay she will relent in time. If I were you, dear Mrs. Tempest, I should order the dress.”

“Would you really, Fanny?”

“Yes; I should order the dress, and trust in providence for the result. You may be able to bring her round somehow between now and the wedding.”

“But I am not going to humiliate myself. I am not going to be trampled on by my daughter.”

“Of course not; but you must have her at your wedding.”

“If I were to tell Captain Winstanley what she has said this afternoon—”

“He would be very angry, no doubt. But I would not tell him if I were you.”

“No, I shall not say anything about it.”

Yet, before night, Captain Winstanley had heard every syllable that Vixen had said; with some trifling and unconscious exaggerations, hardly to be avoided by a woman of Mrs. Tempest’s character, in the narration of her own wrongs.

A PICTURE OF SPANISH LIFE AND CHARACTER.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

It has frequently occurred to me during a lengthened residence in Spain, how little is really known in England of the people who have their homes south of the Pyrenees. Indeed, Europe, to most travellers, would appear to end at the foot of this mountain barrier, for beyond Queen’s messengers, an occasional newspaper correspondent, and a limited number of commercial agents, few seem to make their way into the comparatively ignored land of Iberia. Those tourists whose curiosity leads them to explore the country of the Cid, rarely leave the beaten track of railways and high roads. They travel with a guide book, a dialogue and pocket dictionary; they loiter for a fortnight in the capital, and catch a passing glimpse of those cities that line the frequented routes. With few exceptions, they are entirely unacquainted with the Castilian tongue, hotels afford them a brief shelter, and their knowledge of the customs and manners of the people is gleaned in the streets and cafés, the bull-ring, and other places of public resort. As to the inner life, culture, and general social ethics of the Spaniard, the great bulk of tourists know next to nothing. How should it be

otherwise? Unknown, and as I have suggested, probably ignorant of the language, his sole intercourse is with railway officials, carriage-drivers, guides, and innkeepers. In most cases he has not come with an introduction to any of the dwellers in the land, and he remains, as it were, in the outer court, staring up at the façade of the house, but never crossing the threshold. The customs of Spanish society are prohibitory, and few, unfranked, are likely to pass the barrier where pompous etiquette mounts guard. Undoubtedly there are a privileged few whose position in the world of fashion acts as an "open sesame," but these only elbow their way through the ranks of the Spanish "upper ten;" in reality, very much like jostling the throng which fills, during the respective seasons, the salons of Paris and London. In addition, I may mention the English colonies which cluster about Bilbao, Barcelona, and the sherry districts of Andalusia; but these, I take it, live very much within their own circles, attend to their own business, and contribute very little to the information of their fellow-countrymen at home. In the district where I have fixed my residence during the past year, I have not seen a passing Englishman, and the oldest inhabitant but preserves a vague notion of our nationality, from the fact that a division of Wellington's army halted in the town for a brief rest, when driving the French across the Pyrenees.

It must not be imagined for a moment, that I assume to thoroughly fill the blank which seems to me to exist. Still, I think I may be able to add somewhat to the incomplete Spanish notes, which, from time to time, have been put in circulation. My experiences are of Northern Spain especially, and for more than four years I have wandered from province to province, lingering in towns during the hard winter months, and with the dawn of summer afoot again, roaming over plains and through mountain valleys, at times climbing to thousands of feet in the bright joyous atmosphere, then descending to chill deep gorges, seldom illumined by a fleeting ray of sunlight. I have ever sojourned with the people, following their mode of life; and whether my home has been within the walls of a city, a county pueblo, or a solitary mountain caserio, I have invariably identified myself with those whom chance, for the time, had made my companions. Tillers of the earth and shopkeepers, contrabandistas

and government officials, priests and deputies, the upper ten and lower millions, all have in turn been my associates. Such then having been my opportunities for learning something of the Spanish life of to-day, I dare venture the result of my gleanings, desiring honestly to produce a picture true to colour and faithful in the rendering of the models which have served me.

As I have already mentioned, my residence during the past year has been stationary, San Fulano being the town in which I have taken up my abode. I had, perhaps, best make the statement here, that San Fulano will not be found indicated on any map of Spain, or inscribed in the voluminous list of saints. When a Spaniard, in conversation, desires to convey that some fictitious individual was the hero of such or such an event, he uses the term Don Fulano, just as we, for instance, would say in England, Mr. Thingamy. My object in thus veiling the real name of my present home is to shield myself from reprisals should, by chance, this paper attract the attention of Spanish publicists, and find its way back to the Peninsula, printed in the Castilian tongue. Such an occurrence is quite amongst the possibilities, and so with a view to making myself safe, I have decided to give the genuine saint an alias.

It was towards the close of a sultry June day that I looked down on San Fulano from a mountain height; it lay, creamlike in its whiteness, on the banks of a silvery river, which wound its way through a charming valley, all green and gold with emerald foliage and ripening harvest. "There," said I, "is the spot where, for the present, my wanderings shall end;" and tightening my waist-scarf, I commenced a rough descent. From early morn to dewy eve, I climbed and strode over eight Spanish leagues of difficult country, and it was with intense satisfaction that I stretched my limbs, in half reclining posture, beneath the stone archway of the house to which I had been recommended. The master of the establishment, quite an imposing caballero in his manner, had, on my advent, placed a chair, himself, and his belongings at my disposal, which courtesy was immediately followed by the offer of a cigarette. As to terms for board and residence, those were matters with which he had no concern; he would summon the senora, and no doubt she would be honoured in receiving me

beneath their roof. Well, the senora was pleased to fall into an arrangement, and so for a year I have formed one of the family of the Zubicoas.

San Fulano has its site in the heart of a Spanish Switzerland. The lakes alone are missing. But there are shimmering rivers and brawling torrents; richly wooded mountains and bald rugged peaks; narrow winding valleys, which at each bend disclose some new beauty; and, what is its chief boon, balmy breezes that rustle through the gorges, skimming the cool rushing waters, and tempering the fierce Iberian summer heat; so that, from June to September, the town and its neighbourhood are colonised by emigrants from the south, eager to escape from the scorched plains of Castile, and the suffocating atmosphere of Andalucia. Many wealthy families of Madrid have here their country residences, and for four months in the year San Fulano is the centre of vagabondising fashion and political intrigue.

I have said that San Fulano first disclosed itself to me "creamlike in its whiteness," but I afterwards discovered it was the whiteness of the sepulchre. With the exception of a cluster of palacios on the northern outskirt, which form its limited Belgravia, it is odoriferously foul and picturesquely rotten. The massive stone basements of many of the houses date back five hundred years, and are still grimly solid, though somewhat sunken by their weight of centuries. The upper portions have in most instances been patched and repatched; yet still by the side of what is here considered a modern improvement—probably a casement and balcony a hundred and fifty years old—may be seen narrow, pointed, granite, carved apertures, pierced in a wall from two to three feet in thickness. These are unglazed, and are closed by a shutter, which in turn has a small grated opening. The varied façades of these decrepit buildings are wonderfully rich in quaint detail, with their rusty iron and worm-eaten wooden balconies, oddly perched here and there. From these usually float in the sun-glare multi-coloured garments and rainbow-hued draperies, protected from a passing shower by the deeply projecting roofs of moss-grown, fluted tiling. The streets, which are narrow and roughly paved with shapeless boulders, are monopolised by the pigs. Indeed, so arrogant are the brutes, that the question as to who is to take the wall

or the gutter, is only settled by a stout stick. It may be guessed what is the ordinary condition of the streets when such scavengers make them their favourite foraging-ground. There is usually but one common entrance to each house for cattle and humanity, and this is through a deeply-set stone archway which leads directly to the stable, and consequently one is continually stepping over foul litter. If the proprietor be a tradesman, there is an opening to the tienda or shop, either to the left or right, beneath this gloomy stench-infected porch; and on the opposite side is the dark staircase which leads to the upper portion of the straggling building, where perhaps many families have their dwelling. Now, as in most instances each family keeps its pigs, and a yoke of oxen to till a patch of land in the neighbourhood of the town, it may be imagined what is the condition of the common stable at night, and what savoury odours pervade the ever-open staircase and corridors. Indeed, it has often happened to me, when paying a visit, to stumble over a sow and her young on a dark landing, or while groping my way up the time-worn uncertain stairs, to place my hand in the midst of a group of roosting fowls; and yet possibly the person to whom my visit was to be paid boasted of blue blood, was as proud as the proudest of hidalgos, and bore a shield with quarterings that dated from the heroic period of San Ferdinand or the Cid Campeador. With regard to the furniture of a suite of rooms occupied by such a person of quality, the less said the better. One seldom meets with any attempt at luxury, and most frequently even comfort is ignored. So far as I am personally concerned, I have little to complain of, for the family with whom I reside own the house and admit no other tenants; and as the building is roomy, well-aired, and comparatively modern, I esteem myself fortunate beyond my neighbours.

San Fulano has a plaza, one side of which is taken up by the church, having for belfry a Moorish tower over a thousand years old. There is also a fine open pelota-ground, or what we should term in England a tennis-court, and close at hand stands the casino. We are now at the northern outskirt or fashionable quarter, where rise the more pretentious residences of the summer visitors from Madrid and the south; and here branch off, by the river side, charming shady paseos

from which an occasional glimpse may be had of outlying caserías, embowered in verdure, and shining out in the sunlight, like opals in rich emerald settings. From every point one has only to glance upwards, and towering heights meet the eye.

How often, at early morn, have I thrown wide the jealousies, to gaze out on rose-tinted granite pinnacles, that rise from the lower forest slopes to catch the first blush of day. Sometimes at this hour the valley is flooded by a sea of silvery mist, above which pierce the bald summits, like islands of pink coral; and then, when climbing Phœbus warms him to his work, the vapour is riven, to float away in tinted clouds, and field, wood, and river awaken joyously to the golden light. Again, at eventime, comes the rich carmine glow with which the sinking sun flushes the circling mountains, and, later on, the quaint upper gables of San Fulano stand out aflame, in the yellow light of the early moon. Then in the still atmosphere may be heard the inspiriting tones of the guitar and mandolin, marking the time of the jota Aragonese or the Habanera; or perhaps, from a balcony, come the lingering tremulous notes of an Andalusian romance, which rise and die in lengthened waves of almost oriental harmony, for the Moor has left his traces in the land. Finally, when tertulias are at an end, when the casino has closed its doors on the last loiterer, and when the life of the pueblo is hushed, those who court sleep in vain may lull themselves with the unceasing murmur of the river waters, broken in upon at intervals by the chant of the sereno, who proclaims the hour and condition of the night. Such is San Fulano, which is to serve me as studio for my picture of Spanish life, and I could not have chosen a better.

The permanent residents of San Fulano and its neighbourhood may be divided into three classes: the aristocracy of independent means, the tradesmen, and the tillers of the land. Those who come under the head of aristocracy, are, with few exceptions, parvenus of fortune, who by early and successful enterprises, either in Spain or the colonies, have acquired a competency which permits them to pass in idleness their after life. Let it be understood that "successful enterprises" has a Castilian meaning, which is far from indicating legitimate commercial transactions. A government appointment, for instance, well manipulated, will produce

a great deal more than the salary which accompanies it. The ethics that rule in Spanish official life do not seem to condemn the diverting of public funds from their proper channel, to enrich those to whom the interests of the nation are confided. All of these, however, have not made what Yankee "industrialists" would term "their pile." Some among the number have been faint-hearted in their plunder, and have sought safety in early flight, eking out a pretentious existence on an exceedingly limited capital. A few may have really gained their independency by lucky speculations in Cuba or on the South American continent; and I know of one spare, aged, yellow caballero, who has retired on a by no means despicable fortune, gained by running dusky human cargoes into the bays and inlets of the greater of the Antilles.

There is a lesser number, making up the aristocratic group, which boasts of pure blue blood, enriched by the unmixed dye of centuries. But then Hidalguia is so common in northern Spain that really it ceases to be a distinction. Indeed, I know of some pueblos in which every man claims to be of noble descent; yet, for all that, they go to their work in the fields, patched and dirty. The daily banquet is a garlic-flavoured bean soup, strengthened with rancid oil; and the luxuries, an idle moment, a cigarette, and a ray of sunshine. But the hidalgos of San Fulano are not reduced to such straits, though they are infinitely poorer than most of the members of the parvenu aristocracy. However, all alike are insufferably proud, and it is next to impossible for a stranger, brought into chance communication with them, to get beyond the lofty, complimentary style in which they place themselves at his disposal. Their offers of service are profuse and florid. There is nothing they possess that may not apparently be yours, and yet there is not a single honest intention in the whole of their frothy professions. Indeed, the wholesale use of meaningless compliments is common to all, from the simple citizen to the highest grandee; and from his earliest days the Spanish child is taught to round off periods of speech, of which he soon learns the emptiness. By such tuition his character, in after years, grows to be artificial, and even false; a mode of outward expression being acquired by long habit which is at variance with the innermost thought. As an instance of this extravagant mode of paying

compliments, I will quote a few specimens as an example.

A stranger is just rising from a fonda dinner-table, perfectly satisfied, and with his whole mind bent on coffee, a cigar, and digestion. Before he has well pushed back his chair a new guest enters, and takes his place at a cover which has been prepared for him. Prior to dipping his spoon in the soup, the last-mentioned, with a bow and imposing flourish, will address him who has just dined as follows: "Le gustar a usted repetir, caballero?" which means, "Will it please you to recommence?" The stereotyped answer to such an invitation is: "Muchas gracias, caballero, buen provecho"—"Many thanks, may you profit by the meal." Now this has certainly no meaning. The man who is about to dine knows well enough that he who has just satisfied his hunger would not dream of beginning again, unless he happened to be a most surprising glutton; and though he studiously replies to the compliment, he is utterly indifferent as to whether the repast be followed by an indigestion or not. And yet these two men would regard, each the other, as awfully ill-bred were the form not gone through. Again, you may perhaps incautiously admire a handsomely-mounted walking-stick; upon which its possessor, presenting it, says: "A la disposicion de usted"—"It is entirely at your service," and even presses it upon him. Of course you know he means nothing of the kind, and you reply that it could not be in better hands. This reminds me of an incident which happened to an American friend of mine some time since in Seville. He had a letter of introduction to a grandee in that city, and one morning he went to present it, accompanied by his interpreter. He was received with overwhelming courtesy; his host, besides placing himself entirely at his service, added: "Aqui tiene su casa." The interpreter explained to the visitor that the count not only placed himself but his house at his guest's disposal. "Waal, now, that's mighty kind of him," replied the Missourian; "it seems a right pretty place, and I'll pack up and have the trunks sent down." When he learned that this was merely a complimentary mode of expression, he set to bowing in a spineless fashion to the count, who gravely returned the salutations. Having been led through the house and grounds, the count finally introduced his visitor to the stables, and

there my friend expressed a genuine, unreserved admiration for a magnificent pair of Andalusian carriage-horses. He was immediately assured that he might look upon them as his own. Turning to the interpreter, who had faithfully translated the complimentary offer, he said: "Look here now, I'm just sick to death of all this; I haven't admired a single thing that hasn't been placed at my disposal. You tell the count that I accept, and that I'll send a man from the hotel to fetch 'em along." The interpreter protested, but the Missourian insisted. The count, like a well-bred grandee, simply raised his brow and bowed his head, and with mutual salutations the visit came to an end. Well, on reaching the hotel, the American sent a man with a written message for the horses, and much to his surprise, they were forthcoming; the count being infinitely too great a gentleman to enter into explanations, though doubtlessly he ground his teeth, and looked upon the Missourian as a barbarous western savage, incapable of appreciating the high-toned breeding of a Spanish nobleman. Then my friend summoned the interpreter, and dictated the following note:

"COUNT,—It has been explained to me that it is the custom in Spain to say one thing and mean another. This being the case, I have come to the conclusion that you did not really intend making a present of your horses, which I now return by bearer.

"You see I might have made a mistake and kept them.—I have the honour to be,
" &c. &c. &c."

The Missourian never again saw the inside of the count's palacio.

As another example, we will presume a caballero pays a visit, and it is the senora of the house who receives him. In this instance the language of flowery compliment becomes more extravagant than ever, and most frequently there is nothing natural in the way of conversation. On rising to take leave, the caballero, with a low inclination, exclaims: "A los pies de usted, senora"—"Behold me at your feet, madam;" to which comes the gracious reply: "Bese usted la mano, caballero"—"I kiss your hand, sir."

Now it must not be imagined that this excessive courtliness of speech is confined to the upper classes. Quite the contrary: the lower classes are to a great extent equally affected by this national charac-

teristic; and it is intensely ludicrous to hear the great unwashed use the same punctilious form of address—especially so, when it is mixed up with the blasphemous and ribald language which is far too common among them. Fancy a gentleman and lady of the purlieus of Petticoat Lane meeting in the early morn, and commencing a conversation in this fashion: "Have you slept well, madam?" "Perfectly, I thank you, have you?" "Admirably." "I am delighted." And then, perhaps, the lady and gentleman, descending from the courtly sphere, exchange a few expressive observations in a tongue scarcely agreeable to ears polite; and after exhausting the subject, and their command of adjectives, hastily climb again to the higher realms of speech, and wish each other good-day in this wise: "May God go with you, madam." "May He have you in His keeping. I kiss your hand, sir." And yet I have repeatedly heard in Spain such street dialogues between the lower classes, and San Fulano is by no means behind other towns, so far as concerns its choice mixed vocabulary. Again, supposing one has to make a purchase, the shopkeeper will be found primed with compliments. On entering the tienda, the proprietor steps forward, and with much stateliness bids you welcome, and desires that happiness may attend you. He then assures you that his house, himself, and his goods are unreservedly at your service; yet still he does not forget to put the highest price on everything. Indeed, at first a stranger is captivated by the outward show of chivalrous courtesy with which all classes greet him; but should he linger in the land, he will soon discover that the flowery sentences are empty nothings—that in fact they may be defined by one word, as my American friend defined them, and that word is "bunkum."

LOVE ME, LOVE MY DOG.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

In Farmer Applegarth's lower meadow a bull was being baited; and from all the moor and fell-side huts and villages around, miners had come trooping in with dogs at their heels, to enjoy the sport. Nay, boys and women were not wanting, for those were rough times, and unless the poor beast had been duly tortured, his flesh would not have been esteemed sufficiently tender for a gentleman's table. Beef was wanting for a banquet at Derwentside

Hall, and hence there was a call for the bull-bait. Women then worked in the depths of the coal-pits, not merely on the banks, and were naturally amazons of a coarse and brutalised type, mingling freely with the men in their rough games, just as they shared their labours.

A strong stake being driven securely into the ground, a fine young bull, with sleek brown hide and fiery eyes, was fastened to it, with length of chain just sufficient to leave him free to throw himself about in impotent attempts to break away. Then, one by one, thick-set, black-muzzled, strong-fanged bull-dogs were let loose upon him; dogs trained to the sport, and expected to grip the bull firmly by the nostril and pin him to the earth.

But the proud animal, already chafed by the chain and the vociferous spectators, was not likely to brook this onslaught; and they who ventured their dogs were prepared to see them caught on the ready horns of the bull, and tossed high in air over his head, gored, maimed, and bleeding, to lie down and die, or return to the charge more furious from defeat, whilst the chained beast champed and bellowed, and bending down its strong and massive head, brought its defensive horns low enough to catch his foes one after another on their formidable points, and fling them to their defeated fellows; or, wild with pain, strove in vain to shake his tormentors from frothy lip, or bleeding flank and dewlap, till he sank exhausted, the dogs were choked off, and the butcher with his pole-axe put an end to the brutal sport.

Common as were such scenes, it is not to be supposed that the whole of the community countenanced or upheld them. They were sanctioned by custom and long usage, but humanity and intelligence shrank from such spectacles, and tender-hearted women shuddered at the very thought.

Such, though reared on the moor-side, with none of the educational advantages of the present day, was Hope Wolsingham, dairymaid on the Applegarth farm, which was situated near the confines of the Derwentside woods, sheltered and almost shadowed by the oak-crowned rocks, below which rose and fell with many curves the mile long byeway to the river and the hall. Between the woods and the farm, round which it swept, ran the broader lane common to the scattered population, and was cut up into deep ruts by the wheels of coal waggons and farmers' carts. Not far away was a side gate into the woods, and

anyone crossing thence to the moors must pass the farmyard gate.

At this moor-side farm, Hope Wolsingham had been placed by her grandmother when she was little over nine years of age. Her father and mother had both been killed by choke-damp in the bottom of the coal-pit where they worked together, and Betty Wolsingham—nurse and doctress to the whole moor-side—thought she had done well for her orphan grandchild, when Gilbert Applegarth and his wife agreed to take the little one, and find her work on the farm. She patted Hope's fair head as she left her standing by the oak settle in the big kitchen, and bade her be "gude bairn;" but she had no oppressive forebodings of how the little back would ache with stooping to pick stones and weeds all day long, week in and week out; or how lonely and monotonous it would be to stand in a field all the sunlit hours to frighten birds from the farmer's crops with clapper, voice, and wild gesticulations, till arms and throat alike were weary. Indeed, had any philanthropist, born out of due time, so much as hinted that a growing child's strength should not be overtaxed, Betty, wise in her own generation, would no doubt have asked in indignant response: "Wey, what div ye think lads and lasses wor myed fur, but te wark? Wark's gude fur th' bairn, and wark she mun, iv she mysen to live."

And really, judging from appearances, work did not seem to have done the girl much harm. She had had a good and sensible mistress. Dame Applegarth had taken her into favour, not the favour of indulgence, but judicious training for her walk in life; and at nineteen, Hope had much to thank her work and her mistress for. The fresh breezes of moor and fell had fanned the roses of her cheeks and elbows into perennial bloom. Her foot was firm and free; she was straight as a willow-wand, and as supple, and balanced the laden milk-pail on her head as easily as a countess might carry her coronet.

Be sure, many a shy glance was cast towards Gilbert Applegarth's rosy-cheeked dairy-maid at fair or market, or at the parish church on a Sunday; but Hope seemed provokingly unconscious, and would-be wooers had small encouragement.

Perhaps the right one had not glanced her way. Perhaps, Amos Hedley, the new gamekeeper at Derwentside, might have found her less indifferent had he sought her out. But though the buxom maid

might be seen in the farmyard at all hours; or on her way to field or byre with stool and pail; or decorating the barkless dairy tree with cans that shone like silver; or, if it were summer time, churning in the open-air; Amos Hedley would cross the road, and stalk past the farm gate with his gun over his shoulder, and two or three dogs at his heels, whistling, in utter disregard of the clear grey eyes that followed his footsteps, until trees or the rocky banks of the descending lane swallowed up dogs, man, and the last glint of his gun-barrel.

He was a firmly-built, keen-eyed young fellow, with crisp amber curls and fresh ruddy complexion, and Hope was not the only damsel who had speculated whether the new-comer had left a sweetheart behind him elsewhere.

It so happened that Amos had been out on the moors in attendance on his master and a party of sporting friends, and on his way homewards, laden with grouse and moor-fowl, took a short cut through Applegarth's meadow during the progress of the bull-bait.

Gipsy, a favourite black-and-tan setter, ran by his side, with eyes that sparkled like crystals in his graceful head, with every motion of which his pendulous ears flapped and shone like silk; but the drooping curve of his feathery tail, and the dark earthy clots on the fringe of his limbs, told of a heavy day's work, and a readiness for the kennel.

Whether weariness or curiosity, or both combined, prompted Amos to take the field-path rather than the lane, he soon had cause to regret his choice. Your gamekeeper is never a favourite with the dregs of a rural population, more particularly if he be a faithful conservator of his master's interests, and Amos Hedley had not won his way into favour by familiarity.

His appearance on the scene was a signal for scowling and whispering. It was observed and hinted that his gun was slung at his back, and that he had only one dog with him.

Presently someone—it was afterwards said Nick Faw, the travelling tinker—suggested that it would be fine fun to see Gipsy set a bull; his cronies, Joey Dobson and Mat Laing, about whom hung a flavour of poaching, catching and communicating the "gran lairk" to others. No coal-pit ever fired more rapidly than the refuse of that crowd, already excited to explosion.

Amos had loitered to look on, Gipsy wagging his tail and putting down his

head dubiously, as cries of "Naw, Grip!" "Naw, Holdfast!" "Pincher fur ivvor!" "Naw Grip's pinned un by'r lakins!" "Dom ye, Pincher hez him!" half drowned the stifled bellowing of the bull.

There was a simultaneous movement amongst the crowd, the setter was caught up by experienced hands, and before Amos, who was hustled aside, could interpose, the dog was flung into the open ring right in the face of the maddened beast. Nature and training were against his attacking so formidable a foe, yet Gipsy was too well-bred to turn tail even had there been time. The bull, with Holdfast on his flank, Grip hanging to his lip, and Pincher on his shoulder, yet made a final spurt to shake them off, and meet the new assailant. Down went the strong sharp horn, and Gipsy flew into the air, and landed far behind with a great gash in his side, and a broken foreleg.

"Who did that?" cried Amos angrily, as he caught sight of the setter in the ring. "Gip, Gip!" but the good dog was past recall; and the gamekeeper, desecrating a grinning face before him, clutched the owner by the collar, and well shook the grimy fellow, whom he accused of the cruel deed in no measured language.

Nick Faw had both hands free, and helpers ready. Tearing himself loose he struck out at Amos, who was cumbered with his load of game.

The mischievous conspirators closed round with shouts and yells; the birds were torn from him, and tossed from hand to hand; the flagging bull was forgotten now that there was an obnoxious item of humanity to bait; and though the shrill voices of women, and the gruff tones of sturdy men called loudly for fair play, and though Farmer Applegarth hurried up and strove with strength of limb and authority to part the swaying crowd, Amos was battered right and left, his one pair of muscular hands availing little against the shower of kicks and blows which fell upon him and threatened a fatal issue.

Already his manful bearing had created a diversion in his favour amongst the miners and other non-plotters. An attempt at his rescue, which might have resulted in a general fight, was being made, when there was a simultaneous cry from the skirts of the noisy crowd: "Sir William!" "Sir William!" and almost at the same moment was heard the authoritative demand: "What is the meaning of this?"

The unlooked-for appearance of the

baronet and his friends cowed the turbulent spirits, that is, as soon as the silence which fell on the fringe of the dispersing crowd communicated its warning to the writhing knot of brutes who had Amos Hedley in their midst struggling for his life, now up, now down.

Nick Faw slunk away on the first alarm, leaving his two associates, Joey and Mat, to bear the brunt of the baronet's displeasure; and when Amos rose staggering to his feet, a bleeding, bruised, and disordered libel on the fresh-looking young fellow who had come so fearlessly into their midst, hands were not wanting to secure the delinquents, or tongues to tell their demerits.

And a demerit not to be overlooked by the men who had pitted their bull-dogs against the bull, by this time despatched, was the outrageous unfairness of flinging a setter in the ring at a bull-bait; the onslaught on the keeper was as nothing in comparison.

Nor was Sir William likely to overlook either the loss of his four-footed favourite, which had unaccountably disappeared, or the maltreatment of his servant.

Cursing Nick Faw with every step of the long road, Joey Dobson and Mat Laing were hauled off with scant ceremony to the justice-room of the hall, and thence transition to the local house of correction was swifter than pleasant. It was no use for notorious poachers to plead that they were mere tools of Nick Faw, the tinker. They had been instrumental in the destruction or injury of a valuable dog, highly prized by Sir William, and had likewise brutally ill-used his servant.

CHAPTER II.

ALTHOUGH Amos Hedley had struggled to his feet on the opportune arrival of his good master, he staggered like a drunken man, and was only kept from falling by the help of others. Being a single man, he was quartered at the hall with one of the grooms; but he had bled profusely, and was in no condition to walk thither, and no conveyance was at hand.

But Gilbert Applegarth was, and though he did not throw his doors open to every fellow who got bruised in a common brawl, he was ready enough to proffer hospitable welcome and attention to any decent body in distress.

He was especially attentive to the wounded Amos, who cut a sorry figure in his torn garments, with his cut lip, swollen

nose, and eyes half-closed with pulpy cushions of indescribable hue. In his bluff good-nature he felt as if the onslaught on the gamekeeper in some sort reflected on himself, seeing that it occurred on his own land, and that he could not do too much to wipe out the stain.

He assured Sir William that his servant should have every attention at the farm, that his presence there would be "no inconvenience whatever;" and at the young man's earnest request, caused diligent search to be made for the missing setter, which, not being found, dead or alive, was conjectured to have been carried off by the uncanny tinker.

When Amos, supported by the farmer and his son, stumbled into the great kitchen—where a bright fire was blazing on the hearth, gleaming and glimmering again in polished oak, glowing in burnished brass and pewter—and was helped to a cushioned rocking-chair by the ingle-nook, a stooping female figure rose with a sudden exclamation, to make way for them, almost upsetting a large bowl of water as she did so. It was Hope Wolsingham, whose eyes were red with weeping, and whose clothing bore as many sanguine stains as that of Amos, who was almost too blind, dazed, and exhausted to take note of her or her occupation.

A low whine of recognition, a dog's nose against the hand which hung listlessly down, aroused him to the consciousness that Gipsy was safe, and next, that the young woman before him had been compassionately washing the wounds of the poor creature, and binding them up as carefully as though it had been human.

He could not see how she had wept over the dog, when by some instinct it had crept to her feet at the house-door, or how pitifully she had brought water for its thirst as well as its injuries, or the mental process by which the dog had been associated with its keeper. But for what he did see, his heart thanked her better than his lips.

Aye, and thanked her more than when, in conjunction with busy Dame Applegarth, her attention was transferred to himself, and he felt the fingers tremble as they bathed his poor disfigured face, or fed him with healing possets, or shook up the soft feather pillows to ease his aching head and shoulders.

Sir William came to see his gamekeeper, and then my lady, whose curiosity had been aroused by her husband's praises of

the kind-hearted dairy-maid, who had so deftly bound up Gipsy's gaping side and broken limb, and was taking as much care of the setter as of the young man.

Hope curtsied and blushed, and rolled her apron over her hands abstractedly as her ladyship with condescending affability commended the maid's humanity and skill; but she jerked her hands behind her when the lady drew a long crimson silk purse from her handsome reticule to proffer a golden gift, and retreated as if the coin were a very witch's lure.

"Hout, maw ledly!" she protested. "Aw cuddn't, aw cuddn't tak' it! The puir dumb doggie's welcome twice over. Awd be a brute mysel' te tak' pay fur th' bit of tendin' aw gied either th' puir doggie or th' canny young chep yander, they brutes nigh clooted te death!"

The money went back into the purse of the visitor, who returned to the hall undecided whether to admire or resent the singular young woman's refusal of a reward.

Amos Hedley knew, though his eyes were half-shut; and the "puir doggie" might have known, he wagged his tail so unhesitatingly at her approach, or followed her movements with his bright black eyes, before he began to limp after her on his three sound legs.

She put aside the faint thanks of Amos, much as she had rejected payment for an act of natural kindness, but she gave the dumb animal many a caress, which the "canny young chep" envied; having no intuitive perception that the tender-hearted maiden was caressing himself by proxy.

He had spent a day in bed, with steaks from the brown bull upon his disfigured face, and had quite a week in the farmer's easy-chair, before the taxed-cart was sent for him from the hall; and though the farmer and his dame did their hospitable utmost towards his comfort and recovery, he was keenly sensible of the difference of touch and tone when their dairy-maid applied a poultice, or administered herbal decoctions prepared from her grandmother's recipes. And though his eyes were black and swollen, he had yet sight enough to discern the fair proportions of Hope's lissom form, the tenderness of her smiling countenance, until, as the outer wounds healed, a new and inner one opened.

Hope offered her shoulder for him to lean on as he walked to the cart, and he was not too proud to accept her aid, although he knew well he could have done without

it. She ran to the barn for straw to put under his feet, and to make a bed for Gipsy. She stroked and patted the dog, which returned her farewell in demonstrative dog-fashion. She shook hands with Amos heartily, bidding him come and show himself when he was quite well, and to keep out of the ill-disposed tinker's way. And when the cart had driven off, and Gilbert Applegarth and his wife had gone back into the house, she still lingered at the gate to watch the conveyance as it turned the corner of a moss-grown grey rock, and waved her last good-bye to the young man, who chanced to look back at that moment.

Barely had Amos Hedley time to discover that he was in love with pretty, rosy-cheeked Hope Wolsingham, and to torment himself lest his disfigured face should have set her against him, or to resolve that he would not set foot again on Applegarth's floor until his lip was completely healed, and he could walk erect as of old, self-conscious of strength and comeliness; barely, I say, had he time to arrive at this stage of feeling and resolve, when news reached the hall that his two poaching assailants had escaped.

There had been iron bars to the windows of their prison, and the building was of solid stone, but the rogues and vagabonds were lodged in one common room, and it had a window easily accessible from without.

Two of the three iron stanchions, which had seen years of service, had been filed away, evidently by a practised hand. The lead-setting of the diamond-panes had been cut clean through, and the entire window with not a pane broken left outside, along with a rope which dangled from the remaining bar.

It was very plain that Nick Faw had come to the rescue of his comrades, and had satisfied them that there was honour among thieves.

Sir William and his fellow justices were naturally incensed, threatened the warden with dismissal, and had descriptions of Joey Dobson and Matthew Laing inserted in the Hue-and-Cry, but they might have spared their pains; the men were not forthcoming.

A pedlar brought the news with his pack to the servants' hall at Derwentside, and what more natural than for Amos Hedley to hasten with the intelligence to his kind friends at the farm, forgetful of his seamed lips and yet perceptible limp. Bearing a hare over his shoulder as a present from

Sir William to the farmer, a pair of bright shoe-buckles and a gay cap-ribbon from the pedlar's pack for the mistress and her maid, he crossed the park in an unwonted tremor, and had nearly stepped upon a steel man-trap, of his own setting, in his incautious hurry through the woods.

As he emerged from the shadow of the trees at the copse-gate, he saw that the pedlar must have loitered by the way and left his news behind him, for all down the village street knots of women with their bare arms crossed, and smutty fellows with short pipes between their teeth, were grouped together, or dispersing to gossip elsewhere. The farm-gate stood open; burly Gilbert Applegarth, with both hands thrust into his breeches' pocket, leaned against the gate-post, demonstrating to an eager audience that none other than Nick Faw the tinker had helped the culprits out of gaol. Wasn't he and them thick as thieves? And wasn't there a token of his handywork about it?

Applegarth's tall son George, with a flail over his shoulder, stood close by his father's side, nodding his head in assent, and Amos caught a glimpse of a dark blue printed short-gown, or jacket, and a smiling face under a white linen cap between the father and son; but as he neared the group, he saw a dark petticoat disappear round the corner of the house, and his heart sank with a great fall.

He was too busy asking himself the question why Hope ran away, to pay much attention to the queries of others concerning the prison-breakers, and the farmer spoke to him twice before he received an assent to his theory of Nick Faw's tools having done the business.

Disheartened by Hope's apparent avoidance, he would have contented himself with handing the hare to the farmer with Sir William's compliments, and leaving the buckles for Dame Applegarth with his own "respectful service," but Gipsy did not answer to his call, his lip was yet too sore for whistling, and Gilbert's hospitality was not to be gainsaid; so, partly to oblige the farmer, and partly to look after the stray setter, he followed the former into the big kitchen, where Mrs. Applegarth was drawing a smoking hot loaf from the oven. And then the gossips must have dispersed, for Geordie Applegarth's flail was heard at work in the barn.

The eyes of Amos were again disappointed. A sun-burned hat on a peg, and

a pair of pattens by the door, were all the visible signs of Hope.

The dame could not leave her baking, and the farmer wanted cheese and ale. He strode to the door and called "Hope, hinny!" in a voice like a trumpet.

At the call Hope came in from the dairy with Gipsy in her wake, licking from his black muzzle the traces of fresh curds. The roses on Hope's cheeks were in their fullest bloom, but her eyes avoided Amos, and after a salutation, too brief and commonplace to satisfy his new craving, she coolly lifted a brown stoneware jug from a hook, and descended into the cellar for the ale. Then she placed the cheese-biggin, containing nearly half a cheese, beside the ale, and a fresh brown loaf by the side of that, with no more apparent concern than a daily duty called for.

Amos felt himself rebuffed. He had not the perception to realise that Gipsy stood proxy for himself when Hope stooped to pat him, or stroke his silken ears, as she went to and fro; or that she had disappeared on his approach, lest her pleasure should be too self-evident.

She had had time, since she saw him cross the lane, to decide that he was well enough to have put in an appearance earlier if he were as grateful as he had professed, and to collect her womanly resolution not to make herself too cheap. So Gipsy came in for the favours self-consciousness withhold from his master.

She was sufficiently well-pleased, when Amos, with more parade than was at all necessary, produced the shining shoe-buckles, and begged Mrs. Applegarth to accept them; and she was ready with her admiration; but something she would have scorned to call a pain smote her when he rose to depart without offering her "so mickle as a brass thimble," as she said to herself.

Had she followed Amos to the gate, no doubt the bright-hued ribbon would have been forthcoming, but she gave him her hand to shake as he lingered by the door, and said "gude-bye" with much less heartiness than did her tall thin mistress, going back to her butter-making before his foot was well off the threshold.

I've a notion that had he looked into the dairy and seen her wipe her arm roughly across her eyes as if half-ashamed that the process was necessary, he would not only have left the ribbon, but something else besides for a remembrance.

Gipsy seemed to have an inkling that all

was not right, and came rubbing his head against her woollen petticoat, but a sharp call, repeated still more sharply, drew the dog after his disconcerted and discontented master, as fast as his three legs would carry him; and soon the russet woods swallowed up both, and it was no use straining wet eyes at the dairy lattice.

A BUNDLE OF OLD PLAYBILLS.

A BUDGET of playbills relating to by-gone years, like broadsheets, placards, and handbills, may be made sources of instruction if judiciously used. There are materials in them for obtaining a peep into the state of society at the time. They tell us what was the prevalent bent of public taste in regard to the legitimate drama, as contrasted with lighter and slighter dramatic compositions, extravagant burlesques, merry farces, and spectacular entertainments. They give us the names of pieces now utterly forgotten, and of a few which have greatly increased in public favour since. They mention the names of actors and actresses, then struggling into favour, who afterwards became prime favourites receiving large salaries. They give note of the prices of admission to theatres, and of the hours for opening the doors and commencing the performance. They show, especially in the country theatres, how hard was the struggle of the poor folks to earn a crust. They make us acquainted with the fact that the performers were then compelled to keep a large number of parts in memory. The playbill was changed nearly every night in those times; and there was no such thing as two hundred, five hundred, eight hundred, twelve hundred consecutive representations of the same piece. They show how often the manager treated the public as big children, requiring to be told in the playbill about the plot and merit of the piece to be acted. They show, among other curious things, that the performers sometimes told their troubles to the audience through the medium of the playbills, instead of adopting the modern form of appealing through the newspapers—a difference quite intelligible when we consider the paucity of journals in former times.

There is extant a collection of playbills issued by the Theatre Royal, Manchester, about ninety years ago, just before the horrors of the great French Revolution

were beginning, when naval victories were often won over France and Spain, and when King George (Farmer George) was the popular sovereign of England. The Manchester theatre was not quite the best in the provinces, but still it had a good reputation, and brought into notice many who afterwards proved to be sterling members of the theatrical profession.

Some of these bills of the play are curiously descriptive of the pieces about to be performed, as if imparting knowledge to the really ignorant, or intended to rouse curiosity and anticipatory sympathy.

One night, when *The Gamester* was performed, the author of the playbill or programme—as we now more genteelly call it—informed the about-to-be-enthralled audience that “This celebrated Tragedy is an honest attack upon one of the most pernicious vices that Mankind in general, and this nation in particular, is unhappily subject. To show how Property is transferred from the undesigning Votary of Chance to the vile Betrayer of Confidence and the insidious dark-minded Sharper, was an Undertaking worthy of the Pen of the ingenious Author. This Play, before its Representation, was shown in the Manuscript to the celebrated Dr. Young, who highly approved it, with the remark that ‘Gaming had long wanted such a Caustic as the concluding scene of this Tragedy presented.’”

When O’Keefe’s farce of *The Agreeable Surprise* reached Manchester, it was ushered in with the following playbill announcement: “The Success of this piece was immense at the Haymarket Theatre; indeed, so extraordinary as to induce Mr. Harris to desire, as a Favour, Mr. Colman’s permission to act it three nights in the week at Covent Garden Theatre. The applause was so unbounded as to occasion a repeated Request for two Nights More, which was granted, and for which Public Thanks were given in the Papers.” The tragedy of *Jane Shore*, over which our grandmothers and great-grandmothers wept abundantly, was thus recommended to the notice of the public by the manager, or his literary assistant who drew up the playbill: “There is not, perhaps, in the English Language a Piece better Calculated to rouse the feelings of the Heart, or inculcate Strict Morality, than this. The Downfall of Lord Hastings, the Tyranny of the Duke of Gloucester, and the severe Trial of Jane Shore (who dies in the public

Streets for Want), never fail to work the intended effect upon the Passions, shocking them with Wonder, rousing them to Indignation, and softening them into Pity—the Heart being ever readier to sympathise with Historical Facts than it ever can be with Poetic Fiction.”

Sometimes a description of the scenery was given, instead of a disquisition on the moral excellences of the play. On an evening when Shakespeare’s *Tempest* was to be performed, the playbill told the audience that “This Piece opens with a view of a Tempestuous Sea and a Ship in Distress, accompanied with Lightning, Thunder, and Showers of Fire, which entirely consume the Vessel. In Act the Fifth a View of a Calm Sea, in which Neptune and Amphitrite will be discovered in their Chariot drawn by Sea Horses. The whole to conclude with Ariel’s Ascending in a Golden Chariot drawn by Eagles.” No doubt the manager took great pride in the scenic display thus magniloquently described; and we are quite disposed to award honourable mention to the thunder and lightning, the ship and the devouring fire, Neptune and Amphitrite, their chariot and sea-horses, and Ariel’s golden chariot drawn by eagles. It was no fault in the Manchester staff to be unable to foresee what Mr. Macready and Mr. Beverley would achieve in these matters sixty years later. One evening, when King Richard the First, *Cœur de Lion*, was performed, the printed description told that “The First Act opens with a View of a Strong Castle in a wild and mountainous Country. Act the Second begins with an exact Representation of the Works of an old Fortified Fosse, Terrain, Parapet, &c. In Act the Third a Grand Battle on a Drawbridge before the Castle where Richard is a Prisoner, which is Storm’d by Matilda’s Troops, led by the Gallant Blondel, who sets the King at Liberty. The Whole to conclude with a March and Chorus, Long Live the King.”

This “Long Live the King” affords an opportunity of remarking that the Manchester manager availed himself of all suitable occasions for touching incidentally on topics of current popular interest; and the playbills thus serve as a reminder of bits of history and biography illustrative of those days. Shakespeare was not appreciated then exactly as he is now; but there was at any rate a humble attempt to compliment him. For the benefit of

Mr. Brown—one of the undying Browns—after the performance of Beaumont and Fletcher's comedy of Chances, came "A celebrated Monody, written by Mr. Pratt, called the Shadow of Shakespeare, or Shakespeare's Characters doing homage to Garrick." Here the motive at once presents itself, for the great actor had recently

Shuff'd off the mortal coil.

On another evening, as a playbill informs us, "Mrs. Farren will recite the Monody Written by R. B. Sheridan, Esq., on the Death of David Garrick." The loyalty of the nation to George the Third was conspicuously shown in those days; and the theatres were regarded as suitable places wherein to manifest it as opportunity offered. On one particular evening, after the performance of *Jane Shore*, and before that of *The Citizen*, the playbill announced that "By Desire of several Ladies and Gentlemen, the Song of God Save Great George our King, Long live our Noble King, will be sung in full Chorus by every Gentleman in the Company." This was at a time when naval victories over the French and Spaniards were numerous and brilliant. More suited to dramatic or really theatrical display, however, were incidents illustrative or imitative—of course in a very humble way—of the operations of war itself. Such, for instance, as "A Picturesque Allegorical Representation of the Invincibility of the Rock of Gibraltar, in a most Elegant Moving Transparent Painting of the Garrison during the Siege; another of the Destruction of the Gunboats, and Floating Batteries on Fire; with an elegant Representative Transparency of the Temple of Fame. Dedicated to the gallant General Elliot." A renowned admiral's achievements were celebrated at the Manchester theatre on another occasion by a recitation; when, among a variety of entertainments, was given "The celebrated Old Ballad called the Battle of La Hogue, gained by Lord Rodney over De Grasse; written immediately after the Action, and received with great Applause by the British Officers at the Theatre in Jamaica; to be sung by Mr. Wordsworth, in a new Transparent Scene, representing the British and French Fleets in the Action, with the Cæsar on fire, and the Capture of the Ville de Paris." There is a little chronological confusion here; but we interpret the meaning to be that the battle celebrated was that fought and won by Admiral Lord Rodney, while

the song itself was sung to the tune of an old ballad relating to the battle of La Hogue.

One feature strikingly observable in theatrical matters at that time was the variety of entertainments often presented on one evening, as if to catch shillings from divers pockets by appealing to as many tastes as could well be managed at once. A frequent announcement to be met with in our bundle of playbills is: "At the end of the Play, a Comic Song by Mr. Manden"—Munden, who afterwards became the best of all English performers of old men in comedy. On one evening, between the third and fourth acts of Sheridan's *School for Scandal*, was introduced, "A New Song, called the Medley of Lovers, by Mr. Munden." On another evening, after a performance of *Hamlet*, "The Audience will be entertained with the Performance of the Surprising Ventriloquist, Little Tommy the Speaking Figure. This amusing little man is nothing similar to the original Speaking Figure, but is exhibited in a manner quite different; for it asks Questions, gives Answers, and sings Songs, besides an imitation of Clarinets and Flageolets, Demonstrably without any Confederacy." It is not difficult to see that Little Tommy was an example of a very humble but ingenious kind of speaking figure, often still to be seen in the smaller places of amusement, the exhibitor supplying all the voice and song from his own lungs. The really wonderful automata constructed by Vaucanson and Maelzel, and the automatically-speaking figures of that and later times, belonged to a different class altogether.

There appears, from some of the playbills, to have been a family named Hannett, who assisted in imparting miscellaneous variety to the entertainments at the Manchester theatre. Several members of the family aided to produce "A Combined Entertainment;" Mr., Mrs., Miss, Miss M., and Miss C. Hannett played in the dramatic romance of *Cymon*; then one of them in the dramatic sketch called *The Oracle*; and lastly, two of them in the scene of the *Fine Lady* from Garrick's farce of *Lethe*. We know something of this kind at the present day, where several members of one family, clever and well-drilled, join in an entertainment purposely adapted to exhibit their powers. One Mr. Ryley, a member of the Manchester Company, was apparently very versatile in his theatrical delineations; for one evening, between the

first and second pieces, he sang or recited (perhaps a combination of both) a queer bow-wow composition, giving imitations or delineations of "An Old Dog, a Wretched Dog, a Swaggering Dog, a Strong Dog, a Happy Dog, a Comic Dog, a Greedy Dog, a Cheating Dog; the whole in the character of a Faithful Dog."

Incidentally we find mention of benefit nights, as means for augmenting salaries. This is a subject which the public generally know little about. It is quite evident that benefits often form an important element in the terms of engagement between the manager and the members of the company. Many of the humbler folk have a sort of partnership interest in the receipts on certain evenings, in the form of a percentage on the proceeds of all tickets sold by them. On one occasion we are told that "Tickets will be taken this night for the benefit of Mr. Franks, hairdresser; Mr. Nightingale, gallery doorkeeper; Mr. Bamford, box cheektaker; Mr. Tiffing, box lobby-keeper; Mr. Ridings and Mr. Beswick, musicians." On another evening the public were entreated so to arrange that the advantages should go to those for whom they were intended, and not to outside schemers and tricksters: "Tickets will be taken this night for the Benefit of Mr. Barker, boxkeeper; Mr. Ludlow, pit office-keeper; Mr. Peile, musician; Kitty Harvey, fruitwoman [this reminds us of Nell Gwynne in the time of the Merry Monarch]; and Mr. Horrocks, stage-doorkeeper. As several people have been imposed upon [here's the rub] by buying tickets on these Nights in the Avenue and about the doors of the Theatre, which were forged; this is to give notice that proper people will take Notice of the sellers of Tickets, and all those purchased that way will not be admitted."

Sometimes the humbler members of the company, in the playbills, entreated the public in almost passionate terms to patronise them liberally on their benefit nights, as in the following instance: "Mr. and Mrs. Duncan with the greatest respect acquaint the Ladies and Gentlemen that the Failure of their Benefit at the Theatre is the sole reason for their Soliciting Favour and Support." What the cause of failure was, we are not informed. "Being advised by Many Friends to give the following entertainment, it is humbly hoped that (with Mr. Munden's assistance, who has kindly offered it gratis) they will be found deserving. They would be

happy to have had it in their Power to Exhibit at the Theatre; but the very great expense that would attend 'tis presumed will sufficiently apologise." Mr. and Mrs. Duncan, we may surmise, hired a hall or minor place of amusement.

Mr. Williams, another member of the company, had a mishap which rendered him sadly in need of aid, either through a benefit night or some other channel; for one playbill announces Inkle and Yarico and The Liar for a particular evening, but a MS. note informs us that "there was no play on this night; because Mr. Williams, who was to have played Inkle, broke his leg." Some weeks afterwards his benefit was announced. The playbill expressed the confidence of the poor fellow "that the late Unfortunate Accident, which debarred him of an opportunity of appearing on the Stage for Five Weeks (and even when it did permit him, deprived him of the Power of performing with the Propriety he would wish), does in some Measure Exclude him from a Title to their Favour; yet he hopes his having so Severely Suffered by the Unhappy Misfortune will in some degree plead his Excuse in requesting at this Time a Small Share of that Candour and Liberality which have ever been the Peculiar Characteristics of the Polite Audience of Manchester." Poor broken-legged Inkle! if initial capitals could bring a large audience, his yearning playbill would have done it.

Another benefit night reveals some of the financial perplexities of the struggling actors. Mr. Grist, advertising in a playbill that he would impersonate Cardinal Wolsey in Shakespeare's Henry the Eighth for his benefit, gives us a peep behind the (commercial) scenes. He solicits the patronage of the public because his engagement at the Manchester theatre was rather of a peculiar character. By agreement he was "to perform Twelve Nights, without salary or any other kind of emolument but what may arise from the Receipts on his Benefit Night, after deducting the Manager's charge of Thirty Guineas, together with additional printing, &c. These are the conditions of his engagement; and, under such circumstances, Mr. Grist solicits the patronage of the public." Poor grist, it may be feared, came to Mr. Grist's mill in return for his twelve nights' performances.

One Mr. Penn, who had somehow or other become incarcerated within four strong walls, announced his benefit at

the theatre in superbly lofty language: "Mr. Penn should think himself extremely unworthy of the favour he has hitherto received were he to omit the present opportunity of acknowledging to the Manager and Company of the Theatre Royal, Manchester, whose weekly contributions since his arrival at Lancaster Castle have so materially tended to soften the rigours of his confinement; and as the future happiness or misery of his life depends on the Profits of this night, he most humbly but earnestly solicits the patronage of a public, ever remarkable for their spirited endeavours to succour the distressed, to countenance the only chance now left him to procure (that Blessing so dear to every species of Humanity)—his LIBERTY!" This last outburst is melodrama of the first water. Perhaps Mr. Penn could not meet the monetary demands made upon him by a creditor; and we know from other sources that imprisonment for debt was no light matter towards the close of the last century.

The rivalries and jealousies among the aspirants for theatrical fame were as prevalent then as they are now; and the playbills were often used as the medium for expressing or exposing them. Mr. Ryley, whose name has been mentioned in a former paragraph, one day complained in a playbill of the treatment to which Mrs. Ryley had been subjected in a matter of stage precedence or rank: "The part of William in *Rosina* has belonged to Mrs. Ryley from the time she first played at the Theatre, before a second singer had been engaged. Mr. Banks, to make the piece as respectable as possible, desired that she would, for that night, play *Phœbe*; and that when it was repeated she should resume her own character. Mr. Richards, after asking Mrs. Ryley to play William for his Benefit, which she gladly assented to, has advertised her in the bills for *Phœbe*: denying at the same time his ever speaking to her about William, which Mr. Banks can attest is a gross falsehood." There ensued revenge and counter revenge; Mrs. Ryley refused to play *Phœbe* for Mr. Richards, and then Miss Richards refused to play in a new musical farce written by Mr. Ryley, and produced at his benefit.

We have the authority of Sam Slick for saying that "There's a good deal that's nat'ral in human natur;" and old playbills tell us, on not less reliable testimony, that the nat'ral tendencies of human natur

are as perceptible behind the scenes of a theatre, as in the presence of a crowd of spectators and admiring listeners in the auditorium.

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOBY,

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRIFFITH'S DOUBLS," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXVII. "TOM ESDAILE'S BOY."

IT WAS a relief to Sir Wilfrid Esdaile to know from Dunstan himself that he was going to marry Janet. There was nothing heroic about the young man, but there was a certain generosity and large-heartedness which made him able to be glad that the girl who had rejected him was not to have her life also embittered by disappointment. And at first he had feared that it was to be so. With the revelation of the truth to him, there had come much more than the bitterness of the knowledge that it was his own familiar friend who had won, all unconsciously, that which to Sir Wilfrid seemed just the one prize in the gift of fate worth the winning: there had come great compassion and fear for Janet herself. It had not occurred to him for a moment that Janet had made such an impression upon Dunstan, as could lead to the result that had taken place. He and his friend had dropped the subject of Mrs. Thornton by tacit consent, and Esdaile did not know whether Dunstan had got over it; but whether or no, there had not been anything to indicate that one so different had supplanted Laura. Esdaile did not think Dunstan more likely to be constant to a hopeless passion than any other man—always excepting himself, whom a little while ago he would have suspected of such a sentiment less than anybody—but his very winning and quietly attentive ways, which might have looked to a stranger like the result of captivation, were, as Esdaile knew, habitual to Dunstan, and just as much addressed to Miss Sandilands, or to Julia Carmichael, as to Janet. Her rejection of himself was, he well knew, final; he had said to himself, "She will never change"—was not that steadfastness of hers in all things, great and small, one of her rare charms?—and in all his own pain he had grieved for hers, quite sincerely and unaffectedly, and with much impatient murmuring at the pre-

valence of cross-purposes in human affairs, and the vanity of all things. Here was Janet, a peerless woman, throwing away love—which would have made him (Esdaile) the happiest man alive, and kept him straight, as he familiarly phrased it in his thoughts, always—upon Dunstan, who was in love with another woman, who had thrown him over very lightly to say the least of it. Esdaile did not hate his friend because Janet loved him, though he frankly envied him with all his heart; and when the news reached him, he was surprised beyond measure. The cure had then been complete, and strangely rapid; going on under his own eyes, and he had never suspected it! Well; so be it! Dunstan was a good fellow, but he did not deserve this last best good that fate had sent him; the man who had been so enslaved by one so very different from Janet, could not give Janet such love as she merited, such love as only could make her happy. Esdaile believed himself to be a commonplace enough sort of a fellow; until he met Janet he had never particularly wished to be other and better than he was; but he believed that he could appreciate her more highly, and sympathise with her more truly—he who had never been in love with anyone except her, who had no memories of false and fickle fine ladyism to blunt his perception of her pure truth and fervent goodness, and take the edge off his taste for those qualities. Dunstan was going to marry Janet, and he could write of it so coolly, and hope all follies—meaning love of the kind which he had lavished vainly on Laura Chumleigh—were over for him! It seemed like a bad dream to Esdaile, but also a very hard and bitter reality; and nothing that he had ever had to do in his life cost him so much pain in the doing as the writing to Dunstan, whose letter had reached him before he left England, and travelled with him to the town on the Spanish frontier, from whence he had despatched his answer.

Would Sir Wilfrid have been sufficiently magnanimous to be glad, had he known that it was to his hand Janet owed the little push that had set the wheel of fortune turning for her? When he found among his papers the black-bordered envelope, addressed, in a hand which he had never seen, to Captain Edward Dunstan, and sent it on to its destination, he had been glad that he was accidentally able to remove a cause of annoyance and per-

plexity from his friend and from Janet; but he had thought no more of it, and he never knew that to that trifling circumstance the woman he loved owed the fulfilment of her heart's desire.

There had fallen on Sir Wilfrid a great weariness of life, and the evils of his early training, or rather the want of it, began to tell on him. If he had not hitherto regarded life from an Utopian point of view, he had at least believed it a very pleasant sort of experience and institution generally, and had not troubled himself with the contemplation of it in any of its aspects towards persons less fortunate than himself. He was very good-natured, easy to move to a ready and untroublesome kind of charitableness, and, as he proved in the case of John Sandilands, trusty in friendship; but he was not either by nature or education a man to bear trouble, and especially disappointment, well, in the sense of profitably. Out of the eater comes not forth meat, nor of the bitter, sweetness, except to the tried and disciplined mind and will, and these he had not; so that Sir Wilfrid Esdaile took it ill that his sky was clouded over, and sulked with fortune, in whose smiles he had lived hitherto, because her brow had knitted itself, and her eyes were stern. The first time a man learns, as a hard fact, by personal experience, that he cannot have what he wants, the lesson is bound to be unpleasant, and it will be the more so in proportion as it is long delayed, and in striking contrast with previous experiences. Sir Wilfrid was a bad subject for such teaching; an unruly pupil in the hard school of contradiction, impatient of pain and resentful. Janet's kindly message vexed him; he had believed her wider-minded, capable of comprehension of feelings which she had never experienced, and of sympathy with them; he thought she would have some idea of what the hopeless loss of her meant to him. He believed himself much less egotistical in his love than she was in hers; the harmless words in Dunstan's letter, which she could hardly have avoided allowing him to write, unless she had made the avowal to him which it was for Esdaile himself to make or to have unmade, hurt him. She was happy, and what did it matter to her! Thus the man who really loved Janet with a love which might have elevated his whole character, misjudged her, and taking his punishment ill, hardened himself. It was not that the

"Amen" to "God bless her" stuck in his throat; no, he could be glad that she was happier than he; it was that he could not be reconciled with his enemy—disappointment. Restlessness, which is our modern fashion of parrying trouble, seized upon him, and that notion of returning to Ceylon, which he had at first mentioned to Dunstan merely because he found it difficult to write at all, and did not quite know how to account for himself, began to assume the form of a serious purpose.

He would go to Ceylon, stay awhile with John, and go on to India, do a regular grand tour of the country, and perhaps make his way to some of those wild and extraordinary places, in which everything is so utterly strange, that it seems impossible one could there go on thinking the old thoughts and be haunted by the old scenes. He had fallen in with a few people whom he knew on his way through the south of France, and had gone on with them into Spain, caring nothing about them, and little about whither he went or what he looked at, but yielding to the restlessness of an idle man. He sometimes wished now that he were not an idle man, that his life were not all leisure, that it had some certain and enforced occupation in it, since pleasure, in which he had hitherto found his business, had become of a sudden so hideously vapid, that he asked himself whether it was not the most stupendous of bores. He thought even that he should like well enough to manage that coffee-plantation of his, if only it were not his own. Altogether, the state of mind into which Sir Wilfrid Esdaile was falling was one which would have been observed with regret by anyone who cared for him. Under the influence of unhappiness, and revolt against it, the "wildness" for which Sir Wilfrid's father had had in his time a reputation, perhaps a little worse than he deserved, began to develop itself in "Tom Esdaile's boy," as Mr Gilchrist had called him. Sir Wilfrid drifted about a good deal just at this time, and when the intelligence of Dunstan's marriage reached him—he had been expecting it, half-fearing the announcement, half-longing to know that the event had really taken place, but entirely angry with himself for caring—he drifted back from Spain with the new acquaintances who had added themselves to the old ones in whose company he had crossed the frontier, and found himself, without much premeditation, and in a devil-walk, some of

mind, among the gambling world of Nice and Monaco.

In former days Sir Wilfrid Esdaile had never cared for gambling; he had never felt the craving for any fierce and engrossing excitement, but had been well content with the less harmful diversions of sport and society. He had none of the vulgar love of mere gain that very often underlies that passion for gambling, which is, by some odd perversion of reasoning, held less odious when it is free from a sentiment which, though mean, is at least reasonable, and he was not a sufficiently rich man to lose with impunity and indifference; therefore he had kept clear of that temptation. "Fatal Zero" had not allured him, while he was still as when we saw him first; but he was drawn towards it, when in the fever of his disappointment he turned from the milder pursuits that had satisfied him hitherto.

He would go out to Ceylon by-and-by, he kept telling himself, when Rattray and St. John and Le Mesurier and the others should have gone back to London; but for the present he would stay here, and do as the others did. And so the early spring found Sir Wilfrid Esdaile among the motley company who thronged by times the Promenade des Anglais or the beautiful gardens that border the coast at Nice; but were frequent in their visits to the paradisaical pandemonium of Monaco.

He had not heard directly from Dunstan, but he knew from Julia that the newly-married pair were in Paris, and that they were to be in London after Easter. Julia said little of Janet, and that little in a measured way, and Sir Wilfrid wondered whether she had found out his secret, if secret his love could indeed have been called. He had not been careful to hide it; Dunstan, for instance, had been observant in a very ordinary degree, might have seen it clearly enough. At least, Julia did not rejoice in Janet's marriage, that was plain. Sir Wilfrid wondered what she had said to John Sandilands about it, and what that steady-going and obstinate young Scotchman thought of the celerity with which Dunstan had recovered from his disconsolate state. How well he remembered the vague trifling way in which they had discussed the unnamed young lady of Dunstan's love, and the first casual mention of Miss Monroe!

A very bright day at the end of March had tempted out into the pure and sparkling air a number of the more confirmed

sadness to the scene in so many places on the Riviera. The Castle Hill was more than usually attractive, with its palms and cypresses flung against a sky of the clearest blue, and the far-spreading prospect over the Bay of the Angels steeped in sunshine. Sir Wilfrid Esdaile and two of his friends had accompanied some new arrivals to the Castle Hill, and Sir Wilfrid was pointing out to the ladies of the party the various features of a view which has not many rivals, when he suddenly stopped short, arrested by the sight of two persons who were advancing slowly in the direction of the platform.

They were two women; the taller and younger of the two leaned on the arm of the shorter and older, and though walking with manifest fatigue, had something of eagerness in her gait and expression. The sunshine seemed to bring refreshment to her eyes, and the pure delicious air to her fair but wan brow and cheeks; her slightly parted lips seemed to drink it as she came slowly on, with a graceful walk and distinguished carriage, although no one could look at her and fail to see that the beckoning hand was raised for her. Her face was very fair, with such harmony of line and feature that its beauty was still striking, though all the bloom had vanished from it; with deep dark grey eyes, and very rich fair hair, which lay in waved masses above her broad smooth brow, defined by the narrow rim of white under her close black bonnet. Her dress was the deep mourning of a widow, but of the French style, except for the narrow cap-rim. The older lady was a bright cheery-looking person of perhaps five-and-thirty, rather stout, with very black eyes, a high colour, and an expression of vigilant kindness which rendered a plain face singularly attractive. Her mere manner of supporting the delicate hand and wrist that rested on her substantial arm seemed to tell of intelligent care and tenderness. Her attire was of a thoroughly English type, and rather overdone in point of colour. It was singular that the sight of these unobtrusive persons, who took no notice at all of them, seemed to affect Sir Wilfrid Esdaile and the lady to whom he was speaking simultaneously, and with equal force, for they both started and stared. Sir Wilfrid, however, recovered himself in an instant with a muttered, "No; it cannot be!" but the lady said:

"Surely, surely, that is Janet Monroe;" and unconscious of the astonishment which her words awakened in Sir Wilfrid, walked

the tall young lady in deep mourning with outstretched hand and the words: "Dear Mrs. Monroe, I am equally surprised and delighted to meet you here!"

A bright flush, which instantly faded, passed over Mrs. Monroe's face, strengthening the likeness that had struck Sir Wilfrid almost with bewilderment; and a very sweet smile, nearly as evanescent, marked her recognition of the person who addressed her.

"And I little expected to see you, Mrs. Thornton."

The stout lady had fallen back a step, as Mrs. Monroe removed the hand which had lain on her arm that it might clasp that of Laura, and was looking with pleasure and interest at the brilliant face and the beautiful dress of the dazzling little person—she looked little beside the tall bending figure of Mrs. Monroe—who glanced at her too with lively curiosity.

"My friend, Miss Wells," said Mrs. Monroe; and then Laura shook hands with Miss Wells, and called to Sir Wilfrid Esdaile to come and be introduced to Mrs. Monroe. The other gentlemen of Mrs. Thornton's party, who had moved on to another point of view before she saw Mrs. Monroe, returned, and Mr. Thornton was but little less glad than his wife to see the young widow in whom they had felt so strong an interest, the friend and neighbour of the old lady at the Stone House, far away in Scotland. But Mr. Thornton was quick to see the change in the fair face and the slight figure, and he enquired about Mrs. Monroe's health with real solicitude. Soon all the party were walking down the slope to their respective carriages, and Laura was trying hard to persuade Mrs. Monroe that nothing would be so good for her as a cruise in their yacht. The *Firefly*, it appeared, was in the harbour; and her owners had come to Nice only the day before. Laura had met several persons of her acquaintance already, but meeting Mrs. Monroe was quite too delightful. She had so much to say and to hear. Where was Mrs. Monroe staying? their hotel was on the Promenade; how delightful it would be if it proved to be Mrs. Monroe's hotel also. But this crowning satisfaction was not reserved for Laura. Mrs. Monroe was living in the old town, "to be with Miss Wells," she said briefly in explanation; and she was afraid it would be too much for her to visit Mrs. Thornton that day; the expedition to the Castle Hill

was arranged that Laura should call upon her early on the following day, and the party separated. Only a few sentences had been exchanged between Mrs. Monroe and Sir Wilfrid Esdaile, but she had told him that she had heard much of him from her sister-in-law, Mrs. Dunstan; and as Janet's new name was pronounced for the first time in his hearing, Sir Wilfrid glanced at Mrs. Thornton, thinking it must sound strangely to her too; but she did not seem to have heard it.

"You remember," wrote Mrs. Thornton to her cousin, a week afterwards, "the young widow whom I met in Scotland just after my marriage, Mrs. Monroe; she is here, and I fear she is in very bad health indeed. I was near making such a blunder that I must tell you about it. We met Mrs. Monroe at the show place here, called the Castle Hill, and there was an odd, brisk, stout, kind-looking person with her, whom I took for a sort of superior maid, with a talent for the care of invalids, but Mrs. Monroe introduced her as her friend, Miss Wells. It turns out that Miss Wells is a 'character.' She has a good fortune, and spends it among the poor English at all sorts of foreign places; she stays a great deal at Nice, where she lives in the unfashionable quarter, in a roomy old hotel, because her mother and sister—the only people she had belonging to her—died here, and are buried in that dreadfully pretty and melancholy cemetery. If there are any solitary and uncared-for people among the poor creatures who come here in such numbers for a little prolongation of life, Miss Wells finds them out, and looks after them and cheers them up; and she is doing all these good things for Mrs. Monroe, who is hopelessly ill Mr. Thornton thinks, but I think she may get better in this delightful place. And we have also met your hero, Sir Wilfrid Esdaile, and renewed our acquaintance with him. He is very nice, and I wish he were not so fond of play, and so ready to make friends of people he does not know much about. He is not in a good set, from what Mr. Thornton has already observed, if, indeed, there is a good set here—among the playing people I mean. One does see such dreadful-looking men, like the creatures with whom Becky Sharpe went to the ball where the Marquis of Steyne met her, and women more dreadful still, if

possible. Sir Wilfrid gets on better with Mr. Thornton than with me; indeed, they are great friends. I should not have taken him for the sort of person you described—I mean merely in his ways; he seems restless and easily bored, and not at all decided about what he is going to do. Mr. Thornton and he have been talking this morning about 'climbing' in the autumn, and Sir Wilfrid seems quite bitten with the idea, though he is not an Alpine man; I wish they could set about it now, for it would be much better for him than the 'tapis vert,' and the people who surround it, and he has been so good to you I cannot but like him. We had a talk about you and your plans yesterday, and he vows he will bring John Sandilands back from Ceylon, and there must be no more delay. He spoke with so much dislike of long engagements, and the slips between cup and lip in human affairs, that I have a notion of my own about him. Mrs. Monroe, whom I see every day, is full of her sister-in-law's marriage, and I have caught Sir Wilfrid looking at me once or twice when she has been asking him questions (which he answers in the vaguest way), very much as if Captain Dunstan had not kept his own counsel. If I am right, that would account, considering that he and Sir Wilfrid are such friends, for his not being very cordially disposed towards me; and yet what nonsense, now that he has got over it, and is married, like myself. It was a little odd, don't you think, that marriage? For, after all, she was nobody, and he could hardly have been very violently in love. Men are never very good at descriptions of people, and Sir Wilfrid is no better than the rest; he is very vague about Mrs. Dunstan, but says she is wonderfully like Mrs. Monroe. Our plans are not quite settled; but I think we shall be here for another fortnight, and then go to Paris, and on to London after a little time there. The house at Prince's Gate is nearly ready; we get glowing accounts of it, but of course I shall put the finishing touches to it myself. And remember, dearest Julia, you must be there when we arrive. I wonder whether the Dunstons will be in town much this season—Sir Wilfrid says he does not think they have a house—anyhow, as I shall be keeping quiet, I should not be likely to see them."

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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XIX. I SHALL LOOK LIKE THE WICKED FAIRY.

NOTHING in Captain Winstanley's manner during the sultry summer days which went before his marriage betrayed his knowledge of Violet Tempest's rebellious spirit. He would not see that he was obnoxious to her, and spoke to her and looked at her as sweetly as if there had been the friendliest understanding between them. In all his conduct, in any act of his which approached the assumption of authority, he went to work with supreme gentleness. Yet he had his grip upon everything already, and was extending his arms in every direction, like an octopus. There were alterations being made in the garden which Violet knew were his, although Mrs. Tempest was supposed to have originated them. He had, in some measure, assumed dominion over the stables. His two hunters were already quartered there. Vixen saw them when she went her morning round with a basket of bread. They were long-bodied, hungry-looking animals; and the grooms reported them ravenous and insatiable in their feeding.

"When they've eat their corn they eats their 'ay, and when they've eat their 'ay they eats their bed, and then they takes and gnaws the wooden partitions. I never see such brutes," complained Bates, the head-groom.

Vixen fancied these animals were in some wise typical of their owner. One morning when Vixen was leaning upon the half-door of Arion's loose box, giving

herself up to a quarter of an hour's petting of that much-beloved animal, Captain Winstanley came into the stable.

"Good-morning, Miss Tempest. Petting that pretty little bay of yours? I'm afraid you spoil him. You ought to hunt him next October."

"I shall never hunt again."

"Pshaw! At your age there's no such word as never. He's the neatest little hunter in the Forest. And on off-days you might ride one of mine."

"Thanks," said Vixen, with a supercilious glance at the most leggy of the two hunters, "I shouldn't care to be up there."

"Oh, by-the-way," said Captain Winstanley, opening the door of another loose box, "what are we to do with this fellow?"

"This fellow" was a grand-looking bay, with herculean quarters, short legs, and a head like a war-horse. He snorted indignantly as the captain slapped his flank, and reared his splendid crest, and seemed as if he said "Ha, ha!"

"I don't quite know of whom you are speaking when you say 'we,'" said Vixen, with an unsmiling countenance.

"Naturally of your mother and myself. I should like to include you in all our family arrangements, present or future; but you seem to prefer being left outside."

"Yes," replied Vixen; "I prefer to stand alone."

"Very well, then. I repeat my question—though, as you decline to have any voice in our arrangements, it's hardly worth while to trouble you about it—what are we to do with this fellow?"

"Do with him? My father's horse!" exclaimed Vixen; "the horse he rode to

his dying day! Why, keep him, of course!"

"Don't you think that is rather foolish? Nobody rides or drives him. It takes all one man's time to groom him and exercise him. You might just as well keep a white elephant in the stables."

"He was my father's favourite horse," said Vixen, with indignant tears clouding the bright hazel of her eyes; "I cannot imagine mamma capable of parting with him. Yet I ought not to say that, after my experience of the last few months," she added in an undertone.

"Well, my dear Miss Tempest, family affection is a very charming sentiment, and I can quite understand that you, and your mamma, would be anxious to secure your father's horse a good home and a kind master; but I cannot comprehend your mamma being so foolish as to keep a horse which is of no use to any member of her family. If the brute were of a little lighter build, I wouldn't mind riding him myself, and selling one of mine. But he's too much of a weight-carrier for me."

Vixen gave Arion a final hug, drying those angry tears upon his soft neck, and left the stable without another word. She went straight to her mother's morning-room, where the widow was sitting at a table covered with handkerchiefs and glove-boxes, deeply absorbed in the study of their contents, assisted by the faithful Pauline, otherwise Polly, who had been wearing smarter gowns and caps ever since her mistress's engagement, and who was getting up a trousseau on her own account, in order to enter upon her new phase of existence with due dignity.

"We shall keep more company, I make no doubt, with such a gay young master as the captain," she had observed in the confidences of Mrs. Trimmer's comfortable parlour.

"I can never bring myself to think Swedish gloves pretty," said Mrs. Tempest, as Vixen burst into the room, "but they are the fashion, and one must wear them."

"Mamma," cried Vixen, "Captain Winstanley wants you to sell Bullfinch. If you let him be sold, you will be the meanest of women."

And with this startling address Vixen left the room as suddenly as she had entered it, banging the door behind her.

Time, which brings all things, brought the eve of Mrs. Tempest's wedding. The small but perfect trousseau, subject of such anxious thoughts, so much study, was

completed. The travelling dresses were packed in two large oilskin-covered baskets, ready for the Scottish tour. The new travelling-bag, with monograms in pink coral on silver gilt, a wedding present from Captain Winstanley, occupied the place of honour in Mrs. Tempest's dressing-room. The wedding dress, of cream-coloured brocade and old point lace, with a bonnet of lace and water-lilies, was spread upon the sofa. Everything in Mrs. Tempest's apartment bore witness to the impending change in the lady's life. Most of all, the swollen eyelids and pale cheeks of the lady, who, on this vigil of her wedding-day, had given herself up to weeping.

"Oh, mum, your eyes will be so red to-morrow," remonstrated Pauline, coming into the room with another dainty little box, newly-arrived from the nearest railway-station, and surprising her mistress in tears. "Do have some red lavender. Or let me make you a cup of tea."

Mrs. Tempest had been sustaining nature with cups of tea all through the agitating day. It was a kind of dram-drinking, and she was as much a slave of the teapot as the forlorn drunken drab of St. Giles's is a slave of the gin-bottle.

"Yes; you may get me another cup of tea, Pauline. I feel awfully low to-night."

"You seem so, mum. I'm sure if I didn't want to marry him, I wouldn't, if I was you. It's never too late for a woman to change her mind, not even when she's inside the church. I've known it done. I wouldn't have him, mum, if you feel your mind turn against him at the last," concluded the lady's maid energetically.

"Not marry him, Pauline, when he is so good and noble, so devoted, so unselfish!"

Mrs. Tempest might have extended this list of virtues indefinitely, if her old servant had not pulled her up rather sharply.

"Well, mum, if he's so good and you're so fond of him, why cry?"

"You don't understand, Pauline. At such a time there are many painful feelings. I have been thinking, naturally, of my dear Edward, the best and most generous of husbands. Twenty years last June since we were married. What a child I was, Pauline, knowing nothing of the world. I had a lovely trousseau; but I daresay if we could see the dresses now we should think them absolutely ridiculous. Dear Edward! He was one of the handsomest men I ever saw. How could Violet believe that I should sell his horse?"

"Well, mum, hearing Captain Winstanley talk about it, she naturally——"

"Captain Winstanley would never wish me to do anything I did not like."

The captain had not said a word about Bullfinch since that morning in the stable. The noble brute still occupied his loose box, and was fed and petted daily by Vixen, and was taken for gallops in the dry glades of the forest, or among the gorse and heath of Boldrewood.

Mrs. Tempest had dined—or rather had not dined—in her own room on this last day of her widowhood. Captain Winstanley had business in London, and was coming back to Hampshire by the last train. There had been no settlements. The captain had nothing to settle, and Mrs. Tempest confided in her lover too completely to desire to fence herself round with legal protections and precautions. Having only a life interest in the estate, she had nothing to leave, except the multifarious ornaments, frivolities and luxuries, which the squire had presented to her in the course of their wedded life.

It had been altogether a trying day, Mrs. Tempest complained: in spite of the diversion to painful thought which was continually being offered by the arrival of some interesting item of the trousseau, elegant trifles, ordered ever so long ago, which kept dropping in at the last moment. Violet and her mother had not met that day, and now night was hurrying on; the owls were hooting in the forest; their monotonous cry sounded every now and then through the evening silence like a prophecy of evil. In less than twelve hours the wedding was to take place; and as yet Vixen had shown no sign of relenting.

The dress had come from Madame Theodore's. Pauline had thrown it over a chair, with an artistic carelessness which displayed the tasteful combination of cream colour and pale azure.

Mrs. Tempest contemplated it with a pathetic countenance.

"It is simply perfect!" she exclaimed. "Theodore has a most delicate mind. There is not an atom too much blue. And how exquisitely the drapery falls! It looks as if it had been blown together. The Vandyke hat too! Violet would look lovely in it. I do not think if I were a wicked mother I should take so much pains to select an elegant costume for her. But I have always studied her dress. Even when she was in pinafores I took care that she should be picturesque. And

she rewards my care by refusing to be present at my wedding. It is very cruel."

The clock struck twelve. The obscure bird clamoured a little louder in his woodland haunt. The patient Pauline, who had packed everything and arranged everything, and borne with her mistress's dolefulness all day long, began to yawn piteously.

"If you'd let me brush your hair now, mum," she suggested at last, "I could get to bed. I should like to be fresh to-morrow morning."

"Are you tired?" exclaimed Mrs. Tempest wonderingly.

"Well, mum, stooping over them dress-baskets is rather tiring, and its past twelve."

"You can go. I'll brush my hair myself."

"No, mum, I wouldn't allow that anyhow. It would make your arms ache. You ought to get to bed as soon as ever you can, or you'll look tired and 'aggard to-morrow."

That word haggard alarmed Mrs. Tempest. She would not have objected to look pale and interesting on her wedding-day, like one who had spent the previous night in tears; but haggardness suggested age; and she wanted to look her youngest when uniting herself to a husband who was her junior by some years.

So Pauline was allowed to hurry on the evening toilet. The soft pretty hair, not so abundant as it used to be, was carefully brushed; the night lamp was lighted; and Pauline left her mistress sitting by her dressing-table in her flowing white raiment, pale, graceful, subdued in colouring, like a classic figure in a faded fresco.

She sat with fixed eyes, deep in thought, for some time after Pauline had left her, then looked uneasily at the little gem of a watch dangling on its ormolu and jasper stand. A quarter to one. Violet must have gone to bed hours ago; unless, indeed, Violet were like her mother, too unhappy to be able to sleep. Mrs. Tempest was seized with a sudden desire to see her daughter.

"How unkind of her never to come near me to say good-night, on this night of all others!" she thought. "What has she been doing all day, I wonder? Riding about the Forest, I suppose, like a wild girl, making friends of dogs, and horses, and gipsies, and all kinds of savage creatures."

And then after a pause she asked herself fretfully:

"What will people say if my own daughter is not at my wedding?"

The idea of possible slander stung her sharply. She got up, and walked up and down the room, inwardly complaining against providence for using her so badly. To have such a rebellious daughter! It was sharper than a serpent's tooth.

The time had not been allowed to go by without some endeavour being made to bring Violet to a better state of feeling. That was the tone taken about her by Mrs. Tempest and the vicar's wife in their conferences. The headstrong misguided girl was to be brought to a better state of mind. Mrs. Scobel tackled her, bringing all her diplomacy to bear, but without avail. Vixen was rock. Then Mr. Scobel undertook the duty, and, with all the authority of his holy office, called upon Violet to put aside her unchristian prejudices, and behave as a meek and dutiful daughter.

"Is it unchristian to hate the man who has usurped my father's place?" Violet asked curily.

"It is unchristian to hate anyone. And you have no right to call Captain Winstanley a usurper. You have no reason to take your mother's marriage so much to heart. There is nothing sinful, or even radically objectionable in a second marriage; though I admit, that to my mind, a woman is worthier in remaining faithful to her first love; like Anna the prophetess, who had been a widow fourscore-and-four years. Who shall say that her exceptional gift of prophecy may not have been a reward for the purity and fidelity of her life?"

Mr. Scobel's arguments were of no more effect than his wife's persuasion. His heart was secretly on Violet's side. He had loved the squire, and he thought this marriage of Mrs. Tempest's a foolish, if not a shameful thing. There was no heartiness in the feeling with which he supervised the decoration of his pretty little church for the wedding.

"If she were only awake," thought Mrs. Tempest, "I would make a last appeal to her feelings, late as it is. Her heart cannot be stone."

She took her candle, and went through the dark silent house to Violet's room, and knocked gently.

"Come in," said the girl's clear voice, with a wakeful sound.

"Ah!" thought Mrs. Tempest triumphantly, "obstinate as she is, she knows

she is doing wrong. Conscience won't let her sleep."

Vixen was standing at her window, leaning with folded arms upon the broad wooden ledge, looking out at the dim garden, over which pale stars were shining. There was a moon, but it was hidden by drifting clouds.

"Not in bed, Violet," said her mother sweetly.

"No, mamma."

"What have you been doing all these hours?"

"I don't know—thinking."

"And you never came to wish me good-night."

"I did not think you would want me. I thought you would be busy packing—for your honeymoon."

"That was not kind, Violet. You must have known that I should have many painful thoughts to-night."

"I did not know it. And if it is so, I can only say it is a pity the painful thoughts did not come a little sooner."

"Violet, you are as hard as iron, as cold as ice!" cried Mrs. Tempest, with passionate fretfulness.

"No, I am not, mamma; I can love very warmly, where I love deeply. I have given this night to thoughts of my dead father, whose place is to be usurped in this house from to-morrow."

"I never knew anyone so obstinately unkind. I could not have believed it possible in my own daughter. I thought you had a good heart, Violet; and yet you do not mind making me intensely wretched on my wedding-day."

"Why should you be wretched, mamma, because I prefer not to be present at your wedding? If I were there, I should be like the bad fairy at the princess's christening. I should look at everything with a malevolent eye."

Mrs. Tempest flung herself into a chair and burst into tears.

The storm of grief, which had been brooding over her troubled mind all day, broke suddenly in a tempest of weeping. She could have given no reason for her distress; but all at once, on the eve of that day which was to give a new colour to her life, panic seized her, and she trembled at the step she was about to take.

"You are very cruel to me, Violet," she sobbed. "I am a most miserable woman."

Violet knelt beside her and gently took her hand, moved to pity by wretchedness so abject.

"Dear mamma, why miserable?" she asked. "This thing which you are doing is your own choice. Or, if it is not—if you have yielded weakly to over-persuasion—it is not too late to draw back. Indeed, it is not. Let us run away as soon as it is light, you and I, and go off to Spain, or Italy, anywhere, leaving a letter for Captain Winstanley, to say you have changed your mind. He could not do anything to us. You have a right to draw back, even at the last."

"Don't talk nonsense, Violet," cried Mrs. Tempest peevishly. "Who said I had changed my mind? I am as devoted to Conrad as he is to me. I should be a heartless wretch if I could throw him over at the last moment. But this has been a most agitating day. Your unkindness is breaking my heart."

"Indeed, mamma, I have no wish to be unkind—not to you. But my presence at your wedding would be a lie. It would seem to give my approval to an act I hate. I cannot bring myself to do that."

"And you will disgrace me by your absence. You do not care what people may say of me."

"Nobody will care about my absence. You will be the queen of the day."

"Everybody will care—everybody will talk. I know how malicious people are, even one's most intimate friends. They will say my own daughter turned her back upon me on my wedding-day."

"They can hardly say that, when I shall be here in your house."

Mrs. Tempest went on weeping. She had reduced herself to a condition in which it was much easier to cry than to leave off crying. The fountain of her tears seemed inexhaustible.

"A pretty object I shall look to-morrow," she murmured plaintively; and this was all she said for some time.

Violet walked up and down the room, sorely distressed, sorely perplexed. To see her mother's grief, and to be able to give comfort, and to refuse. That must be undutiful, undaughterly, rebellious. But had not her mother forfeited all right to her obedience? Were not their hearts and lives completely Sundered by this marriage of to-morrow? To Violet's stronger nature it seemed as if she were the mother—offended, outraged by a child's folly and weakness. There sat the child, weeping piteously, yearning to be forgiven. It was a complete reversal of their positions.

Her heart was touched by the spectacle of her mother's weakness, by the mute appeal of those tears.

"What does it matter to me, after all, whether I am absent or present?" she argued at last. "I cannot prevent this man coming to take possession of my father's house. I cannot hinder the outrage to my father's memory. Mamma has been very kind to me—and I have no one else in the world to love."

She took a few more turns, and then stopped by her mother's chair.

"Will it really make you happier, mamma, if I am at your wedding?"

"It will make me quite happy."

"Very well, then; it shall be as you please. But, remember, I shall look like the wicked fairy. I can't help that."

"You will look lovely. Theodore has sent you home the most exquisite dress. Come to my room and try it on," said Mrs. Tempest, drying her tears, and as easily comforted as a child who has obtained its desire by means of copious weeping.

"No, dear mamma; not to-night. I'm too tired," sighed Violet.

"Never mind, dear. Theodore always fits you to perfection. Go to bed at once, love. The dress will be a surprise for you in the morning. Good-night, pet. You have made me so happy."

"I am glad of that, mamma."

"I wish you were going to Scotland with us." (Vixen shuddered.) "I'm afraid you'll be dreadfully dull here."

"No, mamma; I shall have the dogs and horses. I shall get on very well."

"You are such a curious girl. Well, good-night, darling. You are my own Violet again."

And with this they parted; Mrs. Tempest going back to her room with restored peace of mind.

She looked at the reflection of her tear-blotted face anxiously, as she paused before the glass.

"I'm afraid I shall look an object to-morrow," she said. "The morning sunshine is so searching."

A PICTURE OF SPANISH LIFE AND CHARACTER.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

SAN FULANO is early in its habits, especially as to that portion of the population which earns its living in the fields; the sun and the labourer rise together. Then follow

the tradespeople; and by seven all are afoot, even to the fashionable colonists from Madrid and the south. But it must not be imagined that female fashion makes its permanent appearance for the day at this hour. The *senoras* and *senoritas* have been awakened by the clanging summons to seven o'clock mass; and as San Fulano lies in the midst of a most devout country, they dare not, if they care for their souls—I should say, value public opinion—remain absent from the celebration. So, as tubbing is unknown, they slip yawningly from their beds into their high-heeled, embroidered slippers of bronzed leather. They robe themselves in a high-fitting, long-trained, ebon dress, which is caught in at the waist by a belt; the marvellous wealth of hair is gathered up into a mound, and held by a pin, which at the same time fastens the black lace mantilla, falling in such wise, that the unrefreshed sleep-haunted face is completely hidden. Their devotions at an end, they hurry back to chocolate, and usually remain immured within their chambers till the mid-day meal, which in the country is termed dinner. But it is not till after the *siesta* that the *senora* or *senorita* makes her public appearance, and then she blazes forth in the full splendour of a toilet, which is the result of hours of preparation, worked at bit by bit. Naturally, I am ignorant of the mysteries which occupy the greater portion of the day, but I am assured on credible authority that there is a far greater employment of cosmetics than of water; however, when my lady is dressed for her part, the outward result is very satisfactory to the eye.

The resident caballeros of San Fulano, and those who are merely summer visitors, with the exception of a few gliding rapidly down the hill of life, are not very assiduous in church attendance during the week—they are content to air their religion on Sundays. Chocolate absorbed, they get their journals from the post-office, and then betake them to the shady seats of the paseo by the riverside. While the politics of the day are being scanned, the quiet of the balmy summer morning remains undisturbed, but this peaceful interlude is of brief duration. Debating groups are gradually formed, each caballero waving his paper as the banner under which he fights, and a fierce, gesticulating, wordy strife is waged. There are Liberal Conservatives, the actual party in power, Constitutional

Liberals, Moderados Historicos, Democrats, and Radicals—the Absolutists, or Carlists, do not make much show. Well, not only does the excited throng number representatives of these various parties, but even fractions of each; for the more broadly defined political “platforms” in Spain have their numerous offshoots, making a most intricate puzzle, with which I will not vex the reader. And so the debaters, divided in opinion, surge and shout. They advance on each other under a cloud of cigarette-smoke, waving their respective banners as though a breach of the peace were inevitable; then they separate, walking to and fro excitedly, to come again into wordy collision when some crushing argument occurs to them. Finally, the various “platforms” group themselves apart, and mutter treasonable language, really believing, for the moment, that they are the centres of important conspiracies which are to upset the existing state of affairs, and bring their own party into power. And this simulation of sapping at the foundations of the government is intensely gratifying, for next to the national passion for gambling, the Spaniard dearly loves to conspire against everything and everybody. It is not only in San Fulano that this unhealthy disposition to overthrow those who for the moment rule the country is dominant. The same restless jealous temperament is common to the whole of Spain. All, in their way, are striving to seize the helm of the ship of state; and naturally, in the oft-repeated struggles, the spokes fly round, and the vessel is continually going to grief. I verily believe that if Santiago, the patron saint of the nation, held the reins of government, all the parties would unite and endeavour to dispossess him.

I cannot do better here than repeat some remarks made to me by one of my most intimate acquaintances, a Spanish gentleman, who knows his countrymen well, and who, strange to say, speaks his mind honestly. He has more than once held responsible positions in different parts of the Peninsula, and, in addition, his mind has been healthily developed by foreign travel. He happens at this moment to be enjoying the mountain freshness, of which San Fulano is the centre, and I esteem myself fortunate in meeting him again.

We were strolling one morning under the trees of the paseo, occasionally pausing to watch the excited politicians, who, if possible, were more energetic than ever.

I made some observations in reference to the numerous parties which divided Spain, and the passion which seemed to dominate, even in such a comparatively friendly meeting as that we were witnessing; and added that, so far as my experience went, the whole country seemed to be ever stewing in the political pan, and not unfrequently, as a natural result, getting into the fire. I also remarked that I thought the voice of agitation might be occasionally hushed from patriotic motives, and that the government should have a chance given it of working out its programme honestly, if such were possible.

"Patriotic motives!" exclaimed my companion; "patriotism is a word which has long been eliminated from the Spanish dictionary. You see the ex-colonial governor there, expounding his views to a knot of fellows. Well, a few years ago, he was a nobody, occupying a very humble position indeed; and now, as you are aware, he is a rich man, with a Madrid residence, and yonder tree-embowered palacio. But he was one of those restless intriguing spirits, endowed with a certain energy, that generally manage in some way to come to the surface. His lucky star brought him into contact with a leading party man in the Cortes, who, noticing his talent and aptitude for intrigue, got him, by using various influences, returned as deputy. Of course there was a compact between them; it being understood that the ex-governor was to work for his protector, and if the cards they were to play turned up trumps, why he would not be forgotten.

"Well, our friend, once in the house, manipulated the wires so successfully, that the party leader found himself each day surrounded by additional supporters, and finally his strength became so great that he reached the highest position in the ministry. His right hand man there, who helped him to climb the ladder of state, was shortly appointed to the governorship of an important colony, and though he only enjoyed the position for something like a month, he returned to Spain with the foundation of his present great fortune. His protector being still in power, he was given, for a time, the control of the Treasury, which office materially added to his wealth. At present he and his chief are thrown out, and they are working and intriguing with all their might to get another innings. You will not, I presume, admit that such men are actuated by

patriotism. They only espouse a party with a view to benefiting themselves, when that party obtains the direction of affairs. No, amigo mio, this unfortunate country is at the mercy of a series of firms of political hucksters, who certainly are not guided by patriotic motives. Their ambition is not to see the nation solvent, respected, and powerful in its unity; they simply treat the question of politics as a commercial one, and their only desire is their own advantage, and not that of the state at large. To imagine that any of the members of these different parties have a real political creed, would be a mistake—one and all are ready to fight in the opposite camp, should their claims be ignored on their party coming into power."

"This is but a sorry picture that you paint of your country," observed I; "from your remarks one would infer that there are few honest men in Spain."

"That is just it—very few that are honest, whatever policy they may affect; and the misfortune is that when success places them in a high position, it does not reform them. I am sometimes inclined to think that an autocratic government, controlled by a strong hand, is the only solution to our miserable condition. We want a man of iron will and fearless character, capable of seizing and throttling this many-headed political hydra. Were such an one, of honest and inflexible purpose, to rise amongst us, I am convinced he would receive the nation's support, for the people know how sadly they are used—I may say robbed—by those who pretend to legislate for them, and they are wretchedly conscious that when one party has had its day, it will be replaced by another actuated by much the same motives. Can there be a better example of this condition of affairs than that shown by our government stock? The country is at peace internally, the Carlist rising has long since been stamped out, and the Cuban revolt may be said to have terminated. Yet look at the quotations of state securities, fluctuating daily to the miserable extent of a few centimes, but never denoting a healthy disposition to recover their long-lost value. For instance, I have eighty thousand pesetas of my little fortune thus invested, and if I desired to realise my capital I could not obtain twenty thousand, and I am only one of a million thus mulcted. There is no confidence. The nation has been so handled and robbed, that it holds aloof from everything in the shape of

Spanish government stock; and the money of the country, instead of increasing the national wealth, now goes for investment to France or England."

Here my companion paused to roll and light a cigarette, then, puffing out a cloud of fleecy vapour, he continued:

"Look at those officers grouped apart and speaking earnestly—there again is cause for anxiety. The army is being reduced, and a very large proportion of the commissioned members are to be sent to their homes on a greatly reduced pay. Many of them reached their grade during the late civil war, and, believing their career assured, married. The result is, that those who are designated for removal from active service will have to starve, with their wives, through life as best they can. The greater number, you must have noticed, are comparatively young men. Do you think for a moment that they will settle down quietly to enforced poverty? For my part I am certain they will not; and sooner or later we shall hear of conspiracies, aided and abetted by military men, whose only object will be to create a struggle, that they may again find employment in the butchering line. Now, as the sun is getting hot, and I have letters to write, you must excuse me. A Dios."

As the heat becomes sensible on the paseos, despite the overshadowing foliage, the excited caballeros calm, for a time, their party passions, and seek the dark cooler shelter of the shops, where they gather in knots to discuss the scandal of the neighbourhood. I must confess I was at first greatly surprised at witnessing such groupings in the towns and cities through which I passed. If I desired to purchase some necessary article, I had to make my way through a dozen or so of smoking loungers, which made the acquisition of a shirt or a pair or two of socks a very disagreeable business to a bashful individual. Gentlemen at home seldom enter shops unless compelled to do so, and certainly they would never think of choosing them as desirable places in which to while away an hour or two before lunch time. And when one takes into consideration the fact that the shops of San Fulano are ill-lit, obscure dens—evil smelling from, as already described, the close neighbourhood of the stable, in which filth of every kind is allowed to accumulate for months—one is the more surprised. But as the Spanish caballero merely crosses his own threshold

for the purposes of eating and sleeping, he seeks, when not gambling at the casino, distraction wherever it is offered. The notion of giving a few hours to mental culture never occurs to him, and the last thing he is likely to take up is a book. His sole reading is the brief perusal of his paper, and, as a natural consequence, his general knowledge is woefully limited, and his ideas travel in a very narrow groove indeed. And so a portion of the morning is given to scandal-mongering and evil-speaking generally; the caballero not disdaining to usurp the woman's prerogative of indulging in futile mischievous speech. Jealousy is a Spanish characteristic; and though two men may outwardly have the appearance of being devoted friends, each will find something to say to the other's disparagement behind his back.

At mid-day comes the comida or dinner, a frugal and frequently scant meal in the family of the poorer gentleman, whose limited income, honestly and carefully expended, might perhaps furnish the means of living modestly and with comfort. But the curse of gambling brings with it misery, and a dire struggle to maintain those appearances, failing which the Spanish caballero would be dishonoured in his own and society's estimation. At home there may be an empty larder, and, comparatively speaking, bare walls; but abroad he and his wife and daughters must make a brave show, no matter at what cost of suffering and privation within the poverty-oppressed dwelling. With the wealthier the comida is simple enough, seldom varying in character from year's end to year's end. Indeed, the ordinary family cook has no pretensions to touch even the hem of the cordon bleu; and as gastronomy in its higher culture is neither appreciated or understood by the generality of Spaniards, the kitchen remains as far behind the age as the nation. Besides, it is not customary—despite the unmeaning compliment which is on everybody's lips as the hour for dining draws nigh—to receive guests. It is only on the occasion of a great fiesta that friends are invited to the table, and then profusion, rather than perfection, is studied. It must be remembered I am speaking of middle-class society generally, and not of the higher fashion of the capital, which, of course, lives very much as those whom they emulate live in Paris or London.

By two in the afternoon San Fulano is as hushed as the dead dwellings by the

Nile. There is no movement in the sun-stricken streets, the very pigs seeking shelter from the sun beneath the stone archways, and imitating the siesta which has drowsily fallen on all. The tiendas are closed, and the labourer in the outlying fields is sleeping in the broad shadow of some widely-spreading oak. A vapoury heat is dancing in the valley, and circling the lower slopes of the mountains with a delicate azure mist, while the rugged granite peaks, boldly sculptured by deep-cast shadows, stand out decisively from the speckless sky.

It is not till four that the pueblo again shows signs of life, and then the caballeros of the morning, reinforced by the better class of tradesmen, betake them to the casino, where, with the exception of a brief interlude for a cup of chocolate, they will steadily gamble till the hour of the *cena*, or supper, draws nigh, generally nine o'clock. The poor man may have probably come with his last available gold piece, knowing that, if it is lost, the dire shifts at home will become harder to bear. The tradesman, inflated with a certain purse-pride, frequently stakes and loses more than he can afford, even to the extent of compromising his commercial position; and the wealthier individual, if fortune is against him, but the more vehemently puffs at his cigarette, while if he wins, he knows that it is perhaps the money that should go to buy food for an already pinched family. The vice of gambling would seem to be born in the Spanish race. Children of all classes, from five years of age and upwards, stake the coppers that have been given to them openly on the plaza, and I have seen them disputing over a contested *cuarto* on the steps of the church, while *mass* was being performed within the building. And I have seen the priests sweep by without a word of expostulation, but this is hardly to be wondered at, as the priests themselves are by no means free from the besetting sin.

By the time the sun begins to wane, *senoras* and *senoritas*, in all the bravery of a carefully-studied toilet, make their appearance on the chequer-shadowed *paseo*, and so powerful is the new attraction, that many of the younger caballeros are induced to leave, for a period, the seductive influence of the gaming-table. As I have already remarked, no matter how the result is obtained, the outward show is eminently satisfactory. Even if a Spanish woman is not pretty, which, when young, is seldom

the case, she carries a charm with her which never fails to assert itself. Her figure is rounded and graceful—she has, unfortunately, a tendency in after years to grow stout—and her bearing such that no other race of women I know of can pretend to. The little arched foot treads the ground lightly but proudly, and her step and carriage are the very poetry of motion. The robe, which has generally a sweeping train, is worn somewhat clingingly, showing the contour of the form, but not impeding free action in every movement. A gauzy mantilla, falling artistically from the admirably-arranged luxuriant tresses, is the simple head-dress, with perhaps the addition of a rose or camelia, planted just where one would have it. And she carries a dangerous, and often killing weapon, which in other hands but hers loses its power—the fan. How it opens and shuts with a dexterous, yet careless turn of the ivory wrist; how it taps the pink tips of the dimpled fingers, to give emphasis to some arch expression; how in the sun-glare it is spread, and poised gracefully as a shield against the rays; how, when desirous of addressing, unnoticed, a gallant, and stabbing him with a glance of the lustrous eyes, it is made to act as a screen; how, by an almost imperceptible movement, it beckons an expectant but irresolute admirer; how it imposes silence on some too presuming caballero, by being passed lightly over the speaker's lips; how it indicates impatience in its quick fluttering; and how it is sometimes so manipulated, that its softly-cadenaced breath fans both the wielder and the supremely happy lover. Yes; the Spanish woman is by no means deficient of the elementary powers of fascination, and if one can only induce her to descend from the realms of artificial complimentary speech, and to speak naturally, she is perfectly charming. She has a fashion of saying what she thinks—in this she differs from the lords of her race—and of calling a spade a spade. She is bright, and even sparkling in her badinage, which, however, seldom rises above triviality; and if one would not break the momentary attractive spell, one should never attempt to change the superficial character of the conversation.

The little education she possesses has been obtained within the walls of a convent, and I think I am right in stating that the profane instruction never goes beyond reading, writing, the simpler rules of arithmetic, and music, though years

are devoted to cramming her with the lives of saints and the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. Of history she knows absolutely nothing, and her geography does not extend beyond her own usually limited travelling experiences. As to art and literature, the terms have no signification to her unprepared mind, and it is very doubtful, in the greater number of cases, if in after years the brain becomes more fertilised by reading. She only deals with surrounding familiar objects, and these, as subjects of conversation, are playfully and amusingly handled. Her *espièglerie* and coquetry make her most winsome, and, as already suggested, she is largely endowed with the elementary powers of fascination. Indeed, I cannot conceive a more pleasurable way of passing a charming quarter of an hour than a saunter on the paseo of San Fulano, with a not too strictly duenna-guarded damsel.

Married, the senora manages to pass through life without scandal, though no woman lives more apart from her husband. If, in her walks abroad, a young and attentive caballero is ready and obedient to her commands, none but the most wickedly disposed would dream of casting a stone. She has been brought up in the strict observance of the religion of her Church, and so long as she attends its ceremonies, and enjoys the good opinion of her spiritual adviser, who is also her confessor, no one dare whisper a word of slander. It is her lord's pleasure to seek his amusements away from home, and the only duty which is expected of her is to make herself pleasant and agreeable to her liege when he honours the house with his presence.

As evening closes in, and darkness commences to spread its mantle over mountain and valley, the paseo is gradually forsaken for the supper-table—a meal that is quickly disposed of, for the senoras have either to receive or to visit. It is in the Belgravia of San Fulano, in the houses of the wealthier colonists, that really charming tertulias are held; and one family is especially famous for its weekly assemblies. A suite of rooms, lightly yet elegantly furnished, open on to a broad stone terrace, embroidered by a band of multicoloured flowers, that fill the still atmosphere with their fragrance. Flights of steps descend to a richly-kept garden, with its plashing fountain, perfumed parterres, and avenues of arched foliage that lead to the riverbank; while beyond is a

stretch of valley that sweeps to the feet of the towering heights, which rise dark and mysterious on the star-twinkling background. Intensely enjoyable are these gatherings in such a season as that of which I write, when the pale moon

Frees her from a fleece of cloud,
And swims along the deep blue sea of heaven
On sweet June nights.

Once the formal compliments and initiative etiquette of the reception disposed of, one seems to have passed from the stilted, false world of the Spaniard, and to have entered another life. Senoras, knowing that it is their hour, use it most captivatingly; and the senoritas, freed from duenna surveillance, display to admiration their fascinating powers. Even the caballeros, for a moment, lay aside their pompous bearing, and appear to have become oblivious of politics and gambling. Of "tall" talk there is none, for reasons I have described; and though the conversation never rises above the simple subjects connected with daily life, yet there is not wanting a seasoning of "Sal Andaluz." There is an utter absence of anything approaching affectation, and a stranger is at first startled by the natural and unreserved fashion in which ladies allude to matters that would be banished from an English and even French drawing-room.

But the great attraction of these tertulias is the music; and San Fulano, during its season, can boast of the presence of artists who are renowned in the salons of Madrid and in the cities of Andaluca. Ah, it is supremely delicious in the soft moonlight, with charming companions on either side, fluttering their fans and speaking in whispers, to half recline amidst the flowers of the terrace, to savour the aroma of a Cuban cigarette, to listen dreamily to a wild melancholy romance of almost oriental character, and to beat time to the sparkling movement of a bolero or fandango, played as a duet between guitar and mandolin, and accompanied by the snapping of the castanets! Sometimes a space is cleared in the mellow-lit rooms, and caballeros and senoritas step proudly and gracefully to the measure of the Habanera or Jota Aragonese. And so the summer night passes pleasantly, till the deep chimes from the Moorish tower proclaim the hour of twelve, and, as the last echo dies away, closes the, to me, most charming chapter of Spanish daily life, as I have studied it in the mountain-shadowed, quaint old town of San Fulano.

LOVE ME, LOVE MY DOG.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

THE misunderstandings of unavowed lovers are, of all others, most persistent, least comprehensible, and least open to happy solution.

Amos Hedley and Hope Wolsingham saw just so much of each other as served to widen the gap between them, and not enough to bridge it over; yet, with the perverse inconsistency of human nature, the attachment of each became stronger as there seemed less likelihood of a mutual understanding.

Servants both, with set duties and hard work before them from one week's end to another, they had no leisure to ruminate with folded hands, and grow morbidly sentimental, but the heartache was not the less real and deep. The few days' intercourse at the farm, when the man was helpless and the woman tenderly helpful, had raised hopes which only lacked confirmation.

Alas, for hope! Their first meeting set doubt in its place, and doubt is an enemy not easily dislodged.

The brown and crimson leaves of October had grown dingy under the chilly breath of young November, and lay in sodden heaps under the dripping trees when the light frost gave way before mist and rain.

Amos, in attendance on Sir William, came and went from the park to the moors, the nearest way to which rounded the corner of the farmyard and crossed the Applegarth meadows, and had frequent opportunities to say a word in passing to whomsoever chanced to be about; and as they mostly passed at milking-time, whether morning or evening, and the dogs gave notice of their approach, it needed little contrivance to bring Hope within speaking distance on these occasions. But as milking-time came close upon feeding and foddering-time, big Geordie Applegarth was generally there also with his pitchfork, or pails of swill for the porkers, and being fond of a gossip, effectually prevented any private tête-à-tête.

Geordie was sublimely unconscious of intrusion, but Amos read in his constant presence an intentional intervention and supervision of Hope only compatible with ulterior designs of his own, and resented it accordingly.

He had carried the bright ribbons in his pocket, hoping to find a favourable moment for their presentation; but un-

certain how his offering might be received, he could not risk it with that raw-boned fellow at her elbow. So the silken love-gift came and went away with him, until, in high displeasure at George Applegarth's association with Hope, he began to pass without glancing towards the farm-gate even when alone. Nay, if Gipsy were with him, and evinced a desire to run beneath the bars and have a little quiet frolic with Hope, whose plump hand was always ready to stroke his head, a shrill and prolonged whistle summoned the grateful animal away before he could lick her hand in return.

Under this fresh slight Hope decided that Amos was ungrateful, that he was not worth thinking about, and that she would not waste another thought upon him. But she thought of little else. True, she kept out of sight when he was near, but she watched for his coming from behind the dairy lattice, and sighed when he was gone.

Hers was not a fading colour, but its brightness paled; she lost her spirits and her appetite, and then Dame Applegarth took notice of the change.

Hope insisted it was only due to the weather, but the good dame thought otherwise, and decided that her maid should have a holiday for the purpose of consulting her grandmother, the doctress, and bringing back such herbs and simples as their own garden might not afford.

Betty Wolsingham, when at home, which was but seldom, occupied a small cottage in a sort of rift, high on the side of Black Fell. Other cottages, chiefly inhabited by pitmen and their families, were scattered here and there, singly or in groups. Hers stood alone and aloof, under the shelter of a grey rock, and was distinguished by a small patch of garden-ground, in which Betty reared a few vegetables and such medicinal herbs as would flourish with little cultivation.

A clear spring of pure water trickled from the rock behind, and ran away in a thin rillet down the hillside, leaping in spray here and there until it lost itself in a wider burn, inky as the coal deposits whence it flowed.

Burnhead was little more than three miles from Derwentside, but three miles of rugged, pathless road over moor and fell, intersected with yawning caverns in the shape of old and abandoned coal-pits, with gorse and whin to impede progress if the "blind-path" be deserted; three miles, I say, of such road might well

count as six. So Dame Applegarth must have felt when she filled with fresh butter, new-laid eggs, a piece of bacon, and a pie, a basket for Hope to carry to her grandmother, and hurried the girl off early on the Saturday afternoon, with strict injunctions not to return until the next day, when she was to start early from Burnhead, lest the mists of evening should overtake her before she got home.

Hope took the basket and trudged off, hardly feeling its weight; perhaps her heart was the heavier of the two, for as she left the house-door she saw Amos Hedley at the copse-gate, and though his foot advanced as if to meet her, he stepped back, and the sudden smile died out from his face.

She had not seen Gilbert Applegarth and Geordie together watching her from the farmyard, or heard, as Amos had; the farmer's words to his son as he slapped him on the back encouragingly with one hand, and pointed at the same time to the figure going towards the village with the other.

"Theer's a canny lass fur thee, Gwordie, nivvor her marrow in all Durwham."

A canny lass, indeed, under the grey duffel cloak, with the gipsy hat tied down so closely and modestly under her chin, so as to cover her ears, and shadow her face from either glaring sun or staring eyes.

There was little sun to stare at her that November afternoon, and the few pitmen she met, with their picks over their shoulders, and their empty bait-pokes slung behind, merely said, "Gude-den, hinny," and passed on.

Never had the road to her grandmother's seemed so long and wearisome. Either she was really ill, or had been disheartened at the first start, for before she had gone half the distance she sat down to rest on a boulder grey and yellow with lichen, and put her basket beside her, glad to be relieved of the weight.

As she sat there pondering what Amos Hedley really thought about her, and whether it was true he was courting the laundry-maid at the hall, and whether it would be wise to mention him at all to her old grandmother, ruminating in a desultory sort of way, looking absently before her across the fell the while, she saw a figure approaching in the distance, and suddenly recognised the disreputable tinker, Nick Faw. She snatched up her basket in the instant and hastened along,

with steps no longer retarded by love-dreams, but quickened by apprehension.

Apparently he was not journeying her way, for, on looking back after awhile, distance or the inequalities of the road hid him from view.

Greatly to Hope's disappointment, Betty Wolsingham's cottage was closed. Its owner was evidently abroad smoothing someone's way either into the world or out of it, for the door was locked, which was never the case during temporary absence.

What should she do now? Go back she must, and that without delay; but she was already tired, and had no mind to carry a heavy load back with her. There was a small stone bench outside the cottage, and here she seated herself to consider—not the expanded prospect before her, but her own.

The walk had given her an appetite. Congratulating herself on the pork-pie in her basket, she broke down its wall of paste without ceremony, and finding a tin dipper at the back of the cottage, helped herself to a draught of water from the spring.

She then tried both casements, but they had been carefully secured, so there was no chance of emptying her basket on the window-seat within. Her only plan was to leave the things and a message with Betty's nearest neighbour—a collier's wife, who lived some four hundred yards away down the burn-side. This would take her out of her way, but it would be better than going back so laden.

So resolving, she again lifted her basket, this time with a little sigh of weariness; but the afternoon was advancing, and, though she knew every foot of the road, the knowledge came with the consciousness that it was safest trodden before the shadows closed in.

From the collier's wife she ascertained that her grandmother had only left home the previous day, and had fastened up her cottage because there were some "uncanny chaps hingin' an' keekin' about."

Hope's heart gave a leap as she thought of Nick Faw, and was half-inclined to accept the woman's hospitable invitation to remain there until morning. She had, however, too clear a perception of the already overcrowded state of the pitman's hut to add to its inconvenience. Contenting herself with leaving the comestibles behind for the woman's own use, reserving only the bacon for her grandmother, with many profuse apologies for rejecting the hospitality

pressed upon her, she turned her face homeward, not without calculating how far she should be able to travel before darkness came to obscure her path.

A stout heart had Hope. Setting fatigue aside, she stepped forward resolutely, with the grey hood of her cloak drawn over her hat, and the empty basket swinging in her hand to the motion of her feet. It was anything but a straight or a defined path: here and there she followed the downward course of the burn, once or twice she crossed the running water with a bound, now she traversed a precipitous ledge of rock, anon a cleft in which the day was quenched, and from which she only emerged to find the twilight deepening, and a thick mist blotting the outlines of the landscape. She was glad when she reached the open moorland, and knew that more than half the distance was traversed. For the first time she stopped to rest, leaning against a low grey ridge of stone whilst she shook the chafing sand and pebbles out of her shoes.

As if the very stoppage had conjured up a "bogle," she heard a loud halloo, which was answered by a rough voice, apparently on the other side the ridge, and within two yards of the spot where she stood.

Neither the call nor the answer were in choice language; but what made her heart sink was that the man hailed had answered to the name of "Nick," and that she could not pursue her road without being seen as soon as she reached the dip of the slaty screen of stone.

Hope's breath came and went. The spot was lonely. The man had an evil name, and his friends were tarred with the same brush. She was equally at a loss whether to advance or retreat, and indeed was half afraid to stir lest the crunch of loose stone beneath her tread might tell of her presence.

And now she felt that even the gathering fog was a friend to her; she might be able to pass the end of the ridge under its veil. There was no danger on the moors she dreaded in comparison with those men, of whom she had had a shuddering horror since the day she saw young Amos Hedley so bruised and battered by their brutality.

As she paused in fear and uncertainty she heard Nick Faw abuse the others for keeping him waiting so long in the cold. Then there was a gurgling sound as of liquor passing from a bottle-neck down

someone's throat, and then—well might she hold her breath and listen with mouth agape—all the details were discussed of a well-laid plan to break into Derwentside Hall on the Monday night, and carry off whatever plate and valuables they could lay their hands on, any opposition on the part of the inmates to be silenced by the knife.

Hope's ears and nerves were strained to the uttermost, her dread of discovery increased by the weight of the secret now in her keeping, and she longed to hear the men depart and leave the path open to her.

Presently there was a move, a move that appalled her. Nick Faw announced his intention to return to Black Fell. If he did, he must turn the corner of the ridge, and not even the fog would hide if he brushed against her.

Resolution came quick as thought. Gathering herself together she darted off like an arrow from the string, passed the dip of the rock unseen, if not unheard, in the fog, and barely caught the startled "What be yan?" or the jeering reply, "A hare, mon! Div ye think it be auld Clootie?" as away she scudded with all the celerity of fear and its reckless lack of perception.

In the one dread of pursuit she kept her course, though she could scarcely see a yard before her, and landmarks had disappeared.

Soon she had a dim consciousness that she had lost her way, and moved forward with more caution. Now she began to wish she had accepted the horn-lantern offered by the pitman's wife, that she might scan the path before her feet, and distinguish bushes from boulders. She was worn out with fatigue, terror, and anxiety, and what wonder if she also wished for the arm of Amos to sustain her, as she stumbled at every step? All at once her spirits rose; she fancied she discerned a well-known clump of bushes through which ran a narrow footpath leading direct to the village, and Hope congratulated herself on being so near home.

Yes; there was the gap between the gorse. She put her foot confidently forward—a shriek pierced the fog! She was going dizzily down, down into depths of unutterable darkness!

CHAPTER IV.

A QUICK shock, a sense of rapid descent, a feeling of stifling suffocation, of a head

swollen to bursting, dizziness, appalling terror, a retrospective vision of life, a horror of death, a plunge into cold water, a return to consciousness! Hope was struggling instinctively in the treacherous element which had saved her life by breaking her tremendous fall, and now threatened to engulf her. Had she known that she was thirty fathoms below the surface of the moor, she would have given up hope, and been lost; but though the water rushed into her mouth and drowned her cries for help, and though her woollen cloak was heavy and clung to her, she struggled to keep her head free, and, in struggling, her open hand struck the rugged side of the pit and grasped it tenaciously. Slight as was the hold, it supported her to strike her feet downward and find solid ground beneath them, and now the water came only to her armpits—she could breathe again.

Half afraid to move a step in the pitchy darkness, she raised her voice again, only to hear her call reverberate as it rose, and to feel how hopeless was her situation. Yet she groped with one hand along the wall, and strove to find a higher level for her foot.

At length her hand struck against a projection just above her head. It was a piece of timber, a kind of beam, doubtless one of the supports of the shaft when that had first been sunk for coal. At the full stretch of her arm she contrived to grip it firmly; and so, holding fast by the left hand, with the other she loosened the fastening of her saturated cloak and let it go. Relieved of its dragging weight, she threw up her right hand also to the beam, and clinging firmly with the strength born of despair, planted her feet against the rough wall of the shaft, and foot by foot—the water buoying her up—raised herself higher and higher, until, with a supreme effort, she swung herself across the beam.

The position was painful and critical. She had no light to guide her. In gaining the beam she had lost her foothold of the wall, and so great was the pressure on her waist, she felt assured she must drop unless she could scramble into a sitting posture.

After one or two narrow mischances, which sent her heart leaping into her throat, she attained her object, and thanked God for comparative safety.

Yet was her situation little less perilous. The beam had not more than the circumference of a man's hat-crown, and her sole

support being the side of the shaft, her seat was necessarily very insecure, added to which her feet were yet in the cramping water, her strength was well-nigh gone, and with the temporary rest a sense of drowsiness stole over her.

Fortunately hunger came to keep her awake, and with it longings for the half-eaten pie left at the collier's cottage. So far, struggles for immediate safety had overpowered every other thought and feeling; but now the desolation and hopelessness of her position smote Hope.

Of times she could take no note. It was the 27th of November, and its fog was thick enough to blot out moon and stars, had either hung above that old pit-mouth. Not until day had fully chased the mists and shadows, did a glimmering patch of light high up above her tell her that only one night had gone. To her it seemed as if the darkness was perpetual, and she had been there treble the time.

During the night she had contrived to raise her feet out of the icy water, and extend them before her on the beam; but they were almost numb, and she shivered in her wet clothes.

With her hungry longings had come thoughts of all the good things at the farm to tantalise her; and then the knowledge that she would not be missed until the Sunday night set in; and she began to question her own powers of endurance, and to wonder if she could hold out until they began to search for her. She wondered, too, how long it would be before Amos Hedley heard that she was missing, and if he would join in the search.

And then, as if conjured up by the thought of Amos, came in a flash over her mind the dreadful plot she had overheard, and the danger which threatened his master's household, and perchance himself. In the consciousness that she held a secret on which both life and property might hang, her hunger was for the time forgotten, and feverish longing to escape and warn Sir William overpowered all else.

She screamed until she was hoarse, but only her own voice came back to her; and as the hours went slowly by, and her clothes dried upon her, she grew parched and doubly feverish. To quench her intolerable thirst, she drew gently up the tail of her linen gown, which hung below drabbling in the water, and sucked the moisture out; but it had to be done with caution, lest she should overbalance.

And ever and anon she shrieked for

"help" and "Amos," but neither came; though another night wore out, and another day passed its meridian. She grew clamorous for food, fever was gaining upon her, and after lapses into despairing silence, her cries grew sharp and shrill.

Not until the day began to wane, and the gathering shadows sent home the farmer and his son to their Sunday evening meal, did Dame Applegarth evince any surprise at her maid's long absence. Then she began to remark that Hope was late, that it was not safe for a girl to wander on the fells after dark, and threatened to rebuke her when she did get home.

But when night began to show a black face at the diamonded casement, and the flames of the blazing fire leapt up to light the kitchen with reflections in polished oak and pewter, she looked uneasily out, and bade "Gwordie tak a lantern, and leet th' canny bairn through the mirk."

Geordie seemed somewhat loth to stir himself, but he never dreamed of disputing his mother's behests; so he reached a horn lantern from a hook behind the door, carefully lit and adjusted the bit of home-made candle within, closed the lantern deliberately, and, with a stick in one hand, set off on his errand, nothing doubting he should meet her before his long legs had carried him the length of the village.

Before he had gone far he met various parties of young fellows returning from the fell, some with game-cocks under their arms, others with bandy-sticks, or trigs; cock-fighting, bandy, trippet-and-coit, and other gambling games, making the fell-side like a fair on Sunday afternoons.

Several of these he questioned, but no one had seen or overtaken Hope, and when he had gone little more than a mile he turned back, satisfied in his own mind that she had stayed with her old grandmother. He was not gallant, and he wanted his supper.

He was, however, away quite long enough to add to his mother's uneasiness, without allaying it. She had never known Hope so far behind time in all the years of her long service; the lass had been like a daughter to her; and unpunctuality in her mind portended evil.

As Geordie came back down the village street, the light of the lantern gleamed on the white mutch, or long-eared linen cap, of his mother, as her head was stretched over the gate and her anxious "Wheer's Hope?" greeted him.

The question, and the short "Aw dinnet ken," with the longer assurance which followed that she must be "steyin' wiv auld Betty, for sarten!" being asked and answered from a distance, reached the ears of another watcher across the road. From the copse-gate, which he had already unfastened, came Amos Hedley, equipped for night-duty, with his gun over his shoulder.

From the tenour of his questions it would seem he was no better satisfied with Geordie's excuse than was Dame Applegarth, or the farmer, who joined them at the gate; and, but that the gamekeeper's duty tied him to his master's woods all night, he would himself have set off to put anxiety to rest, although the farmer assured him it "wad be kittle wark for a stranger te gan ower th' fell after neet-fa'; an' th' wench meet be syef enoof efter a'."

In that "might be" the good dame and Amos were compelled to look for hope, for Geordie showed no disposition for another march in search of his mother's dairymaid. But Amos watched that night with an impatience for the dawn he had rarely known before.

Instead of retiring to rest when the hour came to report himself to the head keeper, he swallowed in haste a glass of ale, thrust a hunch of bread and cheese in his coat-pocket, and was off on his self-appointed errand to Burnhead.

Geordie's nonchalance had allayed his jealousy, but not his fears or his love, and the restlessness which had gathered force during the night, gave speed to his flying feet, and made his possible reception a matter of small moment.

Disappointment awaited him at Betty's cottage, as it had awaited Hope. A pair of robins were breakfasting on the crumbs left from Hope's repast, but doors and windows were alike secured, and no hospitable smoke curled from the low chimney-top.

He stood hesitating; the crumbs were an assurance that someone had been there but recently. Possibly Hope and her grandmother had together quitted the cottage that very morning, and gone to make a neighbourly call before the former returned to the farm.

He cast his eyes around and singled out a cottage for enquiry, overleaping rock and burn in his impatient descent. It chanced to be the one Hope had gone out of her way to visit.

"Aye, Hope hed ben theer, suir enoof, but nowt wad gar her stop;" then observant of the ghastly change in her questioner's face, the woman added the kindly consolation that she might have stopped somewhere else farther down the fell when she found the fog coming on, and would most likely have reached home before then.

Alternately hoping and fearing, he hurried back after thanking his informant, turning aside from the trodden path, with tireless foot and expectant voice, towards every shepherd's hut or pitman's cottage within range, wherever it seemed feasible the girl he now loved so dearly might have sought a night's shelter and hospitality in emergency.

But, oh! how haggard was the face Amos presented when he burst into Farmer Applegarth's house, about eleven that Monday forenoon, and found his last hope extinguished on their hearth.

Not seeing Hope, or a sign of her, in the farm-yard, or in the empty kitchen, he rushed on to the dairy, where dame Applegarth was skimming the milk, too much concerned at her maid's absence to complain of the extra work. At the first accents of his hurried enquiry, the first glimpse of his anxious face, she dropped the wooden bowl of cream from her hands, and clasped them together on her breast in consternation, as she cried in echo to his hasty explanation: "Nut theer! and nut seen sin Setterday efternuin! Aw telt Gwordie somethin' wor wrang; aw wur suir of it! Whativer con hev fa'en the lass?"

Out ran the quiet woman into the farm-yard, calling for Gilbert and Geordie in a state of unusual excitement. Then she recollected that "the daft callont wor gyen te th' smiddy," and, whilst Amos darted across the road, and bounded over the copse-gate into the wood, she flew up the straggling street to seek her son, remembering only that Hope had gone away at her bidding, that Geordie had been luke-warm overnight, and feeling much as if whatever had happened to the girl would lie at their door.

The excitement spread. Staid Dame Applegarth could not rush up the village without bringing wives to their doors, and children after them. "Lost on Black Fell in the fog two days sin," roused many a sturdy pitman who worked on the night-shift from his forenoon dreams, to join the impromptu band of searchers

who were off, along with the farmer and Geordie, long before Amos returned with leave of absence granted, and limping Gipsy at his heels.

THE CHARLTON HUNT.

In the bosom of the South Downs, midway between Chichester and Midhurst, lies the secluded little village of Charlton, which, for more than a hundred years, was the Melton Mowbray of our forefathers. Immediately above it is the Goodwood racecourse; around it is the Charlton Forest. A hundred years ago Goodwood was a place nobody had heard of; everybody knew of Charlton, at least, by repute.

In 1749, the Duke of Richmond happened to be staying at a hunting-box he had lately built near Charlton, when the assizes were held at Chichester. As in duty bound, he entertained the judges. The little house at Goodwood has since expanded and become of world-wide fame, and it is not now spoken of, as it was then, as a house the duke had built near Charlton for the convenience of hunting.

The land at and around Charlton had formerly belonged to the Norfolk family, the Fitzalans, Earls of Arundel, whose hunting-box was at Downley, on the verge of the forest, where two earls died in the years 1525 and 1544. After the discovery of fox-hunting, a meet was always held at Charlton, whose broad delightful downs had been long before devoted to amusements of a kindred character.

It owed its later celebrity to the combined efforts of the Duke of Monmouth and his friend Ford, Lord Grey of Up-park, who kept two packs of hounds between them here.

Monmouth used to say, when he was king, he would come and keep his court at Charlton. His popularity throughout the neighbourhood was as great as it deserved to be; he was not then a pretender to the crown, and he was a supporter of fox-hounds; consequently he was received at Chichester, on his arrival for hunting in February, 1679, with such boisterous bell-ringing and bonfiring, that Bishop Carleton wrote an apology to the archbishop in London, hoping this conduct would not be interpreted as manifesting any want of loyalty on the part of his majesty's most devoted subjects at Chichester, than whom, &c. &c.

It happened that Mr. Edward Roper, of Eltham, Kent, was among the gentlemen who paid their respects to Monmouth on the occasion of the excessive bell-ringing; and he afterwards became the master and manager of the duke's fox-hounds, and fled with him to France after his attempt upon the throne. In the forests of Chantilly he pursued the amusement he could no longer enjoy in Sussex. On the accession of William the Third, Mr. Roper returned and again kept hounds at Charlton; the Duke of Bolton joined him in a sporting partnership, and shared the expenses of the pack; and the Duchess of Bolton, daughter of the Duke of Monmouth, graced Charlton every season with her presence.

The Charlton Hunt now became the best patronised and most popular in England. The sporting portion of the community poured down upon the place with their horses. Some, like the Dukes of Devonshire and St. Albans, erected hunting-boxes in the village of Charlton for their accommodation; others accepted such humble lodging as the inhabitants could offer. All the neighbouring villages were crowded. Under these circumstances, there was an obvious drawback to the enjoyment of the numerous visitors. In the hunting season the days may be delightful, but they are short; and when the long evenings are spent in small lodgings, in cottages, or in the best parlour of the Pig and Whistle in a South Down village, they become rather wearisome. There were the villages, and there they are now, Charlton and Singleton, a mile apart, each very pleasant by daylight so long as the downs and forest, and the green lanes and field-paths are available for walks and rides. Each is equally delectable during the hours that are available for fox-hunting in winter, and picnicing in summer; but after dark, there is not, and there was not a hundred years ago, anything to do. The native inhabitants, very possibly, found something to do, and did it—they had their usual occupations—but it was not so in the case of strangers.

The Earl of Burlington was one of those who disliked the long winter evenings doing nothing in the Pig and Whistle, and he therefore furnished a design for a place of refuge to be built at Charlton, and used of an evening by the fox-hunters. A subscription was started, and a place called Foxhall, consisting of a room and

offices, was erected for the votaries of Diana, as a place of resort during the long winter evenings. And here they came, not always in cabs and carriages, but on foot stalking up the village in the dark from their close-packed cottages and inconvenient inns. The Duchess of Bolton with her hereditary love of Charlton and of fox-hunting, invented an appropriate device; a flag-staff was planted before Foxhall, and on the top a gilt fox, fashioned as a weather-cock, swinging round with the wind.

The Earl of Burlington had arranged the details of his design with considerable foresight, and it presently appeared that Foxhall was not only admirably adapted as a banqueting-room, but, under stress of circumstances, it could be used as a saloon, concert-room, drawing-room, assembly room, and ball-room. It proved, in short, an extraordinarily convenient place of wondrous adaptability, and her grace of Bolton often dined here with the other guests, bringing with her a hopeful young fox-hunter, Lord Nassau Pawlett, her son. And here too her grace frequently breakfasted, and when the repast was over, repaired to a window and watched the weather-cock. The wind is everything in reference to the scent, and the duchess' device was the more appropriate on that account.

The fame of the Charlton Hunt reached its climax. The celebrated St. Victor chief patron of la chasse at Chantilly crossed the Channel to hunt with Mr. Roper, whom he had known in exile; and here, among these secluded downs, he met the greatest sportsmen of England and the cream of her hunting aristocracy.

Among others who joined this famous hunt, as a matter of course, was the Duke of Richmond. Goodwood, till 1720, had been a hunting seat of the Comptons; in that year the Duke of Richmond acquired it, and brought the duchess and the young Lord March to the meet at Charlton. In the evening they came to Foxhall with their daughter, the Lady Ann Lennox, afterwards Countess of Albemarle.

A rival hunt was attempted at Petworth, a neighbouring domain which then belonged to the Duke of Somerset. But the star of Petworth had recently suffered an eclipse. Ten generations of Percies, including Hotspur, had held Petworth in lineal succession, in addition to their

Northumberland property; and then, towards the middle of the last century, a common fate of noble houses had overtaken the house of Percy—it had ended in daughters. There were two. Sir Hugh Smithson married one, and took the northern estate with the name of Percy and the title; the Duke of Somerset married the other, and took Petworth.

The Duke of Somerset was one of the most exceedingly great men who ever condescended to set foot upon the South Downs. Although a stranger to the county, he considered himself the lord paramount of West Sussex, and the greatest man there or anywhere. Seeing hounds one day in full cry not very far from his windows, and horsemen and ladies in full pursuit, he angrily enquired: "Whose hounds are those coming so near my house?"

He was told they were the Charlton pack, Mr. Roper's.

"And who is he?" inquired his grace. "Where's his estate? What right has he to hunt this country? I'll keep a pack or two of hounds myself."

The Duke of Somerset was as good as his word; he built kennels and stables at a place called Twines, near Walton, a village on the Downs, and he sent down a pack of hounds and some first-rate cooks to Petworth; and then he asked the gentlemen of Sussex to a sumptuous breakfast. And whenever the Duke of Somerset gave a sumptuous breakfast, the meet at Petworth House was always well attended, but under any other circumstances people preferred riding as usual with Mr. Roper. That gentleman, as the duke had said, had no land in Sussex, but he was a first-rate master of hounds, he followed fox-hunting because he loved the sport, and he was a consummate judge of everything relating to the noble science.

The gentlemen of Sussex never swerved from their allegiance. They breakfasted at Petworth as often as they were invited, and they hunted with Mr. Roper, except when the Petworth hospitalities intervened. The duke was baffled; during several years he endeavoured, in vain, to carry his point, and he then gave up hunting, and gave away his hounds. Fate had decreed, however, the pre-eminence of a Petworth Pack, and the decadence of the Charlton Hunt.

In 1715 old Squire Roper died in the field at the age of eighty-four. He had ridden with the hounds to Findon, when, just

at the finish, he dropped lifeless from his horse. The hounds devolved on the Duke of Bolton, who had married a second wife, Lavinia Fenton (the original Polly of the *Beggars' Opera*). She knew not Charlton, and would not have much cared perhaps to appear there among the other duchesses, her predecessor having been the granddaughter of a king.

On the retirement of the Duke of Bolton he gave the hounds to the Duke of Richmond, who was assisted in the management by the Earl of Delaware, of Buckhurst.

The redoubtable Tom Johnson was huntsman, and every morning a hundred horses were led out, each with an attendant groom in the Charlton livery of blue, with gold cord and tassels to their caps. Lords and ladies continued to flock to Charlton in the hunting season; and, in 1732, the new master, the Duke of Richmond, built the house which remains, and in which he and the duchess lodged, to be ready for the early meet at eight o'clock.

After the meridian the sun descends and then sets, and so it was with this famous Hunt. It flourished till 1750, when the third duke succeeded, and removed the pack to Goodwood, where he built a splendid kennel.

The grand stand on the Goodwood racecourse looks immediately down into the hollow in which Singleton lies on the banks of the little Lavant. The rivulet comes down an adjoining glen, in which is Charlton, hidden from the racecourse by an intervening ridge, but only two miles distant from it, and only a little farther from Goodwood House. There was nothing, therefore, in the site of the kennel to prevent the Goodwood Hunt retaining the fame of that of Charlton; but that did not prove to be the case, and its members were presently confined exclusively to the gentry of the county. The Duke of Richmond was an excellent sportsman, but he did not confine himself so exclusively to fox-hunting as his father and Squire Roper had done.

The Richmond family became political, and when the fourth duke went to Ireland as lord-lieutenant he presented his hounds to George the Fourth. Their star, as a famous pack, soon after set, sinking suddenly, under circumstances that must have keenly touched the kindly hearts of those gentlemen who had long ridden with them. The most terrible misfortune that can fall on fox-hounds overtook them, in the de-

velopment of unmistakable symptoms of madness, which appeared among them, and led to the whole of the pack being destroyed. Foxhall was then pulled down, and all the hunting-boxes of Charlton have since disappeared, except the house of the Dukes of Richmond.

The Petworth Pack is now hunted over this classic ground.

An old title of the Percies, that of Baron Egremont, was revived in favour of the Duke of Somerset, with remainder to his nephew, Sir Charles Wyndham, Bart., who died in 1763. The stables at Twines were not built in vain. The third Earl of Egremont, the son of Sir Charles Wyndham, became the lord paramount of West Sussex, and he became the most successful breeder of racehorses of his day, and won the Derby and the Oaks oftener than anyone else has ever done; even at the present day there hardly exists a racehorse which has not some of the Petworth blood in its veins. His breeding stud was at Twines.

The same princely benefactor of his country and county spent twenty thousand pounds a year, for sixty years, in acts of charity and liberality. The Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, and other distinguished map-makers of Europe, expressed a wish to witness the style of living of a great English nobleman, and they were invited to Petworth, and entertained as they desired. Petworth House was a college of agriculture and nursery of art. Turner and Flaxman, when yet unknown, paid long visits to Petworth and studied in its unrivalled galleries. Arthur Young came, too, on another errand, as the chief adviser of one of the great patrons of English agriculture. To complete this story in a word, such was the reputation of Petworth, that, in the course of nature, hounds were kept there as soon as the Goodwood Pack was abandoned. And they have been kept there ever since.

The following manuscript account of a famous run of the Charlton hounds was discovered some years since, framed, and hung up in an old farmhouse at Funtington:

"A full and impartial account of the remarkable chase at Charlton, on Friday, 26th January, 1738.

"It has long been a matter of controversy in the hunting-field to what particular county, or set of men, the superiority belonged. Prejudices and partiality have the greatest share in these disputes, and

every society their proper champion to assert the pre-eminence, and bring home the trophy to their own county. Even Richmond Park has the Dymoke. But on Friday, 26th of January, 1838, there was a decisive engagement on the plains of Sussex, which, after ten hours' struggle, has settled all further disputes, and given the brush to the gentlemen of Charlton.

"Present in the morning: The Duke of Richmond, Duchess of Richmond, Duke of St. Albans, the Lord Harcourt, the Lord Henry Beauclerk, the Lord Ossulstone, Sir Harry Liddell, Brigadier Henry Hawley, Ralph Jennison, Master of His Majesty's Buckhounds, Edward Panncofort, Esq., William Farquhar, Esq., Cornet Philip Honeywood, Richard Biddulph, Esq., Charles Biddulph, Esq., Mr. St. Paul, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Peerman of Chichester, Mr. Thompson, Tom Johnson, Billy Ives, Yeoman Pricker to His Majesty's Hounds, David Briggs and Ninan Ives, whippers-in.

"At a quarter before eight in the morning the fox was found in Eastdean Wood, and ran an hour in that cover; then into the forest, up to Puntice Copee; through Heringdean, to the Marlows, up to Covey Coppice, back to the Marlows, to the Forest West Gate, over the fields to Nightingale Bottom, to Cobden's at Draught, up his Pine Pit Hanger, where his grace of St. Albans got a fall; through West Dean Forest, to the corner of Collar Down (where Lord Harcourt blew his first horse), crossed the Hackney-place, down the length of Colney Coppice; through the Marlows to Heringdean, into the Forest, and Puntice Coppice, Eastdean Wood; through the Lower Teglease, across by Cocking Course, down between Graffham and Woolavington; through Mr. Orme's park and paddock, over the Heath, to Fielden's Furzes, to the Harlands, Selham, Ambersham; through Todham Furzes, over Todham Heath, almost to Cowdray Park, there turned to the lime-kiln at the end of Cocking Causeway, through Cocking Park and Furzes, there crossed the road, and up the hills between Bepton and Cocking. Here the unfortunate Lord Harcourt's second horse felt the effect of long legs and a sudden steep; the best thing that belonged to him was his saddle, which my lord had secured; but by bleeding and Geneva (contrary to Act of Parliament) he recovered, and with some difficulty was got home. Here Mr.

Farquhar's humanity claims your regard, who kindly sympathised with my lord in his misfortunes, and had not power to go beyond him. At the bottom of Cocking Warren the hounds turned to the left, across the road by the barn near Heringdean, then took the side to the north gate of the Forest (here General Hawley thought it prudent to change his horse for a true blue that staid up the hills; Billy Ives likewise took a horse of Sir Harry Liddell's); went quite through the Forest went through the Warren above West Dean (where we dropt Sir Harry Liddell), down to Benderton Farm (here Lord Harry sank); through Goodwood Park (here the Duke of Richmond chose to send three lame horses back to Charlton, and took Saucy Face and Sir William, that were luckily at Goodwood; from there, at a distance, Lord Harry was seen driving his horse before him to Charlton). The hounds went out at the upper end of the park, over Strettington Road by Sealy Coppice (where his grace of Richmond got a summer set); through Halnaker Park, over Halnaker Hill to Seabeach Farm (here the Master of the Stag-hounds, Cornet Honeywood, Tom Johnson, and Ninn Ives, were thoroughly satisfied), up Long Down; through Eartham common fields and Kemp's High Wood (here Billy Ives tired his second horse, and took Sir William, by which the Duke of St. Albans had no great-coat, so returned to Charlton). From Kemp's High Wood the hounds took away through Gunworth Warren, Kemp Rough Piece, over Slindon Down, to Madehurst Parsonage (where Billy came in with them), over Poor Down, up to Madehurst, then down to Houghton Forest, where his grace of Richmond, General Hawley and Mr. Pauncefort came in (the latter to little purpose, for beyond the Race Hill neither Mr. Pauncefort nor his horse Tinker cared to go, so wisely returned to his impatient friends), up the Race Hill, left Sherwood on the right hand, crossed Offham Hill to Southwood, from thence to South Stoke, to the wall of Arundel River, where the glorious twenty-three hounds put an end to the campaign, and killed an old bitch fox, ten minutes before six. Billy Ives, his grace of Richmond, and General Hawley, were the only persons in at the death, to the immortal honour of seventeen stone, and at least as many campaigns."

Tom Johnson, the last huntsman of the Charlton Pack, lies buried in the church-
yard at Singleton in the valley below the

Trundel Hill; and a marble tablet to his memory is inscribed with the following lines:

Here Johnson lies: what hunter can deny
Old honest Tom the tribute of a sigh?
Deaf is that ear that caught the opening sound,
Dumb is that tongue that cheered the hills around.
Unpleasing truth! Death hunts us from our birth,
In view, and men, like foxes, take to earth.

The South Downs of West Sussex are still noted for fox-hunting; but the revelry of the Goodwood week, within sight and sound of the old huntsman's grave, is a modern addition to the pastimes of the district.

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOBY,

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRIFFITH'S DOUBLES,"
&c. &c.

CHAPTER XXVIII. LAURA.

It was natural that Sir Wilfrid Esdaile should observe Mrs. Thornton a good deal more closely than he would have done had he met her again merely as one of the innumerable persons whom one sees everywhere for awhile, and then ceases to see. He would have studied her, as the woman who had made so strong an impression on Dunstan, with considerable curiosity, but later events lent her an additional interest. She was the distant and indirect cause of his own haunting trouble, of the misfortune that had taken the good out of his life, and, as he was aware, when he would allow himself to listen to the warning, out of himself also. If she had but waited for Dunstan, if she had had just enough constancy, and sufficient of the spirit of the gambler, who always believes in a coming turn of the luck, Sir Wilfrid's own luck would not have been so dead against him in the one great venture that had really been worth making. And how admirably Laura and Dunstan would have suited each other! Under any circumstances that could not have failed to strike Sir Wilfrid; but now, with the strongly contrasted image of Janet always in his mind's eye, he felt it at every turn; and feeling it, found it more than ever difficult to account for Dunstan's marriage, and to reconcile himself to the idea of it. Could he really have come to care for Janet? Had he married her, for some inexplicable motive, without caring for her? In the latter case, Sir Wilfrid, though but little given to thinking of the forecasting kind, seemed in his fancy to see the foam, and to hear the roar of breakers ahead.

could avoid admiring the brilliant and animated young woman, on whom life was smiling so brightly, and who smiled back at life with responsive brightness? She was handsomer, or he thought her so, now, than before her marriage; and her vivacity, her readiness to please and be pleased, and her unflagging spirits, rendered her charming to everybody. There was no more popular person among the English visitors to Nice that season than the beautiful Mrs. Thornton. Was she absolutely heartless, Sir Wilfrid wondered; did she take everything so lightly as she seemed to do; or had the marriage, in which, unless Dunstan had egregiously deceived himself from the first, her heart was not, turned out a perfect success after all?

The season was unusually fine; even the habitual grumblers, who were given to talk of the "treachery" of the climate, were satisfied for once; and Laura enjoyed her sojourn with a thoroughness that had not yet yielded to the habit of wealth and the unlimited power of indulging her wishes and fancies. Prominent among the latter was her liking for Mrs. Monroe; the impulsive regard with which the young widow had inspired her in Scotland, and which had certainly been due in part to the light sense of boredom that had crept over her in the unrelieved society of her husband and his aunt, was revived and strengthened on their second meeting, and Laura derived great pleasure from the power of being useful to her friend.

"I always longed to have her with us," she said to Miss Wells, "away from that horrid cold place, and those dull skies and dismal mists; and you see how right I was; she is ever so much better. If she had only been with us at Naples and Palermo all the winter, she would be quite well by this time. Just look at her colour, and she does not cough once for every ten times she did ten days ago."

Laura had the hopefulness and the disbelief in serious illness, so long as the invalid can be up and about, that belong to persons who enjoy perfect health, and she persisted in considering Mrs. Monroe merely "delicate." And, indeed, there were hopeful symptoms about her now; at least she seemed to be reprieved. She took long drives with Laura, and even went for a short cruise in the yacht; on which occasion Sir Wilfrid Esdaile was one of the party on board the *Firefly*, and was so attentive to Mrs. Monroe and her odd-looking friend, that Miss Wells "quite took to him," as she expressed it, and

they were all doubly sorry about the rumours that reached them concerning Sir Wilfrid's wildness. But the cruise, though the waves were like molten sapphires, and the sky was like a dome of turquoise, was too much for Mrs. Monroe, and she was unable to go out for some days after it, so that Laura had to come to her, which she did very willingly.

The acquaintance of Miss Wells with Nice, and the associations, so dear in spite of all their pain, that bound her to the place, were of old date, before the modern extension and grandeur of the city; and she adhered to the old places and ways. It was a roomy and comfortable, not a bright or luxurious abode in which Miss Wells had established her headquarters for several years; the modern magnificence of the hotels affected by the Russian, American, and English visitors had no charms for her. She knew everybody in the old quarter, she would say, and everybody knew her: and if the fancy should take her to go off to Jericho, she would have nothing to do but to lock her door, hang up her key on a nail in the dingy bureau below, and go. She would find everything on her return exactly as she had left it, and her coming and going would surprise or concern nobody.

The rooms occupied by Miss Wells and her friend, whom she had established in her own quarters, after a brief inspection had satisfied her that this was a case for the active exercise of her own especial calling, were pleasantly situated on the second floor of a rambling old hotel—it no longer exists—and they opened into a wide corridor which led to a staircase at either end. The rooms, which were lofty, with tall windows commanding a lovely view, communicated with each other from one extremity of the corridor to the other, as was generally the case with buildings of the period of this hotel; and between the rooms at one end, which did not belong to Miss Wells, and the rooms at the other end, which did belong to her, there was merely an ordinary door, not "condemned," only locked, and with a square pane of greenish glass inserted into the upper panel—no one could divine with what purpose, for it was too high to be looked through, and it admitted no light, as the door was in the cross-wall close to the outer wall, while the windows were on the opposite side. Miss Wells had a notion that this unreasonable little window in the door had been made to enable somebody to watch a mad person, unseen, in the time

when the hotel was a private house belonging to an old Savoyard family; but the invisible eye in that case must have been set in the head of a giant. A heavy table, laden with books, was placed across the door with the window in it; and the room, which was pleasant and less bare than the others of the suite, was appropriated to Mrs. Monroe.

Well cared for by the brisk and clever woman, whose warmest feelings were enlisted on her behalf, the young widow was very peaceful in these later days. She was under no delusion about her own state; she was quite happy in the conviction that she had but a short time to live; and the serenity, that came with that certainty, enabled her to take more interest in others than she had taken since the sea had swallowed up all the meaning and value of her life. Miss Wells's only brother was saved from the shipwreck in which Kenneth Monroe was lost, and he had brought home the intelligence; but he died shortly afterwards in the very room which Mrs. Monroe now occupied. This was the link between the strangely-contrasted friends. On their quiet and inevitably sad life Laura shone like a sunbeam, warming and brightening it, and was very welcome. She was delighted with Miss Wells, and proud of her conquest of that rather sturdy-natured person, who had a theoretical aversion to fine ladies, but in reality regarded with pleased curiosity the faits et gestes of a brilliant creature of the human butterfly order, whose ways were so entirely different from her own. Laura's beauty and Laura's dress were objects of unwearied admiration to Miss Wells, whose own looks had never occupied her attention, and whose attire was of a florid description.

"You could not imitate that sort of thing," said Miss Wells; "you must be born to it to dress as Mrs. Thornton does—just as if everything she wears was specially invented for her! And did you ever see a man so much in love with his wife as Mr. Thornton is? He really seems to have no eyes or ears for anyone but her. If she was to be spoiled, I think he must certainly spoil her."

"I fancy she gets a good deal of spoiling from everyone. I am sure she does from you," returned Mrs. Monroe, smiling; "but she bears it very well. She has a kindly nature, if not a deep one, and is not hardened by happiness."

This was a true judgment. Laura Thornton was supremely happy in those days. She had only two troubles, if,

was, that she could not have her father with her until after her return to England; the other was, that Mr. Thornton had taken it into his head that the child, for whose birth she might look in the autumn, ought to see the light in his own country. Of course, the child would be a son; everything was so prosperous with Laura that she never doubted that, but always thought of the coming baby as "he," and she understood, if she did not share, her husband's feelings. It was not, however, as if the house at the Mains were ready to receive them: in that case there would be a perfect fitness of things: the grandson of the self-made man ought to be born in the mansion that was to be ancestral in the future: but Laura did not take kindly to the prospect of the Stone House and old Miss Thornton. She thought Hunsford and Lady Rosa would be better than that. However, since Robert had old-fashioned notions about her needing to be with somebody, and since he regarded the event with a solemnity which she hardly comprehended, she would not oppose his wishes. He was so good to her in all things, he really deserved so much concession, and, after all, she must have a spell of dulness somewhere under any circumstances. So she behaved very well about this prospect, consoling herself with the reflection that it was still distant, and that Paris and London lay between, and finding a great deal of pleasure in her life in the meantime. To the childless woman, for whom life was slowly but surely closing, Laura's light way of regarding the benediction of motherhood was strange and a little jarring; but she did not blame Laura, for she knew, at least in theory, that this was the way of Laura's "world," and that she was only as the training and associations of her previous life had made her. She could even be amused by Laura's stories of the serious epistles with which Miss Thornton favoured her, and which contained precepts of the kind that would have had a chance of being followed half a century or so earlier in the history of the world. Laura had a clear perception of the absurd side of everything, and she laughed unrestrainedly at the anticipatory anxieties of the spinster aunt who had had the charge of Robert Thornton's childhood, and seemed to remember every hour of it with a distinctness which a mother could hardly emulate. To Mrs. Monroe, who knew the old lady so well, the spirited description had a pleasantly characteristic

"I do believe," said Laura, "she sees him in knickerbockers and the Latin grammar already."

"And Lady Rosa Chumleigh?" asked Miss Wells, to whose imagination a Lady Rosa, with such a daughter as Laura, was a most fortunate and enviable personage. "I suppose she is equally pleased and anxious?"

Laura was on the point of saying that Lady Rosa regarded the prospect of becoming a grandmother with a good deal of indifference, but she checked herself. She was too well-bred to yield to the temptation of saying unpleasant things about her own mother to a stranger, however strongly the contrast struck her sense of humour. As a matter of fact, Lady Rosa had dismissed the matter in three lines, briefly recommending Laura to take care of herself, and to be sure to see an English doctor wherever she might be. The notion of Scotland was too ridiculous. Why should Laura not remain at her own house in London?

The utterances of Lady Rosa were not sympathetic, but Laura had never expected that they would be; so that it was not any disappointed or hurt feeling which made her say nothing to Mr. Thornton of her mother's letter. It was a kind of shame and pity for that mother—a feeling different from the mere weariness and vexation that Lady Rosa used to produce in her mind. So much influence the higher order of nature with which she had been associating of late had had on Laura, that she began to see the soul of things, not very distinctly or very willingly as yet, but so that among friends judicious enough to admit that Laura could be improved—Miss Thornton, for instance, and Julia Carmichael—an improvement in her would have been acknowledged.

Had she learned to love her husband? Had she come to prize the love that raised her to an eminence which she had perception enough to appreciate, and to dread a little, as the greatest of treasures and the richest of blessings, in comparison with which every external feature of her most enviable lot was but insignificant? No. Laura had learned to like her husband very much; to feel as much respect for him as she was capable of feeling—for that is a sentiment which needs cultivation in the mind—and to be so thoroughly assured and confident of her own power over him, that she no longer felt vaguely uncomfortable, and as if some constant effort were required of her, in consequence

of the pedestal upon which his devotion and his fancy had set her. At first she felt that there was a standard of some sort in his mind which she did not clearly comprehend, but she was quite sure she should not attain to, and she hated that uneasy consciousness that she was not what he supposed her to be; but she had now ceased to feel it. It would never have existed had Laura known what real love meant, or been able to understand aright that which she had won. From the moment in which Robert Thornton perceived that a solitude à deux was not Laura's notion of happiness, he relinquished the project of continuing to find his in it, and she had enjoyed all the novelty and pleasure of foreign travel and society to her heart's content. With the yacht in attendance, they had sojourned wherever she fancied during the winter, and he had schooled himself into content with the share she gave him of her heart, her sympathy, and her company. He had expected too much at first; she had known at once too much and too little of the world; too much to be unconscious of its attractions, too little to be convinced of its emptiness, and wearied of its exactions; he must be patient, and the paradisaical time would come. It would surely come with the child, who, if a new claimant upon Laura's heart, would, at least, be one with whom he could bear to share it, one of whom he could never feel the smallest pang of jealousy, for whom, on the contrary, he might be jealous, if the deeper depths of her nature were not stirred by the new and sacred touch.

Laura had early discerned in her husband's disposition a tendency to jealousy, which is in some cases merely an attribute of temper, but in others the inseparable defect of the quality of strong and deep affections. She was a clear-headed person enough, and she made up her mind, as much, to do her justice, for his sake as for her own, never to provoke the demon. She had had her little spark of romance in her life, and she had trodden it out, deliberately, if not altogether of her own free will. And she had no reason to complain that the reality she had taken in exchange had disappointed her in any way. To the "might have been" she never voluntarily turned her thoughts, after the first pain and bitterness of her interview with Edward Dunstan had passed away; and if a speculation about how they should meet, if ever, where, and when, crossed them, it was not attended by much solicitude.

Laura was not of a disposition to feel apprehension about the future; she carried out the maxim which in homely phrase bids us "not bid the devil good-morrow till we meet him." No doubt she had been a little sorry for herself, and a good deal sorry for Dunstan, but both feelings passed, and only a vague revival of them attended her contemplated return to England. Charming, popular, and admired as she was, the most jealous husband could have found no fault with her; her manners were quite free from coquetry, and her easy eager enjoyment of all the pleasures of society was of the frankest kind. Thus, except in the sense of a disappointed hope of what her feelings towards himself might come to be, a sense which was revealing to him, little by little, the truth that he had expected of her what there was not in her the capacity to give, Robert Thornton never felt the serpent's fang.

We have seen how Captain Dunstan speculated on what might possibly be Laura's feelings concerning his marriage, and though he was mistaken in supposing that her self-complacency would be rudely shaken, it would be vain to deny that Laura did hear of the event with a twinge of mortification. She would not have acknowledged it to herself, and she would have been profoundly disgusted at the bare notion that anyone could have suspected it; nevertheless, she had let it out to Julia. It was very soon, she thought, after all his protestations and his despair. He had got over that pretty quickly, just like a man! However, she had no business, and no inclination to think at all about it; and though she could not help feeling just a little curiosity, she would carefully avoid indulging it by asking questions either of Sir Wilfrid Esdaile or Mrs. Monroe. She was tolerably certain that Sir Wilfrid must know something, if not all, having been with Dunstan at Southampton; and if Dunstan had told his wife, as was not unlikely—for her triumph would but be augmented by a vivid picture of Laura's fickleness and mercenary behaviour, as he, having got over his love for her, would be sure to paint them—what more likely than that his wife would feel curious about her, and question Mrs. Monroe? In case she did so, at least there should be no curiosity on Laura's side to report. Thus it happened that, after the one casual mention of

Mrs. Dunstan on the day of their meeting on the Castle Hill; she was never again referred to by Laura and Mrs. Monroe.

The brief attack of hurt vanity from which Laura suffered was much assuaged by the reflection that the fact of Dunstan's marriage removed from her path the one little difficulty that lay in it. She had nothing to fear from his impetuosity now; his own fickleness, his own readiness to obliterate the past by a new tie, had amply condoned hers. It was not a very long step for Laura's active fancy from this consoling consideration, to wondering where and how she and Mrs. Dunstan should meet, what they would think of each other, and whether Dunstan's Janet was as charming as her Janet. The dead past buried itself with wholesome celerity in Laura's case. She drew several pictures, in her imagination, of the meeting, which, in the nature of things, was to be.

Not one of those pictures prefigured, ever so remotely, the truth of the meeting between Laura Thornton and Edward Dunstan's wife.

Mrs. Monroe was again better towards the close of Laura's stay at Nice, and able to drive out with her friend. The *Firefly* was to make one last cruise along the coast, with Mr. Thornton and Sir Wilfrid Esdaile on board, before going home. They were a pleasant party at the embarkation. Laura, Mrs. Monroe, and Miss Wells were to drive to Beaulieu after they had taken leave of the gentlemen, whose return was to be looked for in three days.

"I am glad to keep Esdaile out of mischief even for so short a time," Mr. Thornton had said to his wife that morning, "and you must keep him up to coming on to Paris with us. He is horribly reckless, and the set here is worse than ever, if possible."

The farewells were spoken, with smiles and good wishes on the part of the ladies. Mr. Thornton foretold a delightful cruise and added fame for the *Firefly*. Miss Wells promised him that she would be responsible for Laura's taking care of herself during his cruise. He had taken leave of his wife, and was about to step into the boat, when he turned back, said something to her in a whisper, and kissed her. When they drove away, her companions saw that Laura's eyes were full of tears.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XX. THE VOW IS VOWED.

ONLY a chosen few had been bidden to Mrs. Tempest's wedding. She had told all her friends that she meant everything to be done very quietly.

"There is so much that is saddening in my position," she said pensively. But she was resolved that those guests who were asked to lend their countenance to her espousals should be the very best people.

Lord and Lady Ellangowan had been asked and had accepted, and their presence alone would lend dignity to the occasion. Colonel and Mrs. Carteret, from Copse Hall; the Chopnells, of Chopnell Park; and about half-a-dozen other representative landowners and commoners made up the list.

"There is such a satisfaction in knowing they are all the best people," Mrs. Tempest said to Captain Winstanley, when they went over the list together.

His own friends were but two: Major Pontorson, his best man, and a clerical cousin, with a portly figure and a portwiney nose, who was to assist Mr. Scobel in the marriage service.

It was a very pretty wedding, the neighbourhood declared unanimously; despite the absence of that most attractive feature in more youthful bridals—a string of girlish bridesmaids. The little church at Beechdale was a bower of summer flowers. The Abbey House conservatories had been emptied—the Ellangowans had sent a waggon-load of ferns and exotics. The atmosphere was heavy with the scent of yellow roses and stephanotis.

Violet stood among the guests, pale as marble; no gleam of colour on her cheek except the wavering hues reflected from the painted windows in the low gothic chancel—the ruddy gold of her hair shining under the Vandyke hat with its sweeping feather. She was the loveliest thing in that crowded church, whither people had come from ten miles off to see Squire Tempest's widow married; but she had a spectral look in the faint light of the chancel, and seemed as strange an image at this wedding as the ghost of Don Ramiro at Donna Clara's bridal dance.

Violet did not look like the malevolent fairy in the old story, but she had a look and air which told everyone that this marriage was distasteful to her.

When all was over, and the register had been signed in the vestry, Captain Winstanley came up to her, with both hands extended, before all the company.

"My dear Violet, I am your father now," he said. "You shall not find me wanting in my duty."

She drew back involuntarily; and then, seeing herself the focus of so many eyes, suffered him to touch the tips of her fingers.

"You are very kind," she said. "A daughter can have but one father, and mine is dead. I hope you will be a good husband to my mother. That is all I can desire of you."

All the best people heard this speech, which was spoken deliberately, in a low clear voice, and they decided inwardly that whatever kind of wife Captain Winstanley might have won for himself, he had found his match in his stepdaughter.

Now came the drive to the Abbey House, which had put on a festive air, and where

smartly-dressed servants were lending their smiles to a day which they all felt to be the end of a peaceful and comfortable era, and the beginning of an age of uncertainty. It was like that day at Versailles when the Third Estate adjourned to the Tennis Court, and the French Revolution began. People smiled, and were pleased at the new movement and expectancy in their lives, knowing not what was coming.

"We are bound to be livelier, anyhow, with a military master," said Pauline.

"A little more company in the house wouldn't come amiss, certainly," said Mrs. Trimmer.

"I should like to see our champagne cellar better stocked," remarked Forbes the butler. "We've behind the times in our sparkling wines."

Captain Winstanley entered the old oak-panelled hall with his wife on his arm, and felt himself master of such a house as a man might dream of all his life and never attain. Money could not have bought it. Taste could not have created it. The mellowing hand of time, the birth and death of many generations, had made it beautiful.

The wedding-breakfast was as other wedding feasts. People eat and drank, and made believe to be intensely glad, and drank more sparkling wine than was good for them at that abnormal hour, and began to feel sleepy before the speeches, brief as they were, had come to an end. The August sun shone in upon the banquet; the creams and jellies languished and collapsed in the sultry air. The wedding cake was felt to be a nuisance. The cracker bonbons exploded faintly in the languid hands of the younger guests, and those ridiculous mottoes, which could hardly amuse anyone out of Earlswood Asylum, were looked at a shade more contemptuously than usual. The weather was too warm for enthusiasm; and Violet's pale set face was almost as disheartening as the skeleton at an Egyptian banquet. When Mrs. Tempest retired to put on her travelling dress Violet went with her, a filial attention the mother had in no wise expected.

"Dear girl," she said, squeezing her daughter's hand, "to-day is not to make the slightest difference."

"I hope not, mamma," answered Violet gravely; "but one can never tell what is in the future. God grant you may be happy!"

"I'm sure it will be my own fault if I

am not happy with Conrad," said the wife of an hour, "and oh, Violet, my constant prayer will be to see you more attached to him."

Violet made no reply, and here happily Pauline brought the fawn-coloured travelling dress, embroidered with poppies and cornflowers in their natural colours, after the style of South Kensington; a dress so distractingly lovely, that it naturally put an end to serious conversation. The whole costume had been carefully thought out; a fawn-coloured parasol, edged with ostrich feathers, a fawn-coloured bonnet, fawn-coloured hessian boots, fawn-coloured Swedish gloves with ten buttons—all prepared for the edification of railway guards and porters, and Scotch innkeepers and their servants.

Verily there are some games which seem hardly worth the candle that lights the players. And there was once upon a time an eccentric nobleman who was accounted maddest in that he made his wife dress herself from head to foot in one colour. Other times, other manners.

Violet stayed with her mother to the last, received the last embrace—a fond and tearful one—and watched the carriage drive away from the porch amidst a shower of rice. And then all was over. The best people were bidding her a kindly good-bye. Carriages drove up quickly, and in a quarter of an hour every one was gone except the vicar and his wife. Vixen found herself standing between Mr. and Mrs. Scobel, looking blankly at the old hearth, where an artistic group of ferns and scarlet geraniums replaced the friendly winter fire.

"Come and spend the evening with us, dear," said Mrs. Scobel kindly; "it will be so lonely for you here."

But Violet pleaded a headache, a plea which was confirmed by her pale cheeks and the dark rings round her eyes.

"I shall be better at home," she said. "I'll come and see you in a day or two, if I may."

"Come whenever you like, dear; I wish you would come and stay with us altogether. Ignatius and I have been so pleased with your conduct to-day, and we have felt for you deeply, knowing what a conquest you have made over yourself."

The Reverend Ignatius murmured his acquiescence.

"Poor mamma!" sighed Violet; "I am afraid I have been very unkind."

And then she looked absently round the old familiar hall, and her eye lighted on the

squire's favourite chair, which still stood in its place by the hearth. Her eyes filled with sudden tears. She fancied she could see a shadowy figure sitting there. The squire in his red coat, his long hunting-whip across his knee, his honest loving face smiling at her.

She squeezed Mrs. Scobel's friendly hand, bade her and the vicar a hurried good-bye, and ran out of the room, leaving them looking after her pityingly.

"Poor girl," said the vicar's wife, "how keenly she feels it!"

"Ah!" sighed the vicar, "I have never been in favour of second marriages. The widow is happier if she so abide, after my judgment, as St. Paul says."

Vixen called Argus and went up to her room, followed by that faithful companion. When she had shut and locked her door, she flung herself on the ground, regardless of Madame Theodore's masterpiece, and clasped her arms round the dog's thick neck, and buried her face in his soft hide.

"Oh, Argus, I have not a friend in the world but you!" she sobbed.

CHAPTER XXI. WAR TO THE KNIFE.

A STRANGE stillness came upon the Abbey House after Mrs. Tempest's wedding. Violet received a few invitations and morning calls from friends who pitied her solitude; but the best people were for the most part away from home in August and September; some no farther than Bournemouth or Weymouth; others roaming the mountainous districts of Europe in search of the picturesque or the fashionable.

Violet did not want society. She made excuses for refusing all invitations. The solitude of her life did not afflict her. If it could have continued for ever, if Captain Winstanley and her mother could have wandered about the earth, and left her in peaceful possession of the Abbey House, with the old servants, old horses, old dogs, all things undisturbed as in her father's time, she would have been happy. It was the idea of change, a new and upstart master in her father's place, which tortured her. Any delay which kept off that evil hour was a blessed relief; but, alas! the evil hour was coming, it was close at hand, inevitable. That autumn proved exceptionally fine. Scotland cast aside her mantle of mist and cloud, and dressed herself in sunshine. The Trossachs blossomed as the rose. Gloomy grey glens and mountains put on an apparel of light.

Mrs. Tempest wrote her daughter rapturous letters about the tour.

"We move about very slowly," she said, "so as not to fatigue me. Conrad's attention is more than words can describe. I can see that even the waiters are touched by it. He telegraphs beforehand to all the hotels, so that we have always the best rooms. He thinks nothing too good for me. It is quite saddening to see a herd of travellers sent away, houseless, every evening. The fine weather is bringing crowds to the Highlands. We could not have travelled at a more favourable time. We have had only a few showers, but in one, on Loch Katrine, my poor fawn-coloured dress suffered. The scarlet of the poppies ran into the blue of the cornflowers. Is it not a pity? I was quite unconscious of what was going on at the time; and afterwards, when I discovered it, I could have shed tears.

"I hope when you marry, darling, you will come to Scotland for your honeymoon. The mountains seem to appeal to one's highest feelings. There are ponies, too, for the ascent; which is a great comfort if one is wearing pretty boots. And you know, Violet, my idea that a woman should be essentially feminine in every detail. I never could bring myself to wear the horrid clump-soles which some women delight in. They seem to me to indicate that strongminded and masculine character which I detest. Such women would want the suffrage, and to have the learned professions thrown open to them. I meet ladies—or, at least, persons calling themselves such—in horrid waterproof-costumes and with coarse cloth hats. Hideousness could go no farther. And though I regret the wreck of my fawn-colour, I can but remember with satisfaction what Theodore always says to me when she shows me one of her chef-d'œuvres: 'Mrs. Tempest, it is a dress fit for a lady.' There are scandalous wretches who declare that Theodore began life as a kitchenmaid in an Irish inn, but I, for one, will never believe it. Such taste as hers indicates a refined progeniture."

With such letters as these did Mrs. Winstanley comfort her absent daughter. Vixen replied as best she might, with scraps of news about the neighbours, rich and poor, the dogs, horses, and garden. It was hateful to her to have to direct her letters to Mrs. Winstanley.

The days went on. Vixen rode from early morning till noon, and rambled in

the Forest for the best part of the afternoon. She used to take her books there, and sit for hours reading on a mossy bank under one of the beeches, with Argus at her feet. The dog was company enough for her. She wanted no one better. At home the old servants were more or less friends—their faces always pleasant to see. Some of them had lived with her grandfather; most of them had served her father from the time he inherited his estate. The squire had been the most conservative and indulgent of masters; always liking to see the old faces. The butler was old, and even on his underling's bullet-head the grey hairs were beginning to show. Mrs. Trimmer was at least sixty, and had been getting annually bulkier for the last twenty years. The kitchenmaid was a comfortable-looking person of forty. There was an atmosphere of domestic peace in the offices of the Abbey House which made everybody fat. It was only by watchfulness and tight-lacing that Pauline preserved to herself that grace of outline which she spoke of in a general way as "figure."

"And what a mite of a waist I had when I first went out to service," she would say pathetically.

But Pauline was now in Scotland, harassed by unceasing cares about travelling-bags, bonnet-boxes, and extra wraps, and under-valuing Ben Nevis as not worth half the trouble that was taken to go and look at him.

The gardeners were grey-headed, and remembered potting the first fuschia-slips that ever came to the Forest. They had no gusto for new-fangled ideas about cordon fruit trees or root-pruning. They liked to go their own way, as their fathers and grandfathers had done before them; and, with unlimited supplies of manure, they were able to produce excellent cucumbers by the 1st of May, or a fair dish of asparagus by about the same time. If their produce was late it was because nature went against them. They could not command the winds, or tell the sun that he must shine. The gardens at the Abbey House were beautiful, but nature had done more for them than the squire's old gardeners. The same rose-trees budded and bloomed year after year; the same rhododendrons and azaleas opened their big bunches of bloom. Eden could have hardly owed less to culture. The noble old cedars, the mediæval yews, needed no gardener's hand. There was a good deal

of weeding, and mowing, and rolling done from week's end to week's end; and the borders were beautified by banks of geranium and golden calceolaria, and a few other old-fashioned flowers; but scientific horticulture there was none. A few alterations had been begun under Captain Winstanley's directions; but the work languished in his absence.

It was the beginning of September, and the travellers were expected to return within a few days—the exact date of their arrival not being announced. The weather was glorious, warmer than it had been all through the summer; and Vixen spent her life out of doors. Sad thoughts haunted her less cruelly in the great wood. There was a brightness and life in the Forest which cheered her. It was pleasant to see Argus's enjoyment of the fair weather; his wild rushes in among the underwood; his pursuit of invisible vermin under the thick holly-bushes, the brambles, and bracken; his rapturous rolling in the dewy grass, where he flung himself at full length, and rolled over and over, and leapt as if he had been revelling in a bath of freshest water; pleasant to see him race up to a serious-minded pig, and scrutinise that stolid animal closely, and then leave him to his sordid researches after edible roots, with open contempt, as who should say: "Can the same scheme of creation include me and that vulgar brute?"

All things had been set in order for the return of the newly-married couple. Mrs. Trimmer had her dinner ready to be put in hand at a moment's notice. Violet felt that the end of her peaceful life was very near. How would she bear the change? How would she be able to behave herself decently? Well, she would try her best, Heaven giving her strength. That was her last resolve. She would not make the poor frivolous mother unhappy.

"Forgive me, beloved father, if I am civil to the usurper," she said. "It will be for my mother's sake. You were always tender and indulgent to her; you would not like to see her unhappy."

These were Vixen's thoughts one bright September morning, as she sat at her lonely little breakfast-table in the sunny window of her den, with Argus by her side, intensely watchful of every morsel of bread-and-butter she eat, though he had already been accommodated with half the loaf.

She was more amiably disposed than usual this morning. She had made up

her mind to make the best of a painful position.

"I shall always hate him," she told herself, meaning Captain Winstanley; "but I will begin a career of Christian-like hypocrisy, and try to make other people believe that I like him. No, Argus," as the big paw tugged her arm pleadingly, "no; now really this is sheer greediness. You can't be hungry."

A piteous whine, as of a dog on the brink of starvation, seemed to gainsay her. Just then the door opened, and the middle-aged footman entered.

"Oh, if you please, miss, Bates says would you like to see Bullfinch?"

"To see Bullfinch," echoed Vixen. "What's the matter? Is he ill? Is he hurt?"

"No, miss; but Bates thought as how maybe you'd like to see 'un before he goes away. He's sold."

Vixen turned very pale. She started up, and stood for a few moments silent, with her strong young hands clenched, just as she gripped them on the reins sometimes when Arion was running away with her and there were bogs in front.

"I'll come," she said, in a half-suffocated voice.

"He has sold my father's horse after all," she said to herself, as she went towards the stables. "Then I shall hate him openly all my life. Yes; everybody shall know that I hate him."

She found the stables in some commotion. There were two strangers, gloomy-looking men, standing in front of Bullfinch's loose-box, and all the stablemen had come out of their various holes, and were standing about.

Bates looked grave and indignant.

"There isn't a finer horse in the county," he muttered; "it's a shame to send him out of it."

Vixen walked straight up to the strange men, who touched their caps, and looked at her admiringly; her dark blue cloth dress fitted her like a riding-habit, her long white throat was bare, her linen collar tied loosely with a black ribbon, her chestnut hair wound into a crown of plaits at the top of her head. The severe simplicity of her dress set off her fresh young beauty.

"She's the prettiest chestnut filly I've seen for a long time," one of the grooms said of her afterwards. "Thoroughbred to the tips of her ears."

"Who has bought the horse?" she asked authoritatively.

"My master, Lord Mallow, miss," answered the superior of the men. "You needn't be anxious about him; he'll have a rare good home."

"Will you let me see the order for taking him away?"

"Your groom has got it, miss."

Bates showed her a sheet of paper on which Captain Winstanley had written:

"Trossach's Hotel, September 1, 1870.

"The bay horse, Bullfinch, is to be delivered, with clothing, &c., to Lord Mallow's groom.
C. WINSTANLEY."

Vixen perused this paper with a countenance full of suppressed rage.

"Does your master give much money for this horse?" she asked, turning to the strange groom.

"I haven't heard how much, miss." Of course the man knew the sum to a penny. "But I believe it's a tidyish lot."

"I don't suppose I have as much money in the world," said Vixen, "or I'd buy my father's horse of Captain Winstanley, since he is so badly in want of money, and keep him at a farm."

"I beg your pardon, miss," said the groom, "but the hoss is sold. My master has paid his money. He's a friend of Captain Winstanley's. They met somewhere in Scotland the other day, and my lord bought the hoss on hearsay; and I must say I don't think he'll be disappointed in him."

"Where are you going to take him?"

"Well, it's rather an awkward journey across country. We're going to Melton. My lord is going to hunt the hoss in October, if he turns out to my lord's satisfaction."

"You are going to take him by rail?"

"Yes, miss."

"He has never been by rail in his life. It will kill him!" cried Vixen, alarmed.

"Oh, no, it won't, miss. Don't be frightened about him. We shall have a padded box and everything tip-top. He'll be as snug and as tight as a sardine in its case. We'll get him to Leicestershire as fresh as paint."

Vixen went into the loose-box, where Bullfinch, all unconscious of his fate, was idly munching a mouthful of upland meadow hay. She pulled down his noble head, and laid her cheek against his broad forehead, and let her tears rain on him unheeded. There was no one to see her in that dusky loose-box. The grooms were clustered at the stable-door, talking together. She was free to linger over her

parting with the horse that her father had loved. She wound her arms about his arched neck, and let him lick her hand.

"Oh, Bullfinch, have you a memory? Will you be sorry to find yourself in a strange stable?" she asked, looking into the animal's full soft eyes with a pathetic earnestness in her own.

She dried her tears presently; she was not going to make herself a spectacle for the scornful pity of stablemen. She came out of the loose-box with a serene countenance, and went up to Lord Mallow's groom. "Please be kind to him," she said, dropping a sovereign into the man's ready hand.

"No fear of that, miss," he said; "there are very few Christians that have as good a time of it as our 'osses."

That sovereign, taken in conjunction with the donor's beauty, quite vanquished Lord Mallow's stud groom, and very nearly bought Violet Tempest a coronet.

Bullfinch was led out presently, looking like a king; but Violet did not stop to see him go away. She could hardly have borne that. She ran back to the house, put on her hat and jacket, called Argus, and set out for a long ramble, to walk down, if possible, the angry devil within her.

No; this she would never forgive—this sale of her father's favourite horse. It was as if some creature of her own flesh and blood had been sold into slavery. Her mother was rich, would squander hundreds on fine dresses, and would allow her dead husband's horse to be sold!

"Is Captain Winstanley such a tyrant that mamma cannot prevent this shameful thing?" she asked herself. "She talks about his attention, his devotion, as if he were at her feet: and yet she suffers him to disgrace her by this unparalleled meanness!"

THE "TWO GENTLEMEN" AND THE PLAYERS.

A LITTLE volume, published in 1598, and entitled *Palladis Tamia; Wit's Treasury*: being the second part of *Wit's Commonwealth*, by Francis Meres, Master of Arts of both Universities, printed by P. Short for Cuthbert Burbie, and sold at his shop at the Royal Exchange, London, makes early and curious mention of Shakespeare and his plays, and affords evidence of the estimation in which the poet was then held. "As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy

and tragedy among the Latines, so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for comedy, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love's Labours Lost*, his *Love's Labours Won*, his *Midsummer's Night's Dream*, and his *Merchant of Venice*; for tragedy, his *Richard the Second*, *Richard the Third*, *Henry the Fourth*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Romeo and Juliet*." Further, writes Master Francis Meres: "As Epinus Stolosaid that the Muses would speak with Plautus' tongue, if they would speak Latin, so I say that the Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine-filed phrase, if they would speak English." Shakespeare is also enumerated among "the best of our lyric poets," and described as "the most passionate among us to bewail and bemoan the perplexities of love." It is added: "As the soul of Ephorus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet, witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare; witness his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugared sonnets among his private friends," &c.

The comedy of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was first printed in the folio collection of the plays published in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death; John Heminge and Henry Condell being the editors. We are wholly without record of any early performance of the play. It is, as Hazlitt describes it, "little more than the first outline of a comedy loosely sketched in—the story of a novel dramatised with very little labour or pretension." It provides the players with no great opportunities for histrionic display. The work is rich in passages of quaint humour, in scenes of tender sentiment, and poetical expression; but the dramatic interest is never highly wrought. Johnson, while pronouncing the versification excellent, and the allusions learned and just, complains that the play is "a strange mixture of knowledge and ignorance, of care and negligence. The author," he continues, "conveys his heroes by sea from one inland town to another in the same country; he places the Emperor at Milan, and sends his young men to attend him, but never mentions him more; he makes Proteus, after an interview with Silvia, say he has only seen her picture; and, if we may credit the old copies, he has, by mistaking places, left his scenery inextricable. The reason of all this confusion seems to be that he took his story

from a novel, which he sometimes followed and sometimes forsook, sometimes remembered and sometimes forgot." Sohleal holds that the play, with *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Comedy of Errors*, bears many traces of an early origin; that it paints the irresolution of love and its infidelity to friendship "pleasantly enough, but in some degree superficially." In the character of Julia, the German critic discovered "a light sketch of the tender female figures of Viola and Imogen," who, in like disguise, quit their homes on love adventures, and to whom "a peculiar charm is communicated by the display of the most virginly modesty in their hazardous and problematical situation."

The absolute source of the plot of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* has not been discovered. It is believed, however, that Shakespeare built portions of the framework of his play upon the story of *The Shepherdess Felismena*, contained in a version of the *Diana* of George of Montemayor, by Bartholomew Yonge, first printed in 1598, but completed sixteen years before. A partial version had been made by Edward Paston at an earlier date, and in 1596 the first part was turned into English by Thomas Wilson, and dedicated to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton; but neither, apparently, of these performances was ever printed. Shakespeare, however, may have had access to the manuscripts. Other incidents of the play may possibly have been derived from the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney, first printed in 1590; but the resemblance, as Mr. Payne Collier states, is "too slight and casual" to warrant any decided conclusion on the subject. There is reason, however, in the suggestion that an early play, entitled *The History of Felix and Philomena*, referred to in the accounts of the Revels of Court, as represented before Queen Elizabeth in 1585, "on the Sunday next after Newyears Daie at night at Greenwich," may have been a dramatic version of *The Shepherdess Felismena*, the hero of which story is called *Don Felix*, and may further have been serviceable to Shakespeare in contriving *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

Shakespeare had read the writings of Lyly, the euphuist. Mr. Payne Collier notes a resemblance between a passage in the *Alexander and Campaspe* of Lyly, first printed in 1584, and a line in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. "Thou may'st swim against the stream with the crab," says

Apelles in Lyly's play; "feed against the wind with the deer, and peck against the steel with the cockatrice; stars are to be looked at, not reached at." So the Duke in Shakespeare's comedy demands of Valentine: "Wilt thou reach stars, because they shine on thee?"

The more famous plays of Shakespeare gradually found their way back to the stage after the reopening of the theatres at the Restoration. The comedy of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, however, long remained upon the shelf—seemed, indeed, to be altogether forgotten. No traditions of theatrical success probably attached to it; the names of the great Elizabethan actors were not connected with it. Davenant had been able to descant upon Taylor's method of playing Hamlet, or Lowin's performance of Henry the Eighth; there was no one to tell how in Shakespeare's own time Valentine had been represented, how Proteus, how Speed, or how Launce. It was not until 1762 that the play reappeared upon the stage. It had then been subjected to considerable alteration and adaptation at the hands of one Benjamin Victor, who, from the humble state of a peruke-maker, or barber, rose to be the poet-laureate of Ireland, wrote various plays of inferior note, filled the post of under-manager of the Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, and finally entered Garrick's service as the treasurer of Drury Lane Theatre. It is told of Mr. Victor that, offering one of his productions to Mr. Rich, the eccentric and illiterate impresario of Covent Garden, he was discomfited by the information that his tragedy was unacceptable, for the mysterious reason that there was "too much horsehair in it." This may have been a sly allusion to Victor's earlier trade of wig-maker. He was considered, however, a very proper person to operate upon Shakespeare.

In an advertisement to the altered play, Victor writes with a self-satisfied air of his labours and their success, and imitates earlier adapters in extending a sort of contemptuous patronage to the poet. "It is the general opinion," he states, "that this comedy abounds with weeds;" and he professes that he has removed the rankest of these, while solicitous lest he should go too far, and, grubbing up weeds, should destroy flowers as well. Further, he had endeavoured to give a greater uniformity to the scenery, and a connection and consistency to the fable, adding: "I cannot find upon the strictest enquiry this comedy

was ever acted since the time of its immortal author; it is undoubtedly one of the most weak and irregular of his plays."

Victor's alterations are often unfortunate enough. Thus, by transposing the second and third scenes of the first act, he compels Julia to answer Proteus's letter before she has received it; and by consolidating other of the scenes, he has skipped over the lapses of time contemplated by the poet, and jumbled together incidents that should have stood apart. In Victor's version Silvia not only decides upon marrying Valentine before he has plainly avowed his love for her, but even supplies him with written directions as to their union and escape; Launce speaks his first soliloquy at Milan instead of Verona; and two comic scenes are added to reintroduce Launce and Speed in the fifth act. Valentine's declaration after he has become reconciled to Proteus, "All that was mine in Silvia I give thee," which Pope, Hammer, and Steevens have censured as unnatural, Victor suppressed, and introduced further changes which were accounted improvements. Thus, when Proteus offers violence to Silvia, Valentine advances and bids the outlaws arrest the offender; then addressing Silvia, he assures her of her safety, and tells her to dismiss her fears; afterwards he reproaches Proteus, and then is reconciled to him.

The *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, thus amended, was performed five nights with success, although Mr. Victor admits that, his happy alterations notwithstanding, the "fable appeared rather too weak to claim the due attention of an improved audience." Much to Mr. Victor's disappointment, however, upon the sixth representation of his tinkered edition of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, "which," as he states, "according to theatrical custom belonged to the author of the alterations," there occurred one of those riotous outbreaks which the audiences of the eighteenth century occasionally permitted themselves. It seems that a certain Mr. Fitzpatrick, described as a gentleman of independent fortune and a critic of fair note in his time, having been engaged in some small dispute with Garrick at a club of which both were members, determined to indulge at all costs his wrath against the actor, and attacked him bitterly in the public journals. Not satisfied, however, with this expression of his malevolence, Fitzpatrick was eager for more active measures, and accordingly placed himself

at the head of a band of young men, calling themselves the *Town*, who demanded of the managers admission to the theatres at half-price at the end of the third act of the play of the night, excepting only during the run of a new pantomime. Regardless of the announcement in the bills that the sixth performance of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was for the benefit of the author of the alterations, a riot was determined on. Fitzpatrick harangued the public from the boxes, denouncing the impositions of the managers, and declaring the right of the audience to fix the prices of admission. It was in vain that Garrick attempted to address the house; he was received with groans and uproar, and was treated with the utmost contempt by Fitzpatrick and his associates. An immediate decision upon the matter was demanded of the manager; no time was permitted him for debate and deliberation; he was required to yield unconditional submission. Finally, the benches were torn up, and the lamps and lustres destroyed; every act of violence committed, indeed, which rage or malice could suggest. The riot being renewed upon the following evening, Garrick deemed it prudent to comply with the demands of the rioters, and the manager of Covent Garden was constrained shortly afterwards to follow Garrick's example. The exception made in favour of new pantomimes, however, provoked much remark at the time. It was declared that the effect of the arrangement would be to exalt entertainments of a worthless class at the expense of tragedy and comedy; and that, in order to obtain full prices, the managers would be encouraged to produce a succession of new pantomimes.

Mr. Victor was compensated with a sum of one hundred pounds; for his audience had departed at the commencement of the riot, the money they had paid for admission being returned to them at the doors of the theatre. But his version of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was never more seen upon the stage. Its discomfiture was attributable in part to the violence of Mr. Fitzpatrick and his friends, and in part to its own demerits. Fitzpatrick, it may be noted, figures under the name of *Fizgigg*, as the hero of Garrick's satirical poem *The Fribbleriad*, and was savagely scourged by Churchill in fifty lines expressly added to the eighth edition of the *Rosciad*.

The Valentine of Victor's version of the comedy was personated by O'Brien, the

fencing-master's son, an admired light comedian, who subsequently shocked society very much indeed by becoming the husband of Lady Susan Fox, the daughter of Lord Ilchester. Proteus was played by Garrick's pupil, Holland; Speed by King—to be afterwards famous as Sir Peter Teazle and Lord Ogleby—and Launce by Yates. Miss Bride appeared as Silvia, Mrs. Yates as Julia, and Miss Pope as Lucetta. All these players obtain the mention of Churchill in his Rosciad.

No trace of any further performance of the comedy is discoverable until the year 1784, when Quick, a comic actor much admired by George the Third, famous too as the original representative of Tony Lumpkin, perceiving probably that the character of Launce offered him many opportunities for expressing his drollery, revived *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* at Covent Garden, on the occasion of his benefit. The play was presented from the original text with some few alterations only; no aid being sought from Victor's version. Quick was assisted by the Speed of Edwin, a comedian of great humour; in other respects the cast was but indifferent. The third-rate actors, Whitfield and Wroughton, represented Valentine and Proteus respectively. Silvia was played by Mrs. Stephen Kemble, formerly Miss Satchell; Julia by Mrs. Mattocks, a daughter of the Hallam who did much to establish the theatre in America; and Lucetta by Mrs. Wilson, a lively soubrette whose career upon the stage was but brief. She was famous at one time for her personation of Filch, the pickpocket, in a sort of travestie of *The Beggar's Opera*, when the characters were reversed, and the men appeared as women and the women as men.

The comedy was not repeated until 1790, when, with the wonted inaccuracy of playbills, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was announced at Drury Lane as "not acted these twenty years." Mr. Wroughton sustained the part of Proteus, Mr. Barrymore appeared as Valentine, Launce and Speed being represented by Dodd and John Bannister. The piece was played for three nights only, and then underwent neglect until Kemble revived it at Covent Garden, in 1808. Kemble had small reverence for purity of text—was, indeed, much addicted to tampering with Shakespeare. He added certain lines of his own, and availed himself of Victor's alterations, while avoiding his blunders

for the most part. "On the whole," notes Genest, "Kemble's revival does him no credit." He undertook the part of Valentine, Pope appearing as Proteus. Both players were charged with being somewhat too mature of aspect for the characters they sustained. Kemble was now upwards of fifty, and on this account the description of Valentine as a "youthful" lover was altered to "confident." The comic characters were in thoroughly competent hands, for Munden appeared as Launce to the Speed of Blanchard. Munden is said to have afforded great satisfaction to the public, although certain of the coarser utterances of Launce were received with hisses. The actor brought upon the stage his favourite Newfoundland dog, Cæsar; but the animal had been insufficiently trained for histrionic purposes, or suffered himself to be carried away by his feelings. In one of the scenes he was observed to seize a fellow performer by the leg rather too really and rudely. Launce's dog seems, indeed, to have inconvenienced the representation upon other occasions. Genest notes a performance of the comedy at Bath, in 1822, when Liston, engaged for eight nights only, appeared as Launce: "The play was acted as written by Shakespeare, and not as mangled at Covent Garden. Liston played very well, but he was obliged to pull the dog hard by the chain, which spoiled the effect."

About this time there was a sort of rage for converting Shakespeare to operatic uses, just as in late days the poet has been resorted to for the purposes of spectacle. Bishop, a fertile and graceful composer, furnished the musical embellishments; Frederick Reynolds, the dramatist, making the necessary alterations in the text. The songs introduced were usually musical settings of Shakespearian words, gathered indiscriminately from the plays and the poems; but the singers now and then had recourse to other sources, especially when encores were awarded them. In his memoirs, Reynolds, admitting that severe censure had attended his proceedings, pleaded that he had restored to the stage works which had in truth been lost to it, and that he had really provided "a rich Shakespearian treat." *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which, when produced by Kemble only obtained three representations, now attracted crowded houses for some thirty nights—a proof that the public cared more for the songs than for e

play. Miss M. Tree, a delightful singer, appeared as Silvia; Liston played Launce, to be presently succeeded in the part by Meadows. Valentine and Proteus were personated by Jones and Abbott. The plays operated upon by Reynolds were *The Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. He also added songs and dialogues to *The Tempest*, and altered the second part of *Henry the Fourth*, providing "occasional dialogue," so as to introduce a spectacle of the coronation.

After two seasons of life as an opera, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* departed from the stage, not to reappear until 1841, when Macready was manager of Drury Lane Theatre. It is hardly necessary to say that the original text was now scrupulously respected, the musical embellishments wholly suppressed. The play was liberally provided for, and most carefully represented. Macready records in his diary: "Settled with Marshall and Tomkins the scenery of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*." It was with some hesitation, however, that he undertook the part of Valentine; he was conscious that upon the stage Valentine does not figure very effectively. Presently he writes: "Reconsidered the question of acting the unimportant parts of *Harmony* [in *Mrs. Inchbald's Every One has his Fault*] and Valentine, and came to the decision that everything should be done to raise and sustain the character of the theatre; that my reputation could scarcely be affected in any way by the assumption of these parts, or, at least, not injuriously; and that it would be a sad calculation to think of propping my reputation by the ruins of the theatre. I saw that it was right to do them. Read *Valentine*. Read *Harmony*." And here is a final entry on the subject: "December 29th, 1841. Rehearsed the play of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which occupied us a very long while; it was not finished until five o'clock. Acted Valentine imperfectly and not well. Was called for on account of the play and warmly received." *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* enjoyed few repetitions however.

Seven years later, the comedy was revived at the Haymarket Theatre, when Mr. Charles Kean and Mr. Creswick appeared as Valentine and Proteus, Mr. Webster and Mr. Keeley as Speed and Launce, the heroines Julia and Silvia being represented by Mrs. Charles Kean

and Miss Julia Bennett. And *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was again presented on the opening night of the present Olympic Theatre, December 26th, 1849, when Miss Fanny Vining and Mr. Davenport, an American actor of some eminence, took part in the representation. These final performances may be said to have demonstrated that, from a modern point of view, the stage attractions of the play are but limited.

It may be added, as a concluding note, that the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* is one of the shortest of Shakespeare's plays, is not really longer than a modern five-act play, and therefore does not need curtailment to fit it for representation in the theatre of to-day. It contains no more than nineteen hundred and sixty-two lines.

IN THE CONSERVATORY.

THE passion-flowers o'er her bright head drooped,
The roses twined their faint rich blooms above her,
Great crimson fuchsia bells with myrtle grouped,
White lilies watched the maiden and her lover;
The warm air round them fragrant with the breath,
Of violets nestling in their mossy wreath.
The fountain's silvery tinkle, softly chiming,
Blent with sweet laughter and with low replies,
As past the arch, the music's pulses timing,
Flashed flying feet, flushed cheeks, and sparkling eyes;
And tinted lamps and mellow moonlight strove
To light the happy dream of youth and love.
A little year—a pale girl stood alone,
Where withered tendrils choked a fountain's lip,
And 'mid the ivies, rank and overgrown,
The melting snow, in slow and sullen drip,
Flashed, where 'mid shattered glass and broad arch
barred,
A straggling rose-tree kept its silent guard.
"Gone, like the glory of my morn," she said,
"Like faith, and hope, and joy of summer hours;"
And from the untrimmed branches overhead,
She plucked the frailest of the frail pink flowers,
Meet emblem of the love that had its day,
And passed, with spring and beauty, quite away.

LOVE ME, LOVE MY DOG.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER V.

THE mind is the body's master. Amos Hedley had been afoot in the woods all night, with only an occasional rest against the bole of a tree; had been afoot all the morning on the rugged fell with only a suggestion of breakfast; and might well have claimed the privilege of fatigue; but a spirit of unrest was alive within him, never to be tamed to quietude whilst Hope was missing.

On his way to the head keeper he met Sir William in the grounds, near the hall, and in answer to the query: "Whither so fast, young man?" told hastily the story

of Hope Wolsingham's disappearance, her claims upon his gratitude, and his anxiety to renew the search for her.

The baronet smiled as Amos spoke of gratitude: he had some recollection of the independent dairymaid. The required permission was given on the instant.

Nature and common-sense had dictated the necessity for refreshment; now Amos plunged his head in a bucket of water, ate heartily a dinner the sympathetic cook set before him, and started off afresh like a new man.

Quite an hour had been consumed when, accompanied by Gipsy, he again emerged from the copse, and strode through the village on his way to the fell. The other seekers were far ahead of him, and something like a jealous qualm came over him lest she should be found by any but himself. His better nature, however, rebuked him, and he told Gipsy it mattered not who came first on her track, so long as she was only safe and well.

The dispersed explorers had met and parted, and met again after three hours' fruitless wandering, and were, with the single exception of Gilbert Applegarth, on the point of returning to their own homes, convinced that the girl had gone astray of her own freewill and not of mischance, arguing that she was most likely with old Betty at some "kirsening," when the echoes of a distant shout attracted the thin ears of one, a hewer.

With hands curved to mouth a loud "Halloo!" was thrown forth, and re-answered back again, and the whole party hastened in the direction of the voice, quickening their steps as they saw a figure in the distance, soon recognised as the gamekeeper, running and waving his arms as if to urge them forward.

Amos had already gone over the ground these others had taken, and known it barren. Something urged him to make fresh enquiries from the woman who had seen Hope last, and obtain an indication of the road she had taken.

He had been too brief a time in the neighbourhood to know all the short cuts across the fells, and it was less his own sagacity than that of Gipsy which led him to the long spur of grey rocks where she had rested and shaken the grit out of her shoes.

Here Gipsy, who had been some time uneasy, suddenly came to a stand, sniffed at the ground, looked up in Amos's face, whined, then with his nose to the earth,

was off as fast as his three good legs would carry him, past the point of the spur, often looking back and whining, rebelliously regardless of the keeper's whistle; for the man and the dog were going in different directions.

There was not the faintest indication of a path, but Gipsy kept on, over ground so rugged that Amos could not conceive the possibility of its being mistaken for the road even in a fog, and but for the peculiar manner of the dog, he would have declined to follow.

Presently they came upon great heaps of slag and coal-dust, so long forgotten that weeds and grass had found a home there. But there was no place where Hope could lie hidden, dead or alive, unless it were that solitary clump of furze and hazel-bushes in the distance.

Gipsy stopped as if suddenly arrested, a movement of his long ears told that he was listening, then he stood rigid with his tail set, as if he had come upon his game. He gave a short sharp bark, bounded forward to reach the bushes, looked back as if to call his master, scurried here and there as if to find entrance, and barked as if he were wild.

His master was quickly after him, and, but that he was brought to a sudden stop by something that sounded like a far-off whisper of his own name, he might have fallen forward, and shared the fate of the poor creature perishing of cold and hunger in the depths below, so completely had the thick fringe of hazels hid the old coal-pit's yawning mouth.

Thus checked, with his heart almost at a stand-still, he lay down upon the ground, and thrusting his head into the gap between the bushes, looked searchingly down with shuddering dread.

It was an awful depth, and but that the gleaming water below served as a reflector of the sky, he might have failed to discern the dark figure seated on the beam, with white face raised so piteously to the light.

And now he was sure he heard his own name, faintly mingled with an imploring cry for succour; and as he answered her cry with the one word "Hope!" his sudden joy at her discovery living, was dashed with fears lest she should die ere rescue was possible.

A faint scream rising from beneath told that he was at least heard. Again he called, and loudly, to bid her be of good cheer. Then leaving Gipsy on guard, he darted off helter-skelter, pausing only to

send a loud halloo upon the wind from time to time, until, as he was well-nigh spent, his call was answered.

The blacksmith's wife and Mrs. Applegarth had thought it ill-omened that three of the pitmen slung coils of rope around them when they joined the search; and Amos had more than once been tempted to empty from his pockets the good things the cook had crammed them with in token of her sympathy. He had fancied the weight impeded his progress. He had cause to be thankful he was so laden.

Geordie, whose long legs best fitted him for courier, was at once despatched to the village for more help and sundry appliances, and spurred by compunction he did not loiter by the way.

There was little consultation at the mouth of the pit, where Gipsy stood like a sentry, and barked on their approach.

The hazel has a tenacious grip of the soil; its tough out-spreading roots twining and interlacing. And now Amos showed himself less a novice than the pitmen deemed. He helped to splice the coils of rope, and telling them he had been bred a sea-fowler on the coast, would have ventured on the descent, had not their experience told the line was far too short.

One of their number, foreseeing this on his first glance downwards, had scudded off for bare life to the nearest mine at work; but the brief afternoon had made strides as swift before the man returned with cable and comrades to help.

Still there was a stretch of daylight left when Amos was slowly lowered in a rope-cradle, guiding its descent fowler-wise down the face of the shaft, whilst anxious prayers went up to heaven from the rough beings, so prompt at the call of duty—Wesley's disciples, one and all—and Gipsy could hardly be restrained from leaping after him.

He gained the bottom in safety, only in time to catch the form of Hope as she was dropping from her narrow perch. Expectation and joy had overtopped exhaustion; human nature could no longer bear the strain.

When two pitmen, slung together, reached the side of the keeper, they found him standing more than waist-high in water, sustaining Hope with one arm, and pouring brandy down her throat from the flask of the good-natured cook. By this time a stout blanket had been brought. A sort of hammock was made, into which she was lifted, still in a state of uncon-

sciousness; and Amos, looping his foot in a rope stirrup, prepared for the hazardous ascent, whilst the men below steadied the impromptu oradle with a gye.

There was a breathless hush as the twain were landed clear of the hazels on the bank, and there was some doubt whether Hope was living or dead.

Gipsy barked and leaped excitedly; Farmer Applegarth's big fingers untied the girl's choking hat-strings; Amos kneeled down and chafed her rigid hands; the fresh air blew upon her face; more brandy was administered; and under the influence of one or all restoratives her languid lids unclosed.

Women as well as men had come bare-headed from the village on hearing Geordie's news, and there was a general shout at this token of life. The men then turned with a will to release their captive brethren, and by the time they were landed, Hope was eating ravenously the bread and meat from Amos Hedley's pockets, soaked though they had been in the pit.

She was carried home to the farm in Dame Applegarth's own rocking-chair, and there was no lack of volunteers for the service. But Amos, who had felt his own strength collapse when there was no longer a demand upon it, was content, like Gipsy, to walk beside, and now and then stretch out a hand to wrap closer around her the blanket which the rising wind displaced. Hope was too feeble for many words, but her thanks had been sufficiently eloquent, and Amos was doubly blest.

Wet, cold, hunger, exposure, and enforced wakefulness for eight-and-forty hours, would try the strongest woman's frame. Hope was on the verge of a fever; and when the first use she found for speech was to bid Amos hasten to Sir William, and warn him that Nick Faw and the two escaped poachers were going to break into the hall that very night, she was accredited with delirium. She said she had thought of little else all the while she was down the pit, and implored him to lose no time in warning his master. But he lingered incredulous, and she grew impatient. And then, as fever grew, her mind did begin to wander, and all her pent-up love was unsealed, and found unconscious utterance in broken words and ejaculations of alternate fear and gratitude. She was once more in the darksome pit, cramping on her narrow perch, and yet afraid to move a limb lest she should have a fresh struggle with the icy water below her; praying for deliverance, and crying that she should

die, and Amos would not scorn her then. Anon she implored Nick Faw and Joey Dobeon not to murder Amos—to spare the poor doggie—anon she muttered fragments of the nefarious colloquy by the rocky ridge on the hill-side, with self-gratulations that she had overheard it all. Then she was fleeing from pursuit; now falling, falling into the bottomless pit; every now and again she would look wildly round and shriek for Amos to save her—not to let her die there of cold and hunger!

It was all a disjointed tangle, pitiable to listen to, as evidence of the ordeal she had undergone, and the fever that ran riot through her veins; yet such is the inconsistency of man, that a thrill of satisfaction stirred the pulses of Amos at her unconscious admissions, in spite of the new dread lest she should be lost as soon as found.

She had been laid on a huge blue-and-white check-covered squab or sofa in the kitchen, and had not yet been removed to her own low-roofed bedroom under the eaves. The fire had been piled up high to warm and welcome her, and the whole attendant crowd had taken possession of the apartment, freely discussing Hope's marvellous deliverance and the sagacity of Gipsy, in tones fitter for the hill-side than the sensitive nerves of a woman in her prostrate condition.

Mrs. Applegarth, ministering to her immediate needs, grew uneasy as she listened to her and to them. Geordie came from the cellar with two great pitchers of ale, and the farmer busied himself to place half a cheese and a big loaf on the table; but it needed only a hint from the dame to carry ale and edibles into the barn, with the crowd in their rear. And there Geordie was left to play host, Gilbert returning to help his good dame.

Thus it chanced that Hope's utterances fell into no strange ears, except those of a kindly old neighbour (herself as deaf as a post), who remained to chafe the girl's benumbed limbs, whilst Mrs. Applegarth prepared a hot buttermilk posset by way of food and physic.

At first Amos was disposed to put Sir William on his guard, on Hope's suggestion; but, when she grew palpably incoherent, he was half inclined to fall in with the farmer's notion, that the "puir wench's brain wor torned," he had best "nut fash th' maister for nowt," and reluctantly left her to her nurses at last, to turn the question over in his own mind as he dragged

his tired limbs through the park homewards to the hall. Yet, if Hope had heard, and heard aright, the robbers were to make the attack that very night.—Hark!

CHAPTER VI.

HARK! A dry twig cracked under a heavy foot; a hare, startled from its sleep, scurried past him; Gipsy gave a low growl, and stood still. Amos had borrowed the farmer's gun, and now held it ready: there were certainly strangers in the plantation. To put it to the test he gave a peculiar signal whistle. There was no response. A fellow keeper would have answered.

He stood for a minute or two with his gun at half-cock; then, as if thoroughly reassured pursued his course, with Gipsy limping beside him, quite as weary as his master, though not one whit more content or satisfied.

As usual, Amos had entered the plantation by the copse-gate; the cut thence across the park saved at least a third the distance of the road-proper.

To-night he stood in need of rest, but now he was on the alert, and wide awake. Coupling that stealthy tread with the growl of the dog, and Hope's communication, he was inclined to pay more heed to her warning, and felt how necessary it was he should reach the hall without arousing suspicion in the evil minds so near to him. He stepped on boldly as if on ordinary duty, loitering now and then, and patting Gipsy with a pleasant word; apparently going farther away into the covert, yet drawing nearer to the open park with every step.

Once away from the shadow of the trees he made direct for the hall, pondering how best to get immediate speech with Sir William without first running the gauntlet of the servants' hall.

He was anticipated. The baronet had given orders, that immediately on the game-keeper's return he should be shown into the library.

There he found Sir William seated at a large table, with books and papers before him, and two or three money-bags at his elbow, which had been that day paid in by his steward.

Shutters were fastened, curtains drawn, the fire glowed, the wax-lights in the silver candelabra were repeated in the glazed fronts of ponderous book-cases; and as Sir William half turned in his chair to greet the new-comer, Amos had a vision

of a struggle for the bags upon the table, and the words, "silence with the knife," came into his mind with painful suggestiveness.

"And so the young woman is found! I'm glad of it! And where was it, Hedley; and how came it all about? You must tell me the whole story," and the baronet smiled pleasantly, "for your lady will not bate a jot of the news, and I shall have to retail it. Lady Derwent is greatly interested in your—sweetheart—shall we say?"

It was impossible to answer all the baronet's cordial questions at once, and Amos hesitated. There was a look of gravity on the young man's face, as well as an utterly exhausted droop of his shoulders. There was wine on the table. Struck by something in the young man's voice or manner, Sir William filled a wine-glass from a decanter on the table, and bade him drink that before he began, it would "put heart into him."

But he had already begun. His tale would not brook delay. Briefly and modestly he told the story of anxious quest, attributing the credit of Hope's recovery entirely to the sagacity of Gipsy, and dwelt more on the pitiable condition in which the lost girl was found, than on the adventurous descent of himself and others. His master's commiseration was roused, but its expression was arrested as Amos unexpectedly drew close, and, leaning one hand on the table, bent down to tell in lowered tones that Hope had fallen into the old pit in endeavouring to evade Nick Faw and two others, who had planned, in her hearing, to break into Derwentside Hall that very night, for plunder, and it might be—murder also.

Sir William grasped the arms of his chair and half rose from his seat, aghast and confounded, as he well might be. But he was a brave man, and after that first surprised start, listened with apparent composure, whilst Amos went on to say that he had heard strange footsteps in the wood, and believed the wretches were lurking there in readiness.

"No doubt, no doubt," acquiesced Sir William; "and we must be ready too," he added, with his hand on the embroidered bell-pull.

Thwaites, the pompous old butler, came at the summons. He had been a servant in the family from boyhood.

In horror and amazement he uplifted his fat hands, unable to comprehend the enormity of a burglary at Derwentside.

But he was alive to the need for promptitude and caution. With Amos in tow he left the library to carry out instructions.

Cook had a substantial supper ready for Amos. Men and women servants crowded round to ply him with questions. It was ten o'clock. Lady Derwent had rung for her maid half an hour. "To bed, to bed, you chattering women-folk," cried Thwaites. "It is long past time. Sir William wants the house quiet; he has Mr. Ramsay's accounts to overlook.

He was imperative. The maids retired grumbling, the housekeeper following, with a light in a wire screen, as was her custom, to secure the extinction of other candles. All bolts and bars had been previously adjusted, and to an outside spectator the household appeared to sink into night's torpor and quiescence as usual.

When the coast was clear, Sir William and the butler armed the men servants with cudgels or pistols; and with many a charge to be silent, placed them two and two in the lower rooms, the point of attack being as uncertain as the number of the robbers.

Derwentside Hall was a plain stone edifice, with a flagged pavement on three sides, whilst the other overhung the river at an elevation, and so was safe from attack. It had been calculated that footsteps, however stealthy, would be heard upon this pavement; but the men had come with muffled feet, and the first intimation of their approach was the sound of a file on the unglazed grating of the larder window.

Iron, woodwork, and wirework were all old, the operator skilful; ere long the framework gave way with little noise. Someone crushed through the gap, and dropped on padded feet—a second followed—a third; the flash of a lantern gleamed on the passage walls; there was a stoppage at the butler's pantry, a jingle of keys, as if the lock was being picked, a low-voiced suggestion to make sure of the coin first, it was safest; and then the three ruffians passed into the large kitchen on their way to the opposite door, the one with the dark lantern in the rear. There was a dull red glow in the heart of the recently slaked fire which barely cast a light on the bright iron fender and white hearth, leaving the corners of the great kitchen in deep shadow.

As the third man stole in, Amos, who stood ready, closed the door behind him, shadowy forms darted from every corner,

and the intruders found themselves in a trap.

"Surrender, you vagabonds!" cried Sir William, and the cock of a pistol was heard to enforce command.

"Nivvor!" roared the leader; "it be thee or me for it," and darted forward to throw himself on the baronet, whose voice had revealed his whereabouts.

There was the gleam of a knife, the flash of a pistol, and Sir William was down with a ruffianly hand on his throat. Already he felt the sharp prick of a blade, when the man's arm was clutched from behind, there was a grip of a powerful hand on his collar, he was dragged to his feet, and hurled across the kitchen, where he struck against and overturned a chair in falling. He rose and again rushed forward, but his knife was gone, and when he closed with Amos, the two grappled together, with only their natural weapons, and on equal terms, barring the fatigue of the latter.

In the general scuffle their individual conflict was unobserved. It was not until the other burglars had succumbed to stout cudgels in stout hands, in spite of their lethal weapons, and the crape was torn from the faces of Mat Laing and Joey Dobson, that their captors had breathing-time to note the desperate struggle on the hearth. But by that time it was nearly over, Amos had succeeded in bringing his antagonist to the ground, his head had struck the fender in falling, his hat had fallen off, and Nick Faw lay there stunned.

He was not killed, however, and had fared little worse than Amos, who had got an ugly scratch with the knife in wrestling it from him.

The butler, too, had pretty nearly got his quietus, or thought he had, but it was from the chance hit of a friendly cudgel, and the knives had not otherwise done much damage.

Those were hanging days. When the three ruffians were hauled off to the county gaol the next morning under a strong escort, they knew they were journeying to the gallows, and that they would be too heavily ironed to escape this time.

Penitent enough were the two poachers, who had been led into the more daring attempt by the prospect of plunder and revenge under the inspiration of Nick Faw; but the hardened tinker, scowling and sullen, only opened his mouth in blasphemy.

Amos, whose hand smarted under bandages, could not resist the temptation to

tell the man how their plot had been overheard, and how the lass who heard would have been lost but for the poor dog they had thrown so wantonly at the baited bull. Aye, and mayhap if the doggie had never wanted nursing, it would have known nothing of Hope or her kindness. Nick Faw had certainly twined a rope for his own neck when he threw the dog to be gored.

The man glared at the speaker, and bit at him like a savage; and Gipsy having forced his way amongst the crowd at the back of the hall, as he and his companions were led away in custody, he put out his foot and dealt the animal a brutal kick. He had again reckoned without his host. Gipsy darted after him, and made him feel that woollen stockings were bad armour against canine fangs.

Sir William's wound was scarcely more severe than that of his gamekeeper, though but for the latter's promptitude it might have been fatal. The baronet's gratitude, and that of Lady Derwent, could not be expended in words. He dealt immediate rewards to the other domestics who had taken part in the capture of the burglars and the defence of his property, but he told Amos he should have to think how best to serve him and his sweetheart—as he persisted in calling Hope Wolsingham.

In the first place he left him at liberty, until his hand was healed, to go where he would, and quickly as feet could span the distance Amos was at Applegarth's farm.

An hour later Sir William and Lady Derwent met him at the farmer's gate as he was rushing in a state of distraction to find old Betty Wolsingham. She was wanted to try her skill on her own grandchild, whose fever had not abated.

Dame Applegarth lauded the wondrous condescension of the lady in mounting the dark stairs to Hope's small chamber in the roof, and laying vinegar-cloths on the maid's forehead with her "awn lily-white hands," but the lady felt as if the girl was suffering for her, and as if she owed her a husband's life.

Geordie, who had not ceased to deplore his inactivity in the first instance, was ready enough to fling his long legs over a bare-backed horse, and ride off for Sir William's doctor; and by the time Dr. Blackett's three-cornered hat and gold-headed cane reached the farm, old Betty was there to act as nurse under his instructions, though she felt strongly tempted to trust to her own remedies and ignore him altogether.

Fever and delirium ran high; over and

over again the girl went through her frightful experience on fell and in pit, but in all such genuine anxiety for the people at the hall was apparent, so much affection for Amos Hedley, which he was "sure nivvor te ken," that the sternest heart would have melted with pity, and Amos, kneeling by her bed-side, sobbed again.

For a long while her life trembled in the balance, but what the skill of the time and loving hands could do was done for her; she was young, had a strong constitution; the crisis passed, and left her to regain strength, and to discover that she had a lover by her side who poured out his heart as if he knew the depth of hers.

She was not voted well enough to enter the witness-box at the winter gaol-delivery. The men had gone armed to Derwent-side, had broken in, had picked a lock, fought and wounded the inmates of the hall, and their sentence came from under the judge's black cap. Her evidence was not needed.

At the beginning of the year, Sir William announced to Amos that he had a farm on his hands for which he wanted a tenant; it was well-stocked, and might be had on a long lease for a small rental; and he thought Amos might venture on it, with Hope as his helpmate.

And so it came about. Hope wore at her wedding the ribbons Amos had from the pedlar; and Gipsy was handed over to them along with the lease of the farm, to be petted and spoiled by master and mistress—and by the children, too, when they came.

A WOMEN'S HOTEL.

I BUILT a fold for [women];
I stored it full of rich memorial;
I fenced it round with gallant-institutes.

It had

an arch
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings
From four wing'd horses dark against the stars;
And some inscription ran along the front.

It had a

porch that sang
All round with laurel; a court
Compact of lucid marbles; boss'd with lengths
Of classic frieze; with ample awnings gay
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.
The Muses and the Graces, grouped in threes,
Enranged a billowing fountain in the midst.

It is a noble picture. It is what the Princess Ida did; desiring to benefit

The soft and milky rabble of womankind;
and the world will always know what

came of it, and how her highness was of the earliest to see that she

had fail'd in all;
That all her labour was but as a block
Left in the quarry;

and that she must issue from her sanctuary, with her train of maidens, her laws broken, her scheme impracticable.

But might it not have been a lesson to everybody, everywhere? Yet surely, when, some months ago, there rose the Stewart's Hotel for Women in New York, it was moulded on ideas little less exalted and palatial. An eminent lawyer, Judge Hilton, is said to have erected this at a cost of seven hundred and fifty thousand pounds—probably a misprint in the English papers for seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and being, even then, a prodigious outlay. He intended it to accommodate a thousand women; to sleep them, as well as to feed them. He had it built with such "gallant institutes" as reception-rooms, baths, dining-halls, library, private parlours, sleeping-apartments, laundries; and only fifty women enshrined themselves under his magnificent shelter! These fifty, finding his yoke and trammels too irritating and too irksome, betook themselves away from him after a few weeks' trial, with the conclusion, as a legacy, that no dividend would accrue from his enterprise, and that it must be abandoned.

Happily, it can be announced that there is a reverse to the picture. A lady, wiser by far, modest as a lady should be, and knowing with a lady's instinct that women, unless bred to exceptionally large incomes, are best pleased to have modest surroundings, is now trying the experiment of a small Women's Hotel in London. She gives it no name; she puts no sign, no posting, no blazonry, to distinguish the house from any other in the neighbourhood; the address is simply Seventy-nine, Wigmore Street, and she simply calls it so. The lady means the inmates to rap at the house, unobtrusively, privately, as any other house alongside would be rapped at; the lady has arranged for these inmates to reach to about a score, twenty-two being the absolute full number, and there her Seventy-nine, Wigmore Street, stands. It is at the corner of a street; it was formerly, and only a short time since, a shop; and this gives a long extra outlook at the wide side of it, added on to the frontage, that lets a capital flood of light into the ground floor, furnished as the large and general sitting-

room, that shows up its oak paint and bright crimson cloth admirably, that affords the freest and most cheerful outside view, bringing animation, bringing incidents from it at every moment, and their sympathy. And this, small matter as it may sound, is excellent; because, that Seventy-nine, Wigmore Street, should be home, was in the lady's resolve at the very first outset and beginning. She did not want courtyards, approaches, vestibules, that block out chat and comment, and the kindliness that come from it. She did not want exclusion, distance, withdrawal, cutting young women off from little outside ties that hold them, that they cling to, that give them thought and happiness. She did not want, above all, the awe that is in expanse and spaciousness, in vastness, and altitude, and echo. It was within her knowledge that simple working-women are not at home under the heavy influence of all this. It was within her knowledge that working-women are led by it to think they have had but petty life hitherto, and petty pay for it (wherein, for young women, and in a large city, lies deep danger, obviously); that they are only insignificant individualities to care for; very much too much set upon mere womanly ways and wishes that must be got rid of now, of a certainty, and at the quickest. And the lady, in establishing her Seventy-nine, Wigmore Street, knew it was good to encourage young women to hold to their own, to keep their simplicity. The homes they come from, and that they must return to, are expensive; they should not be taught to despise this inexpensiveness. The wages they can earn (or the salaries) are of the smallest; the wages they can earn are little likely to get beyond the smallest, since they are young, and they are women; and they cannot help their youth and womanhood, or get rid of the last ever, or of the first till they have grown out of it, and till their chances, alas! have become still smaller; and, inasmuch as this denies women the ability of being spurred on by the sight of grandeur and majesty and stateliness to push through all obstacles till they have won grandeur and majesty and stateliness for themselves (which is the way, let it be remembered, that a man is spurred on), the lady has decided that grandeur and majesty and stateliness, or the outside forms of them, are inconsistent, as well as pernicious, in an hotel for earning-women; are a burden, in addition; are a discomfiture, and had better be away.

Women are lodged at five shillings a week. This gives them a comfortable little compartment in a dormitory holding four, each compartment being entirely partitioned off from any other, except where the partitions cease at a certain available height up for better ventilation; this gives them a comfortable little bed, as the chief and largest item in this small dominion, with bedding, and the clean linen for it, liberally supplied; this gives them also—and also to each girl, without anybody else having access to a single article of it—washing apparatus, towels, looking-glass, a chair, and some handy shelves and dress-pegs. It is not luxury, of course, but it is competence; and in it there is every requisite for cleanliness, for neatness and comfort, and for privacy. Then, outside of it, but still included in the five shillings, there comes a list of etceteras that is long, and may be tedious, but that, for all that, had better be given, in order to get a due understanding of the subject. There is a plentiful supply of hot water and cold water, to be used much or little, and entirely at discretion, of easy access at each dormitory-door; there is at the same spot an equally easy arrangement for carrying the used water away; there are tin cans in which to draw it; there are foot-baths and larger baths; there are housemaid's cloths and dusters, changed every week; there is every implement, or utensil, for all the meals—no girls having to provide, or to think of, or to "wash up," any essential for any one of them—there is, finally, the thoroughly free use, at every hour of the day, in common with the rest of the inmates, of the comfortable and cheerful sitting-room, with its bright outlook, on the ground floor. That no girl, singly, without co-operation and combination, could supply herself with this, or with a half of it, for five shillings, is clear; that no girl, able to afford a weekly five shillings, or thirteen pounds a year, for lodgment, should accustom herself to be satisfied with less than so much cleanliness and order and personal nicety, is clear, as well. The girl in enjoyment of it, however, is not to be quite idle—that has to be explained. She is expected to make her own bed; to put her washing apparatus in order; to hang up, or fold away, her spare clothes; to do as much dusting as will keep her compartment fairly clean; to black her own shoes, being charged a penny a week for use of brushes and blacking; and, whenever she takes a bath, it is she who has to draw the water for it, hot or

little. It is just a healthy amount of domestic work that a few minutes every morning are sufficient for; it is not so much, nearly, as what most earning-women and girls have to do at home; it is kept at this little because there is kind remembrance that the time of earning-women is money—or rest; which is quite as needful—and because there is no intention that the time of these particular earning-girls and women should be encroached upon; and it is able to be kept at so little because the hired housemaids of the house scrub and thoroughly clean out each compartment on one day in each week. Other arrangements are possible, however, if a girl be so situated that she cannot spare even this amount of time, and if she can afford to pay a little extra for her lodging, or if two sisters, or two friends, can manage to lodge together. There are single rooms to be hired; there is one at six shillings a week, one at seven shillings and sixpence, one at ten shillings, each provided with two beds; and from the inmates of these the work expected is reduced to a minimum. Furnished lodgings, in the ordinary meaning, these rooms more nearly approach; for though the use of the general sitting-room is included in the bargain—and it must be used for meals, except in illness—the girls can make their private rooms their parlours if they please; sitting in them for study, if they are teachers; for work, if they get their living by their needle.

There has now to be a notification of what can be obtained at Wigmore Street as board. It can be every meal an inmate wishes for; it can be some of them; it can be none. As at an ordinary hotel, there is perfect liberty to order much, or to order little, precisely as is desired. There is a fixed price, too, for all the food; for instance: a penny for a half-pint cup of tea, coffee, or cocoa; a penny for two slices of bread and butter. This is a good contrivance by which the hearty girl, who can relish her two cups of coffee and four slices of bread and butter for breakfast, is the only person who pays for her heartiness, and the more delicate girl, who finds half this quantity sufficient, counts up some little surplus in her purse at the week's end, as consolation for her delicacy. And it is the same with the food for dinner. A girl can have a half a pint of soup for a penny, a half a pint of beef-tea for twopence; she can add a second course to either of these in a plate of meat and vegetables, coming together to fourpence, or make this her dinner altogether; she can add a third

course, in a "helping" of plum-pudding, rice-pudding, Yorkshire-pudding, rhubarb-tart, &c., at the extra cost of another penny for which of the group she chooses. Taking an inmate's board for a week, and counting the whole of the seven days in it, with three meals for each, it can be done for seven shillings. This gives the better of the two breakfasts just alluded to, at the cost of fourpence; this gives the meat and vegetables and the pudding, at the cost of fivepence; this gives two cups of tea, and two slices of bread and butter, for the third meal, at the cost of threepence; making a total of a shilling. The cost of the maintenance of a girl can be arrived at this way by the easiest of methods. It is five shillings for her lodging, seven shillings for her food; twelve shillings together; thirty-one pounds four shillings at the year's end. If the work the girl does is remunerated partly by food—as it is with dressmaking hands for business, who are provided with tea; as it is with day dress-makers in private families, and with assistants at the desk, or who "serve," who get tea and dinner both—then these figures must be altered. They can be less by the price of the teas, saving one shilling and sixpence a week (Sunday tea remaining); they can be less by the price of dinners and teas, saving four shillings; ending, the first, in a total of ten shillings and sixpence weekly, or twenty-seven pounds six shillings the year; ending, the second, in a total of eight shillings weekly, or twenty pounds sixteen shillings the year. Young women with other occupations, however, such as day-teachers—whether that large mass of them under government, at board and national schools, or that other large mass, chancing to be equally out of reach of their homes, giving private instruction in private families—cannot calculate on any such economy. They, like all the rest of their fellow earners, have the chance at times, when their duties permit, of visiting at friends' houses and enjoying friends' hospitality, whereby their expenses are lessened, and they have that additional reason for gratitude and attachment; but, as their employments stand, they get no meals to eke out their salaries, everything they eat is obliged to be a matter for calculation, and their yearly expenses must be taken to amount to what was set down above. And it is excellently well for them that by the generous founding of this Seventy-nine, Wigmore Street, they are able to get so much, and give so little for it; for let a thought be given as to what

such living would cost if it were without co-operation, and, on the other hand, as to what poorness and bareness, almost to what equal, a girl would be reduced who could only spend thirty-one pounds four shillings a year on keeping her life within her, and who must get the best she could, unaided, to come to it. The reflection, with the reckoning of it, proves incontestably what a good gift earning-women have had given to them in this new establishment, what a good service they have had rendered. It is a service, too, it may be happily added here, that does not stop at the limited number of girls and women who can be received at Wigmore Street as residents. Adjoining their pleasant house, and served from the same kitchen, is a nice quiet meal-room, open to any women of the neighbourhood—to those, say, who can sleep at home, but who cannot get so far as home in the middle of the day for eating, and there they can partake of wholesome food—of breakfasts, if wanted, of dinners, teas, of any meal—with company and under influences that are wholesome, and at prices exactly the same as if they were entitled to admittance into the general sitting-room.

This reflection on, and reckoning up of, a girl's board and lodging cannot be left without another word though. It is a word, indeed, too pressing, too patent, too full of point for it to be left unsaid. Where are the girls who can afford to pay thirty-one pounds four shillings a year for their living? Where are the occupations for girls so paid for that the girls can think of spending thirty-one pounds four shillings a year for living? Are there many of them? Do they so present themselves, there and here, that it is difficult to make selection? Alas! there is a question here touching the labour market that must bring sighs. Are women to work?—which they certainly should. Are women to have independent standing, independent homes, independent responsibilities?—which is exceedingly doubtful as a clamoured-for "right," but which, as a dire necessity, is too often forced upon them. Then, by all means, let women have pay for their work that shall not be a mockery; then, by all means, let the wages of work be of the sort that they shall not contend with the wages of sin in more than one way—that way of death. Figures are cruel. It seems cruel altogether to have put down at all the figures that have been put down in this sketch, to have made the search that led to them, to have ventured on the thoroughness and on the multiplication that made up the

sum. Yet figures are kind; for they tell the truth, and draw attention to it. And most especially are these figures kind that are here, and they are put down in the sheerest pity. But they must be added to before they will represent what they were meant to represent. Increase them by the cost of clothing, since an English girl, following the occupation of teacher, clerk, assistant, milliner, must be, before all, neat and attractive; increase them by the cost of washing; by the long list of minor expenses—stationery, postage, an odd newspaper, a train, an omnibus, an endless &c., and the subject is only too grave and pitiable. It means that such women and girls as can work at home, contributing nothing to home expenses, and earning sufficient for dress, do fairly well; it means that such women and girls as can work in others' homes, getting food and shelter as well as salary, do fairly well; but for such others as are unable to fulfil either of these conditions, as are forced to find a world for themselves, alone, with no helping, there are no such calm statements to be made, there can be no use of even such neutral colours. The battle is strong with these, truly; the struggle heavy; they are yet obliged to enter into it; for work of the sort has to be done, and women of the sort have to do it; and it was precisely in the hope of assisting their efforts, of alleviating their anxieties, that Seventy-nine, Wigmore Street, was generously and sympathisingly established.

A reference more now to the Women's Hotel of New York. There the inmates were forbidden to have sewing-machines in any part of it; in Wigmore Street they may have them, and do have them, and use them as they have a mind. In New York they were forbidden to take women friends to their private rooms; in Wigmore Street they may take them and do take them, and may invite them to meals, as they have a mind. In New York, also, there were to be no musical instruments in private rooms (without which, how could a music-governess make herself perfect in some difficult "passage," requiring monotonous playing over, or singing over, again and again?); there was no admittance into the hotel after the regulation closing-hour of eleven at night. In Wigmore Street neither of these prohibitions exists; for the piano or the harmonium may go in with the inmate, and an inmate may remain out after closing-time, which is ten o'clock, provided only

she has previously given notice that such is her intention. The New York objection to the visits of male friends is, however, in full force in Wigmore Street. It is right it should be. No supervision or selection would be strong enough—and no girl is received as an inmate unless she brings two recommendations—to keep out danger, or, at least, scandal, if there were a free intermingling of men in a home for women. The brothers of some would not be the brothers of the others, it must be recollected; and even if the most honest and honourable courtship were begun, honest and honourable English girls are not in the habit of receiving their lovers at their lodgings, and it would lead to other conditions not consistent with the equable tone of propriety that is necessary. So, also, is the New York objection to home pets and pictures held to at Wigmore Street. How could it be put aside? In a house receiving twenty-two women, it is manifest there might be twenty-two birds or animals; if there were, this would not be fulfilling sanitary conditions; and with this or any number there could not be kindness to the birds and animals themselves, since women out at work all day must leave their pets more or less neglected (as earning women, lower in the scale, have unhappily to leave their babies); and in the case of pictures hung up, it is equally manifest that there would be unsightly patches all over the carefully papered and painted walls, when pictures, on their possessor departing, had to be taken down.

Finally, there is one more forbidden thing in Wigmore Street—intoxicating drinks. No wines, beers, or spirits are allowed to be bought or taken there. Whether Judge Hilton laid down this law in New York cannot be accurately stated; it is quite certain that the Princess Ida built her fold without a thought about it, and that it was precisely because she had had no thought about it that all the mischief that befell her came. It is greatly to be hoped that mischief of any sort will be averted from this newer and, in this much, purer venture.

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY,

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRIFFITH'S DOUBLES,"
&c. &c.

CHAPTER XXIX. A WING OF THE FIREFLY.

It was only an unusually emphatic entreaty that she would take care of herself during his absence, with a word of reference

to the hope that rendered her health doubly precious to him, which Robert Thornton had addressed to his wife at parting, and which had strangely touched her. He rarely gave expression in words to his absorbing love of her; contenting himself with the anticipation of her wishes, and the moulding of his life upon her tastes. He had discerned, in very early days, with the sure instinct of a great affection, that Laura was unsentimental; and although he never imagined that an impatience of sentiment could, in her case, be a symptom of shallowness of feeling, he was extremely sensitive to the slightest touch of the ridiculous being associated in her mind with his love for her. Thus, while every day brought her his care, his forethought, his devotion, he dealt little in endearing epithets, or verbal compliments to the beauty and the charm that held his heart as securely as they had won it promptly.

Perhaps it was because she was so bright and happy, the weather so lovely, the sunshine so vivid, the face of nature so smile-bedecked, because freedom, and wealth, and the power of pleasing were such good things to own; perhaps it was because the deeper chords of her nature were being stirred by the new interest and meaning that were coming into her life; but there was in Laura's heart while those tears stood in her eyes a warmer and deeper feeling towards her husband than had ever been there before, and in her intelligence a truer comprehension of him. She had at least a glimpse at that moment of the worth of the undivided love and perfect loyalty of such a heart as his. A strange incredibly clear and rapid vision of her life since she had first seen him passed through Laura's mind, before the brief silence between herself and her companions was broken.

The impression of the morning was not transitory, and the first practical form that it took was one which Laura knew would be pleasing to her husband. After their drive, and when she had left her friends at their own abode, she devoted the remainder of the afternoon to writing to Miss Thornton. Laura felt herself "good" while she was doing this, and she wanted to feel "good" that day. It was never an easy task for her to write to Miss Thornton. The old lady's views were so different from Laura's, and she held them with so much energy and decision; she was so entirely ignorant of Laura's "world," and disposed to hold it in such slight esteem, that there was

reasonable ground for Laura's remissness as a correspondent; it was not all mere laziness, as Mr. Thornton said it was, when he gently urged her to show the fitting respect to his only relative. "Just be yourself in your letters," he would say to Laura, when she objected that it was difficult to write; and she had never liked to say to him that it was that "just herself" which had not been fortunate enough to captivate the aunt as thoroughly as the nephew. On the present occasion, however, her task was not at all difficult; there was one subject which she could always make interesting to Miss Thornton, and that was the very subject on which she felt inclined to write. She would give Miss Thornton a full, true, and particular history of Robert's proceedings — she thought of him as "Robert" this time, and was conscious of the strangeness of the word in her thoughts — since they had arrived at Nice; she would tell her about the Firefly; and finally she would wind up by making a positive promise that the expected heir should be born in Scotland. She had not quite assented to Robert's wishes on that point, though she had no real intention of opposing them; she had been tiresome, capricious, and careless about it, and he would be so glad when he came back to know that she had written such a letter. And she would enclose one of the photographs of Robert that had just been sent home; there had not been time to look at them. Laura went to her husband's room to find the parcel, and lingered there awhile, idly touching the things on the dressing-table, and turning over the books. A portrait of herself was placed upon an easel, by the window. "If we were only to stay in a place for a day," thought Laura, "he would have that unpacked and set up." She found the parcel of photographs, and looked at them all, selecting the best for Miss Thornton. Robert made a good photograph, she thought; the strong, placid, truthful, manly face, came out well under the scrutiny of the sunlight. She propped the little card portrait up on her desk, and glanced at it many times while she was writing, with smiles which would have fallen like sunbeams on Robert Thornton's heart, if he could have seen them.

Her letter completed, it was time for Laura to dress for a dinner, to which she was engaged for that evening, at the villa of a Russian princess. She wished she had not said she would go, and let Robert arrange that she should take Sir John and

Lady Coverley in her carriage; she felt disposed for a quiet evening with a book. It would have been quite another thing if Robert had been with her. Dressing was a bore. There were some gowns in a box, just come from Paris, and she had thought of wearing one of them, but she changed her mind. She would wear a gown which Robert had noticed a day or two previously, and, as ornaments, her cats'-eyes. What trouble Robert had taken about those beautiful gems; what a fine set he had succeeded in getting! The shifting shimmer of the gems became the sparkling little beauty well, and never had Laura looked more sparkling, or more beautiful than she looked that night, when all the new-comers at the Princess M——'s reception who did not know her asked who she was, and all who did were anxious to proclaim their possession of that privilege. Laura's spirits rose high; she was pleased with the company, satisfied with herself, and honestly wishing all the time that her husband were by her side. The moon was shining over the Bay of the Angels when Laura came back to the hotel, and its rays turned to the likeness of silver wings the distant sails on the horizon. The Firefly's were not of the number, Laura knew; she was far far away by this time. The town, and the gardens, the background of hills, the jutting-out promontory, the wide calm expanse of steel-blue sea under the wide calm expanse of steel-blue sky, with the lesser lights that rule the night ablaze in it; the atmosphere so clear and light that every object was defined with a blade-like sharpness; all made up a picture on which not the most accustomed eyes could rest without a fresh sense of calm and elevated pleasure. Laura looked out of her window at the scene for long after she was left alone, with a deeper feeling than its beauty had ever before aroused in her, and said to herself when at length she turned away: "And it must be equally still and beautiful all along the coast. A glorious night at sea."

The morning showed a change; the wind was chill, the sky was overcast, and Laura's daily message of enquiry for Mrs. Monroe, was answered by Miss Wells to the effect that she would not venture to go out that day. Laura had made some engagements, but she did not feel inclined to fulfil them; she was in an idle mood, and disposed for nothing more lively than a visit to her friends in the old town. She sent her excuses to the people who would expect to see her, and wished it was not too early to call on Mrs. Monroe. It had not occurred

to Laura that she should feel lonely and weary just because Robert was to be away on a three days' cruise; but it was so, and the society of two persons, who had nothing at all in common with the bright and pleasure-loving world in which Laura habitually lived, was the only resource to which she could turn without distaste against the depression that was stealing over her. And, somehow, she thought differently to-day from what she had thought yesterday about Mrs. Monroe. She had been too sanguine; these variations were common in the insidious malady that had taken hold of her friend. Miss Wells was not deceived; she had seen too much to be taken in by the false strength and the fitful spirits which might easily delude one so inexperienced as Laura. There came over Laura a sense of the terrible reality of suffering and death, which are in the background of every life, and it frightened her, as if for the first time she had learned that such things were. A glimpse of something more and other in life than she had ever thought of came to her—of something that was in the minds of serious people, like her husband, for instance, and Miss Thornton, which could and would help them in times of trouble from which there could be no exemption or escape for anyone; this it was which was showing itself to Laura, coming in upon her as the tide might come in upon a belated wanderer on the cliff-bound shore; something that was not formula, or cant, or fashion; something which Mrs. Monroe had, and that was helping her. Helping her along a path which Laura discerned aright for the first time, and from the sight of which she shrank—a path which lay through pain, and led to death. What was it? Love? No; that was gone, or rather it was changed into grief, and even Laura knew that a broken heart helps no one on the way of life. Was it courage? No. Mrs. Monroe was not a woman of the courageous kind, even in health. Was it religion? Laura asked herself that question for the first time in her life, when in some unaccountable way the inexorability of the law of suffering that rules human existence revealed itself to her. She must think of this; she must see to this. What had come to her between yesterday and to-day, to inspire her with thoughts such as she had never had previously, and to make her afraid? Her prosperous young life lay all around and ahead of her, bright and smiling like the summer sea of yesterday; and it could hardly

be that a few hours' solitude and a change of weather had affected her so strongly.

The pleasant motherly manner of Miss Wells became downright petting where Laura was concerned, and she was amusingly interested in the "goings on" of the gay, busy, and great people into whose ways and customs she got no more than side peeps through the nooks and crannies of gossip.

Mrs. Monroe was asleep when Laura arrived, and, having gladdened Miss Wells with the announcement that she meant to remain "quite hours," installed herself in the spacious sitting-room at the end of the apartment. When they had talked awhile of the invalid, Laura with more than usual seriousness, and Miss Wells cheerfully enough, though with thorough conviction of the hopeless nature of the case, Laura had to tell of the grandeurs and gaities of the preceding evening, the emeralds and opals of the grand duchess, and the "historic" lace of the princess. She saw that Miss Wells was a little worn and anxious, and so she exerted herself for her amusement and to turn the current of her ideas. While Laura was doing this, her thoughts were busy with Miss Wells's life; she was trying to realise its self-sacrifice, and to imagine in what its rewards, which were distinctly not tangible or ostensible, might possibly consist. Her large income was expended upon the sick and suffering, its "margin" was what she allotted to herself; her time and strength, the skill and patience, the tenderness and cheerfulness which were evident to all—and how infinitely precious to those for whose service she lived, only the sick and sorrowing could tell—were theirs also. How did she do it; and what was her reward? With the strange sense upon her, that had come yesterday, and been growing all to-day, that she was learning something strange and vague which would have to clear itself in her mind and then be learned in all its extent and meaning, Laura listened to the stories of Miss Wells's experiences, which she induced her to tell, the gossip being all exhausted, and felt herself drawn more and more to this woman, so homely and so good.

The long talk was uninterrupted, for when Mrs. Monroe awoke, and Miss Wells went to her, she said she preferred to be left quiet for the time. So the hours went on, and Laura was about unwillingly to take her leave and return to dine in solitary state at her hotel, when a servant came to tell Miss Wells that a

person, who was waiting in the vestibule, wanted to see her. Miss Wells excused herself to Laura, begged that she would not go away—this was merely a message from one of her poor people, no doubt, and would not detain her—and left the room.

"That is, I suppose," thought Laura, "one of the best women in the world; who never did a deliberately wrong act, and very likely has done very few accidentally wrong ones. And yet, if I had done anything awful, and was sorry for it, and wanted to be helped out of it, I would come and tell her, and be quite sure that she would help me. Why, I wonder? There's more in it than her having taken a fancy to me, and I to her. And if—trouble and sorrow were to come to me, I think she would show me how to bear them."

She shivered, drew her mantle round her, walked to the window and looked out, left the window, and turned over the music that lay scattered on the piano. Thus several minutes passed, and Laura was beginning to wonder at the prolonged absence of Miss Wells, when the door opened, and Mrs. Monroe, wearing a white Indian shawl over her widow's dress, but trembling with cold notwithstanding, entered the room. Laura greeted her with surprise and delight, saying that she had not hoped to see her that day at all.

"And our days at Nice are getting few," she added, "so that I grudge one." All the time she was thinking how dreadfully ill Mrs. Monroe was looking, much worse than she had yet seen her look, and that her days were also getting few.

"I want you to stay with me this evening," said Mrs. Monroe, who uttered her words with a strange difficulty. "You will, I am sure. I felt so sure, that I told them to send away your carriage. You do not mind dining without dressing for once."

Her eyes wandered; she seemed hardly conscious of what she was saying; she sank into a chair, and panted for breath, while the damps of suffering or of agitation gathered on her lips and forehead.

"Of course I will stay," said Laura, bending over her in great distress and solicitude. "I am very glad to stay, very grateful to you for asking me, for I was just thinking how dull and dreary an evening I should have to pass, all alone, and I really cannot go out without Robert. You are in pain—you are very very ill!" she added, for Mrs. Monroe had uttered a distinct groan.

But she caught Laura's hand and pressed it against her own closed eyes, and she trembled in every limb.

No thought except of Mrs. Monroe's illness crossed Laura's mind as she bent over her, in the perplexity of ignorance, wishing with all her heart that Miss Wells would come, and that she herself were more useful and capable of helping others.

The person who was waiting in the vestibule to see Miss Wells proved to be one of the servants from the hotel at which Mr. and Mrs. Thornton were staying, and his errand was to request her to accompany him on the instant to the presence of Sir Wilfrid Esdaile. A pencilled line from Sir Wilfrid, which the man put into her hands, confirmed the message, and added that the writer knew Mrs. Thornton was with her, and had to entreat Miss Wells to come at once without letting her know of the summons.

"Where is he?" This was all Miss Wells said.

The man led her along the corridor, and opening the outer door of the room which adjoined the last one of her own suite, and into which the senseless little window in the cross-door looked, let her pass through.

Sir Wilfrid Esdaile, who was restlessly pacing the room on the farther side, came towards Miss Wells, showing her a face more changed and ghastly than she had ever seen on a living man. She shrank back, and faltered out:

"What is it? What has happened? The yacht——"

"Yes! No! Oh, Miss Wells, what are we to do? He is dead! How is she to be told? I found out at the hotel that she was here, and I have come to you."

They stood opposite each other in silence for a full minute; then Miss Wells made a sign to him to speak, and covering her face with her hands, listened.

"The weather had been beautiful all day, the wind fair, and the yacht behaving splendidly. The night was also beautiful, and we stayed up talking until after midnight. I left him, and went below, and then—I don't know quite how it happened, nobody can tell exactly—there was a change of wind, and they were doing something with the sails. I know as little as you of such things, and can't explain anything but the dreadful facts; I don't know whether anybody is to blame—he did not see what was doing, or they did not see him—he was struck, by the fluttering sail, I suppose, by some part of the

was up in a moment, and we saw him—we saw him, in the smooth sea, under the bright moonlight; he was keeping himself up in the water, and it seemed as though he could easily catch the ropes that were out in a moment. It seemed, too, only a minute or two and yet an age until a boat was lowered, but in that minute he had gone down. I was at the side, and looking at him. I don't know whether the men felt the least alarm; I did, but that is because I know nothing of the sea and ships; I think they had no thought but that he was safe. I saw his face distinctly, as he dropped his head and went down. We rowed about for hours, until long after it was daylight—the men did it because I asked them, useless as it was—then we brought the yacht back. There is a crowd at the harbour now, and all is known at the hotel. Thank Heaven his poor wife is here. How will she bear it? How is she to be told?"

"I don't know," said Miss Wells faintly; and pointing to the wall with a shaking hand, "she is there, happy, hopeful, beautiful, and I don't know how she is to be told. I cannot do it, if that is what you mean."

"Yes; that is what I mean," said Sir Wilfrid solemnly. "Think that she is quite alone, except for her servant, and that I am only a man! She must not leave this, and go back to the hotel ignorant of what has occurred; she would hear it in the street, or from the people here."

"Ab," said Miss Wells, with a start; "there's the danger. She may not have waited for me. Stay here until I come back."

He remained in the fast darkening room. Presently she returned, and Sir Wilfrid Esdaile saw in her face, which had lost the expression of terror, that she would do what he asked, and was nerving herself for the task.

"I have sent Mrs. Monroe to persuade her to remain with us; she will not suspect her, as she knows she has been very ill to-day; and I could not see her yet. But I will do it, Sir Wilfrid, though it is like taking up a knife to kill her. Just after she has been talking out her happy young heart to me."

"It is dreadful, but it must be done. And there are arrangements, statements——"

Sir Wilfrid paused, struck anew by the awfulness of the vanishing away of the man who had been with them but yesterday, a very type of the enviable among human beings. If they could have taken Laura to him, as he lay in that great calm of death which at least stills the revolt and tempest of grief, there would have been less dread over them both for the result of what she had to be told; but this resource was not theirs, the solace of the last farewell was not to be hers. The bark of her happiness had indeed

gone down at sea,
When Heaven was all tranquillity.

"When she has been told, it will be best to telegraph for her father; but the first thing is to tell her. I will remain here."

"No; come to my rooms."

He followed her at once. A little group of people had gathered at the head of the stair; the man from the other hotel was talking, and being talked to, in whispers. There was a dead silence as Miss Wells and Sir Wilfrid Esdaile came along the corridor, and taking no notice of them, entered the other apartment.

"I have never seen you so ill," Laura was saying, as Miss Wells came into the room, and approached Mrs. Monroe and herself, "and you are frightened. Is there anything very unusually wrong with you. Oh, I am so glad you have come back. She is—but you are frightened too. What is it?"

She let go Mrs. Monroe's hand, and stood upright.

"I am frightened, my dear," and Miss Wells came quickly, and put her arms round her, "frightened for you. I have to tell you bad news; news of a very great sorrow—the greatest that could come to you."

"Papa!" exclaimed Laura, clutching Miss Wells with both her hands. "Papa! Is he dead!"

"No, no. Let me hold you while you hear it; and try, try to bear it, for his sake, and his child's."

"Robert?"

She said only that one word; she saw the answer that Miss Wells could not speak; she lifted her hands and pushed her hair off her forehead, then, with a wild white smile dropped between the arms that strove in vain to hold her, as if she had been shot.

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXII. AT THE KENNELS.

It was a fresh sunny morning, a soft west wind blowing up all the sweetness of the woods and leas. The cattle were grouped in lazy stillness on the dewy grass; the year's pigs, grown to the hobbledehoy stage of existence, were grubbing about contentedly among the furze-bushes; by the roadside, a matronly sow lay stretched flat upon her side in the sunshine, just where carriage-wheels must pass over her, were carriages frequent in those parts.

Even the brightness of the morning had no charm for Vixen. There was no delight for her in the green solemnity of the forest glades, where the beechen pillars led the eye away into innumerable vistas, each grandly mysterious as a cathedral aisle. The sun shot golden arrows through dark boughs, patching the moss with translucent lights, vivid and clear as the lustre of emeralds. The gentle splash of the forest stream, rippling over its pebbly bed, made a tender music that was wont to seem passing sweet to Violet Tempest's ear. To-day she heard nothing, saw nothing. Her brain was clouded with angry thoughts.

She left the Forest by-and-by, following one of the familiar cart-tracks, and came out into the peaceful little colony of Beechdale, where it was a chance if the noonday traveller saw anything alive except a youthful family of pigs enjoying an oasis of mud in a dry land, or an intrusive dog rushing out of a cottage to salute the wayfarer with an enquiring bark. The children were still in school. The hum of their voices was wafted from

the open windows. The church door stood open. The village graves upon the sunward-facing slope were bright with common flowers; the dead lying with their feet to the west, ready to stand up and see their Lord at the resurrection morning.

Vixen hurried through the little village, not wanting to see Mrs. Scobel, or anyone she knew, this morning. There was a long rustic lane opposite the church, that led straight to the kennels.

"I will go and see the foxhounds," said Vixen. "They are true and faithful. But perhaps all those I love best have been sold, or are dead by this time."

It seemed to her ages since she had been to the kennels with her father. It had been his favourite walk, out of the hunting season, and he had rarely suffered a week to pass without making his visit of inspection. Since her return Violet had carefully avoided the well-known spot; but to-day, out of the very bitterness of her heart, came a desire to renew past associations. Bullfinch was gone for ever, but the hounds at least remained; and her father had loved them almost as well as he had loved Bullfinch.

Nothing was changed at the kennels. The same feeder in corduroy and fustian came out of the cooking-house when Vixen opened the five-barred gate. The same groom was lounging in front of the stables, where the horses were kept for the huntsman and his underlings. The whole place had the same slumberous out-of-season look she remembered so well in the days when hunting was over.

The men touched their caps to Miss Tempest as she passed them. She went straight to the kennels. There were the three wooden doors, opening into three

square stone-paved yards, each door provided with a round eye-hole, through which the authorities might scrutinise the assembly within. A loud yelping arose as Vixen's footstep drew near. Then there were frantic snuffings under the doors, and a general agitation. She looked through the little eye-hole into the middle yard. Yes; there they were, fourteen or fifteen couple, tumultuously excited, as if they knew she was there: white and black-and-tan, pointed noses, beautiful intelligent eyes, bright tan spots upon marked brows, some with a streak of white running down the long sharp noses, some heavy in the jowl, some with muzzles sharp as a greyhound's, thirty tails erect and agitated.

The feeder remembered Miss Tempest perfectly, though it was more than three years since her last visit.

"Would you like to go in and see 'em, miss?" he said.

"Yes, if you please, Dawson. You have Gauntlet still, I see. That is Gauntlet, isn't it? And Dart, and Junc, and Ringlet, and Artful?"

"Yes, miss. There ain't many gone since you was here. But there's a lot o' poppies. You'd like to see the poppies, wouldn't you, miss? They be in the next kennel, if you'll just wait five minutes."

Cleanliness was the order of the day at the kennels; but to do the late master's daughter more honour, Dawson the feeder called a bright-looking lad, his subordinate, and divers pails of water were fetched, and the three little yards washed out vigorously before Miss Tempest was invited to enter. When she did go in, the yard was empty and clean as a new pin. The hounds had been sent into their house, where they were all grouped picturesquely on a bench littered with straw, looking as grave as a human parliament, and much wiser. Nothing could be more beautiful than their attitudes, or more intelligent than their countenances.

Vixen looked in at them through the barred window.

"Dear things," she exclaimed; "they are as lovely as ever. How fond papa was of them!"

And then the kennel-huntsman, who had appeared on the scene by this time, opened the door and smacked his whip; and the fourteen couple came leaping helter-skelter out into the little yard, and made a rush at Vixen, and surrounded her, and fawned upon her, and caressed her as if their recognition of her after

long years was perfect, and as if they had been breaking their hearts for her in the interval. Perhaps they would have been just as affectionate to the next comer, having a large surplus stock of love always on hand ready to be lavished on the human race; but Vixen took these demonstrations as expressive of a peculiar attachment, and was moved to tears by the warmth of this canine greeting.

"Thank God! there are some living things that love me," she exclaimed.

"Something that loves you!" cried a voice from the door of the yard. "Does not everything noble or worthy love you, as it loves all that is beautiful?"

Turning quickly, with a scared look, Violet saw Roderick Vawdrey standing in the doorway.

He stood quietly watching her, his dark eyes softened with a look of tender admiration. There could hardly have been a prettier picture than the tall girlish figure and bright chestnut head, the fair face bending over the upturned noses of the hounds as they clustered round her, some standing up with their strong white paws upon her shoulder, some nestling at her knees. Her hat had fallen off, and was being trampled under a multitude of restless feet.

Rorie came into the little yard. The huntsman cracked his whip, and the hounds went tumbling one over the other into their house, where they leaped upon their straw bed, and grouped themselves as if they had been sitting for their portraits to Sir Edwin Landseer. Two inquisitive fellows stood up with their paws upon the ledge of the barred window, and looked out at Violet and the new master.

"I did not know you were at Briarwood," she said, as they shook hands.

"I only came home last night. My first visit was naturally here. I wanted to see if everything was in good order."

"When do you begin to hunt?"

"On the 1st of October. You are going to hunt this year, of course."

"No. I have never followed the hounds since papa's death. I don't suppose I ever shall again."

"What, not with your stepfather?"

"Certainly not with Captain Winstanley."

"Then you must marry a hunting-man," said Rorie gaily. "We can't afford to lose the straightest rider in the Forest."

"I am not particularly in love with hunting—for a woman. There seems some-

thing bloodthirsty in it. And Bates says that if ladies only knew how their horses' backs get wrung in the hunting season, they would hardly have the heart to hunt. It was very nice to ride by papa's side when I was a little girl. I would have gone anywhere with him—through an Indian jungle after tigers—but I don't care about it now."

"Well, perhaps you are right; though I should hardly have expected such mature wisdom from my old playfellow, whose flowing locks used once to be the cynosure of the hunting-field. And now, Violet—I may call you Violet, may I not, as I did in the old days—at least, when I did not call you Vixen."

"That was papa's name," she said quickly. "Nobody ever calls me that now."

"I understand; I am to call you Violet. And we are to be good friends always, are we not, with a true and loyal friendship?"

"I have not so many friends that I can afford to give up one who is staunch and true," answered Violet sadly.

"And I mean to be staunch and true, believe me; and I hope, by-and-by, when you come to know Mabel, you and she will be fast friends. You may not cotton to her very easily at first, because, you see, she reads Greek, and goes in for natural science, and has a good many queer ways. But she is all that is pure-minded and noble. She has been brought up in an atmosphere of flattery. It is the only fault she has."

"I shall be very glad if she will let me like her," Violet said meekly.

They had strolled away from the kennels, into the surrounding Forest. They walked along idly, following a cart-track that led into the woody deeps, where the earliest autumn leaves were falling gently in the soft west wind. By-and-by they came to a fallen oak, lying by the side of the track, ready for barking, and it seemed the most natural thing in the world to sit down side by side on this rustic seat, and talk of days gone by, lazily watching the flickering shadows and darting sunrays in the opposite thicket or along the slanting stretch of open turf—that smooth emerald grass, so inviting to the eye, so perilous to the foot of man or beast.

"And now, Violet, tell me all about yourself, and about this second marriage of your mother's," Roderick began earnestly; "I hope you have quite reconciled yourself to the idea of it by this time."

"I have not reconciled myself; I never shall," answered Violet, with restrained anger. "I know that mamma has heaped up sorrow for herself in the days to come, and I pity her too much to be angry with her. Yes; I, who ought to look up to and respect my mother, can only look down upon her and pity her. That is a hard thing, is it not, Rorie? She has married a bad man—mean, and false, and tyrannical. Shall I tell you what he has done within these last few days?"

"Do. I hope it is not anything very bad."

Violet told how Bullfinch had been sold. "It looks mean, certainly," said Mr. Vawdrey; "but I daresay to Captain Winstanley, as a man of the world, it might seem a foolish thing to keep a horse nobody rode; especially such a valuable horse as Bullfinch. Your father gave two hundred and fifty for him at Andover, I remember. And you really have too many horses at the Abbey House."

"Arion will be the next to be sold, I daresay."

"Oh, no, no! He could not be such an insolent scoundrel as to sell your horse. That would be too much. Besides, you will be of age in a year or two, and your own mistress."

"I shall not be of age for the next seven years. I am not to come of age till I am five-and-twenty."

"Phew!" whistled Rorie. "That's a long shot off. How is that?"

"Papa left it so in his will. It was his care of me, no doubt. He never would have believed that mamma would marry again."

"And for the next seven years you are to be in a state of tutelage, dependent on your mother for everything?"

"For everything. And that will really mean dependent upon Captain Winstanley; because I am very sure that as long as he lets mamma wear pretty dresses, she will be quite contented to let him be master of everything else."

"But if you were to marry——?"

"I suppose that would entangle or disentangle matters somehow. But I am not likely to marry."

"I don't see that," said Rorie. "I should think nothing was more likely."

"Allow me to be the best judge of my own business," exclaimed Vixen, looking desperately angry. "I will go so far as to say that I never shall marry!"

"Oh, very well, if you insist upon it, let it be understood so. And now Vix——"

Violet—don't you think if you could bring yourself to conciliate Captain Winstanley—to resign yourself, in fact, to the inevitable, and take things pleasantly, it would make your life happier for the next seven years? I really would try to do it, if I were you."

"I had made up my mind to a life of hypocrisy before he sold Bullfinch," replied Vixen, "but now I shall hate him frankly."

"But, Violet, don't you see that unless you can bring yourself to live pleasantly with that man your life will be made miserable? Fate condemns you to live under the same roof with him."

"I am not sure about that. I could go out as a governess. I am not at all clever, but I think I could teach enough for twenty pounds a year, or at least give my services in exchange for a comfortable home, as the advertisements say. How I wish I could read Greek and play Chopin, like Lady Mabel Ashbourne. I'll write to dear old McCroke, and ask her to get me a place."

"My dear Violet, how can you talk so absurdly. You, the future mistress of the Abbey House, to go meandering about the world teaching buttermen's or tea-dealers' children to spell B a, ba, and A b, ab?"

"It might be better than sitting at meat with a man I detest," said Vixen. "Am I to value the flesh-pots of Egypt more than my liberty and independence of spirit?"

"You have your mother to think of," urged Roderick. "You owe duty and obedience to her, even if she has offended you by this foolish marriage. If you have so bad an opinion of Captain Winstanley, you are all the more bound to stand by your mother."

"That is an argument worth listening to," said Vixen. "It might be cruel to leave poor mamma quite at his mercy. I don't suppose he would actually illtreat her. He knows his own interest too well for that. He will not look her up in a cellar, or beat, or starve her. He will be content with making himself her master. She will have no more will of her own than if she were a prettily dressed doll placed at the head of the table for show. She will be lulled into a state of childish bias, and go smiling through life, believing she has not a wish ungratified. Everybody will think her the happiest of women, and Captain Winstanley the best of husbands."

Vixen said all this with prophetic earnestness, looking straight forward into

the green glade before her, where the beech-nuts and acorns were dropping in a gentle rain of plenty.

"I hope things won't be quite so bad as you anticipate. I hope you will be able to make yourself happy, in spite of Captain Winstanley. And we shall see each other pretty often, I hope, Violet, as we used in old times. The Dovedales are at Wiesbaden; the duke only holds existence on the condition of deluging himself with German waters once a year; but they are to be back early in November. I shall make the duchess call on Mrs. Winstanley directly she returns."

"Thanks; mamma will be very pleased. I wonder you are not with them."

"Oh, I had to begin my duties as M. F. H. I wouldn't have been away for the world."

Violet looked at her watch. It was a good deal later than she had supposed. Time goes quickly when one is talking over a new grievance with an old friend. She was a long way from the Abbey House.

"I must go home," she said; "mamma and Captain Winstanley may arrive at any moment. There is no time named in mamma's last telegram," she said; "only that they are moving gently homeward."

"Let us go, then," said Rorie, rising from his rugged seat,

"But I am not going to take you out of your way. Every step of my way home takes you farther from Briarwood."

"Never mind if it does. I mean to walk home with you. I daresay, if I were very tired, Bates would lend me a mount home."

"You can have Arion, if you like."

"No, thanks. Arion shall not have my thirteen stone; I want a little more timber under me."

"You ought to have had Bullfinch," said Vixen regretfully.

"I would have had him, if I had known he was in the market. The writing a figure or so more or less in a cheque should not have hindered me."

BLUEBEARD AT BROGLIO.

THE ancient castle of Broglio is a landmark from the city of Siena. A bold castellated mass catches your eye, based on a rocky platform, midway up the wooded slopes of the Chianti hills. Behind rises the straight ridge of the Casentino mountains; behind both frown the rugged Apennines.

If the castle of Broglio is a landmark, the "fiero barone," its master, is also a landmark among his countrymen.

Like his castle, he is, as to age, of unknown antiquity. Moreover, he is the greatest man in Italy, much greater than the king. When he was prime-minister to Victor Emmanuel the baron forgot himself so far as on one occasion to have passed out before his sovereign. On an angry remonstrance being addressed to him, he replied, "That, after all, the house of Bicasoli dated back two centuries earlier than the house of Savoy." Victor Emmanuel was a good-natured man, and very courteous, but pride, such as the baron's, was too much even for him. The fiero barone being then, as I said, his minister, the king took an early opportunity of leaving the then capital, Florence, for Milan, without apprising him. The hint was taken. The baron's resignation was at once sent in, and accepted. The baron retired to Broglio; and Victor Emmanuel selected the facile Ratazzi to succeed him.

Altogether, on reflection, the baron considered it was an undue condescension on his part to serve the king. As a patriot, he was the servant of Italy; but Italy is a poetic abstraction, Victor Emmanuel a solid reality of flesh and blood.

Obedience in the one case he accepted in a general and impalpable sense. Attendance on the other was but an honourable name for servitude. The baron, who declined any title or honour because he was "the baron," with a name more ancient than the royal house of Savoy, thought that servitude of any kind was incompatible with his dignity.

He could lead the Liberal party from Broglio more fitly than from the Pitti at Florence, or the Quirinal at Rome. Let the Liberals, if they wanted him, come to his castle. The Liberals, knowing the temper of their chief, came in shoals. It was better so, and more befitting the name he bore.

When such a man as this invites you to his castle, you must go. We were in the dog-days. It had not rained for three months, it was dusty beyond words to describe, and we had a drive of ten miles before us. We were four in number. I do not know which dreaded the heat the most. Diplomacy, in the person of a most courteous ambassador, who would rather die than complain in the presence of ladies; a lady, whom I will call Madame Beauty;

another male, whom I will characterise as Parliament; and myself.

Once out of the sheltering walls of Siena, we might appropriate the words of Napoleon at Saarbrück, and say we received "a baptism of fire."

Madame Beauty, abhorring tan and freckles, broke out into loud lamentations. I seconded her. To protect us, the hood of the carriage, an open one, was raised. This relieved us ladies, but not so the gentlemen. They could neither sit up straight nor lean back.

Parliament, a debonair young person, taking life easily, hung his long thin legs outside the carriage, over the wheel, thus accepting his misfortunes sideways. Diplomacy, with the honour and good repute of his august sovereign ever before his eyes, accommodated himself on less elastic principles. He must have suffered agonies; there was no room for his legs; neither could he raise his head, nor stiffen his back.

The road to Broglio was as rugged as the temper of the baron; there was nothing level about either. No sooner were we on the top of one steep ascent than we dropped down hopelessly on the other side. The fierce August sun splashed and dashed on the vineyards and on the olives, like fire. Here and there a large villa, planted on a hill, presented itself, naked and forlorn, to a merciless sunshine. Other villas there were, backed by cypresses, pointing defiance to the brazen heavens.

We were not conversational; the heat made us dull.

Madame Beauty peeped out now and then.

"Splendid! charming! lovely!" were the words on her soft red lips.

Another peep.

"Magnificent! picturesque! poetic!"

"Heavens! what will she do by-and-by for her superlatives," thought I, "if she casts them about so prodigally thus early in the day?" It was only Madame Beauty's way. She was either in tears or she was bursting out into constant songs of praise. The varying expression of her sweet face, the inflections of her musical voice, reclaimed her words from sameness.

Then she fell into fresh ecstasies as we ascended into a forest region, where groups of oaks reared their ancient heads out of a wilderness of tall grass, and heath, and blossoming shrubs of cistus and lavender. In the breaks of timber appeared yellow crags with wooded margins, upland

fields, and vineyards. The crags dropped downwards towards a dried-up river-bed, where a few sheep, led by a ragged boy, snatched a hasty morsel.

Let Madame Beauty exclaim as she would, it was a downright ugly road. Once within the territory of Broglio (a fact announced by an outlook over boundless vineyards), the faultless neatness of the cultivation, the regularity of the furrows, the freedom from weeds, and the peculiar training of the vines, were not to be mistaken. Instead of the primitive Tuscan fashion of letting nature have her way in festooning the vines from tree to tree, or the Roman habit of netting the vines thickly to cane sticks, in a sort of mazy wilderness, each plant was isolated and dwarfed to about a yard in height. At most it was permitted to bear three or four bunches; these, hanging low on the stem to intensify the flavour, were magnificent in size and colour. From those vineyards comes the good Broglio wine, which has found its way, along with its master's name, all over the world.

Presently we were ascending the rounded summits of the Chianti hills, rising steeper and nearer, broken by wooded ravines and lawns of turf, scored by red rocks, and admirably adapted to grape culture.

"Charming! pastoral! enchanting!" Madame Beauty was off again in full cry. "Look! oh, look!" craning her neck out of the hood. "Simply marvellous! sublime!"

Madame Beauty had called wolf so often that nobody looked up, till, in an ecstasy of appeal, she added: "The castle!"

There it was, sure enough, towering above us, a huge, solid, castellated pile—divided from us by a deep valley, also laid out in vineyards—with two central towers of unequal height in the midst. The sun was playing painfully on the long lines of Gothic windows, painfully also on the bright red walls. Why did the fiero barone, when he restored his castle, colour it red? The fresh stone jambs of the Gothic windows and their arches sounded a perpetual discord with the grey old central towers.

"A grand position, but ugly," I said.

Madame Beauty snapped me up sharply. "Some people are never contented," she said.

Diplomacy backed up the lady in admiration. Parliament knew the castle and "the strong man," its master, well; so he smoked his cigarette placidly, dangling

his legs over the wheel, and took no part in the discussion.

"It is the castle of Bluebeard," was all he said curtly, when admiration was exhausted.

"How? Why? What does he mean?" We all fell upon him.

He dangled his legs ostentatiously and shook his head. "I repeat, it is the castle of Bluebeard—voilà tout! You will judge for yourselves."

Even Madame Beauty, with her wheedling ways, could not extract any further information.

A turn in the road shut out the castle. Fresh life seemed infused into our horses; with streaming flanks they responded to the driver's whip, and galloped up a steep avenue bordered by ancient cypresses. The Chianti hills were literally over our heads; we seemed driving into them. Another avenue, this time of fir. Up, up, up; till we were under the castle walls.

We then dashed over the drawbridge, then under a portcullis.

Within the gates a board announced that the castle of Broglio was not shown to visitors while the restorations were proceeding. The restorations had been proceeding for the last twenty years, and would proceed as long as the baron lived.

We zigzagged up a narrow road, threading our way under ancient walls. Some were torn down and lay in ruins—and there were heaps of mortar and piles of stones. A damp cold chilled us, a gloomy darkness engulfed us. Where was the sun gone, and the heat, and the glare? Madame Beauty turned pale, and stared at Diplomacy with alarmed eyes. Parliament's words suddenly recurred to her.

"Why did you call this Bluebeard's castle?" she again asks. "Tell me before I go in. Is there anything strange in it? A ghost? Is it haunted?"

"Wait and see," replied Parliament, determined to baffle curiosity. We reached a quadrangle; the grey towers were rising over us, ready to crush us, and long lines of gloomy buildings extended on either hand. How stern and dismal. Nothing modern there. No red walls, nor flaunting sunlit windows. Even Madame Beauty was mute.

As we drew up before an arched doorway she shuddered, recovered herself a little, then smiled faintly up at a morose and defiant façade.

If the outside of the castle was grim, the major-domo who advanced to meet us was still grimmer. With sullen gravity he answered our enquiry, and announced the

astounding fact that the baron was out. We were expected at an earlier hour; the baron had given us up. Consternation fell upon us at this intelligence.

"There now!" broke out Parliament roughly. "If you accept an invitation from such a man as the lord of Broglio, you are bound to consider his convenience! Of course he had given us up; no one would be out of doors at this time of day but dogs and English!" This was a bad shot on Parliament's side, for only I of the whole party was English. Diplomacy looked grave. He politely demurred to what Parliament was saying. He opined that, as no hour was mentioned, it was the baron who was to blame. He opined also, that, as the ambassador of——he ought to be considered; not individually, but as representing his august master.

"The baron is greater than any king!" cried out Parliament, exasperated, standing on the steps before the door—we ladies had already left the carriage. "After all, when I brought you here, I told you we started too late. You managed it among you. I wash my hands of it."

Diplomacy, still seated in the carriage, felt himself in a false position, his face showed it—snubbed, in fact, by Parliament and by the baron. Parliament was but a wilful young deputy of the left; but the baron, that was different. Ought he to descend, or ought he to return to Siena? He gazed uneasily into the cool depths of the darkened hall; he cast a doubtful glance at such portions of the sky as were visible from between the walls; he looked at the streaming flanks of the panting horses. No! He must pocket his official dignity and remain, if only to rest the horses. Parliament must explain to the baron that as the ambassador of——he was not accustomed to such treatment. Reconciled by this mental protest, he left the carriage, and we entered the hall?

All was strangely modern; nothing ancient, nothing imposing. Cheerful white walls, shining with fresh paint and frescoed—a great opportunity lost! The hall—nothing but a broad passage—led to a southern gallery, conspicuous by a gaudily-tinted ottoman placed in the centre, called by Italians *amorino*—little love—with *dos-à-dos* seats for four; each couple close enough to look well into each other's eyes. The *amorino ottoman* stood opposite an open door, through which a flight of steps led to the ramparts, metamorphosed into

a shrubbery, with flower parterres, at that moment blazing in the sunshine. From thence we were led, Parliament in front, striding on with his long thin legs, into a saloon with darkened windows, where stuccoed columns supported a raftered ceiling, and cinque cento carving was concealed by a glaring cretonne.

The walls followed suit. Rows of trumpery little prints, in wooden frames, were side-by-side with priceless works of the Sieneese and Umbrian schools. It was clear the baron had no taste. In the place of honour, opposite the range of gothic windows, were hung two glaring productions representing the visit of Victor Emmanuel to the castle; the tall gaunt figure of the baron—"So like Don Quixote," Madame Beauty said—contrasting strongly with the broad-shouldered, burly monarch.

I ventured to observe that there must be something very discrepant about the baron, to have created such an interior. For a wonder, no one differed from me. Madame Beauty, not at all herself—she said she felt oppressed by the air of Broglio—had collapsed on one of the chintz sofas. She kept repeating that she could not breathe. Diplomacy, much out of joint in consequence of the slight put upon him by the baron's absence, was evidently turning over in his mind how he should report this unbecoming reception in his next despatch.

"You are looking at the pictures," Parliament said to me in his odd, curt way; "the baron has a mania for having everything painted. Better not when you live in Bluebeard's castle!"

"What do you mean, with your Bluebeard's castle?" cried Madame Beauty, quite provoked, rising and running up to him.

"Wait and see," gravely answered Parliament, gently disengaging himself from her grasp.

At that point one consciousness alone possessed me—it was hunger. I distinctly felt its pangs. If Bluebeard would give me food, I would consider his misdeeds afterwards. I addressed myself to Parliament for relief.

"When the baron went out, had he ordered luncheon? Can you enquire?"

At this query both Diplomacy and Parliament fell upon me savagely. One would think I had proposed the committing a crime.

"A cup of coffee, perhaps, and a bit of

bread," put in dear kind Beauty. "If she is faint——"

"I cannot touch coffee," was my rejoinder. "But a crust of bread—surely a crust of bread——"

Both the gentlemen were indignant. If the baron had ordered nothing, nothing could be asked for. On reflection, both had agreed that we must await his return. Diplomacy had with difficulty been persuaded that the hour of our arrival was inopportune.

"But," said I, pleading hard, "are you not both hungry too?"

All shook their heads.

"If I do not eat," I added, prompted by desperation, "I shall faint. What will you do with me then? I shall require to be laid upon the baron's best bed. Think of that!"

Diplomacy, being a kind man, smiled and yielded. Arm in arm with Parliament, he went out to see what could be done.

Madame Beauty, meanwhile, with a languid indifference to all sublunary wants, posed herself in a coquettish attitude. She was sure to be taken care of, by miracle, or chance, or both; a pretty woman always is taken care of.

To beguile the time, I wandered into a suite of rooms opening from the saloon. At all events, in the baron's absence we could wander about as we liked. The doors were all open. I observed that the entire range of Gothic windows all looked out due south towards the thickly-planted ramparts. I came upon a state bed-room, full of mirrors, with dressing-room beyond, then various other rooms, all perfectly commonplace. Beyond, I reached an anteroom. Beyond that, again, an open door, and—darkness! I groped my way in. Was it a chapel? There were windows, but of painted glass.

At first, I could distinguish nothing. Little by little, I made out a lofty carved ceiling, and dark panelled walls. Growing accustomed to the subdued light, I discovered that one entire side of the wall was covered by a picture. I drew near to see what it was. Heavens! what a picture!

In the centre, on a white bed, lay the form of a dying woman; her features drawn and ghastly. She was still young, though hollow-eyed and emaciated. With one upraised arm and outstretched hand she clutched the arm of a bride, arrayed in orange-wreath veil and white draperies. The bride stooped over her as she lay, too weak, it seemed, to raise herself upright.

Her other arm rested on the hand of a young man standing beside the bride—the bridegroom, who stood a little back. One felt how the dying woman was clinging to the bride—clinging to her with the grasp of death. Her half-open mouth told a ghastly tale of struggling breath; yet the shadow of a smile parted her white lips. "You are saved!" she seemed to say. "I die happy!"

Apart, in the shading of the background, stood two other figures. Foremost, the spare iron-knit form of the baron (I had seen him in public, and recognised him at once), perfectly upright, and rigidly impassive; his blue dress-coat was buttoned over his chest; his hard deep-set eyes were fixed on the dying woman. One long bony finger was raised to his lips; the remaining fingers, turned down, supported his chin. His face neither expressed pity nor anger, nor passion of any kind. He was simply musing. Behind the baron stood a priest. On the farther side a doctor and a nurse balanced the composition. The eyes of all were turned towards the bed; they were awaiting that lady's last breath.

"I told you this was Bluebeard's castle," spoke the voice of Parliament out of the gloom. "You have found it out for yourselves. That dying woman is the baron's wife. There is no key with blood upon it, and there was no sister Anne to call out from the tower for help, and no brother to rescue anyone, but this is Bluebeard's castle all the same. The fiero barone shut up his wife. I don't mean——" and Parliament made a vivid pantomime of drawing an imaginary knife across an imaginary throat. "No; he is too grand seigneur for that; but after years of imprisonment at Broglio she died. She bore him many children. They all died one after the other; and were buried in the chapel in the courtyard, where she lies also. He is a great man, but he has a good deal to answer for—the fiero barone! The children were all delicate like their mother; she was one of the loveliest women of her day thirty years ago. I have heard my father describe her appearance at the grand ducal balls at the Pitti at Florence. The company gathered in crowds to admire her dancing in the cotillion. A great beauty, too soft and yielding for her happiness, but most bewitching! The fiero barone, who is a rich man, and would not condescend to think of money, took her without a portion; he was wildly in love with her. She thought she could do anything she liked with him; and so she did, poor lady, for a

time. The baron is a man of unblemished honour," added Parliament hastily, seeing the expression of our faces.

"But what does his honour matter if he is a——"

"Hush! Remember that you are under his roof." This rebuke was addressed to me. "He had his reasons," continued Parliament curtly.

"What might they be?" I asked sardonically. "Of course the baron does not hang up this picture here, and then ask people to the house, without intending both himself and his reasons—as you call them—to be discussed."

"Just so," responded Parliament; "that is why I tell you all about it."

"I suppose," said I, "he had some motive in having that picture painted? Was it remorse, or was it as a penance?"

"I cannot say," Parliament replied. "No one understands his motive. If he had not been out you might not have seen the picture."

"But you appear to have seen it?"

"Yes; he brought me into the room himself."

"Did he make any remark?"

"None," replied Parliament.

"Tell us, I entreat you, more about the lady and the children," interrupted Madame Beauty, her fine brown eyes full of tears.

"Oh, as to the children," returned Parliament, "that is soon told. As I said, they were born delicate, and they all died. The only one that survived out of the five—there were five, I think—was the daughter, the bride in the picture, Anastasia. She lived with her mother in the rooms which were her prison."

"He must be mad!" I cried.

"You would hardly say that in the senate," answered Parliament, highly indignant. "A more clear and masterly intelligence—a more eloquent and far-seeing statesman does not exist. Then his probity! He is a modern Aristides."

"What could be his motive, then, if he were not mad?"

"Oh, a great deal of motive, according to his view," replied Parliament, shrugging his shoulders with prodigious insouciance. "The lady made him jealous! There was a certain marquis in waiting on the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, a very handsome man. The poor lady was young and thoughtless; she danced, and she laughed, and she flirted with this marquis. There were letters—my father saw them—it was a dissipated court. She was a Venetian,

brought up among serenades and gondolas; very loving, too. You can still see it in that wasted face before you in the picture; soft and smooth, with beautiful fair hair, as you see, spread out on the pillow. My father knew her well; the marquis was his intimate friend. For some time the baron said nothing. Bluebeard always holds his tongue, you know, in the story. At last the end came.

"There was a great masked ball given at the Pitti Palace. The lady appeared as Poetry, her fair hair bound with a coronet of emeralds with diamond leaves, the gift of the baron—when he married her he gave her splendid jewels; her dress was purple, spangled with gold stars. All eyes were upon her; the marquis danced with her incessantly. When the ball broke up the marquis led her to the baron, who received her with a bow, smiled upon her, and, with his usual punctilious politeness, offered her his arm to conduct her to her carriage.

"They drove off together. The night was dark, the lady was tired; perhaps she slept, who knows? They drove on and on, until she roused herself, and asked what new road they were taking which was so long?"

"'It is all right,' the baron answered. 'I have given my orders. As it is a cold night, and we have a long way to go, I have brought this wrap for you. You will need it.'

"As he spoke, he took from the front seat a mantle of fur and placed it on her shoulders. The poor lady dared not ask him what he meant. They drove on and on into the night, far away from Florence, over the Campagna, and along the road that leads towards the mountains; the baron silent, the lady speechless, trembling under her fur mantle.

"What the baron said when he did speak, or how he said it, no one knows; but, at all events, he made her understand that he was taking her then and there to his castle of Broglio, which she would never leave alive—or dead, indeed; for if she died, she would be buried in the chapel. Now Broglio is more than forty miles from Florence. It was a long drive."

Madame Beauty clasped her hands; I made use of some strong expressions. Who would have thought of finding Dante's Nello della Pietra and Pia de' Tolomei in the nineteenth century?

"You will see the baron shortly," continued Parliament, quite unmoved. "You

can then judge for yourselves if he is a man to be trifled with."

"Was she really guilty?" I asked.

"My father, who saw the letters, considered them, I believe, rather compromising in a husband's point of view," was the answer; "but when his wife was once shut up in his castle of Broglio, the baron never alluded to her. He ignored everything. Even when he met the handsome marquis at court—which he did constantly, as he was prime minister to the grand duke before Italy was a united kingdom, and the marquis, a great favourite, was in waiting on the grand duchess—in his cold rigid way the baron singled him out for particular attention. The baron was too proud to admit to the world that any man had dishonoured him.

"The poor lady, his wife, was made to expiate her own sins and those of the marquis. She was shut up until she died; she saw her children all die, except this daughter Anastasia.

"The poor soul grew very pious in her imprisonment. She was permitted to attend mass in the chapel, where her children lay unburied in their little coffins, and where she herself now lies also unburied. That is another fancy of the fiero barone. Neither his wife nor his children are buried. We will go and see the chapel and the vault," continued Parliament, turning round to Diplomacy. "It is a strange fancy not to bury them; stranger still to display their coffins to the curiosity of visitors."

Diplomacy acquiesced. He had listened with a polite expression of horror on his well-regulated features, but carefully avoided expressing any opinion. Whatever he had done, the baron had been prime minister at the court to which he was himself accredited.

"Is that all?" asked Madame Beauty.

"Oh, of course all sorts of strange stories are told. They talk of the curate of Passaglia. Passaglia is a parish just over Broglio, higher up on the Chianti hills. The curate had been a kind of secretary to the baron." Parliament was speaking, spurred on to his recital by the eagerness of two pairs of women's eyes riveted upon him. "He was permitted to come once a month to Broglio to confess the lady. He was a good man, the curate, and did all he could to soften her imprisonment. Indeed, he affirmed that she was a living saint, and that her soul being purified from all earthly taint by her suf-

ferings and the patience with which she bore them, she would need no fires of purgatory when she died, but go straight to Paradise. Perhaps this reached the baron and displeased him, *chi lo sa?*

"One day the baron was away when the priest came as usual to confess her. Finding the lady very sad (she died soon after), he remained longer than he ought to have done, conversing with her. She had already confided to him her intense desire that her sole remaining child, now grown up, should marry her cousin, a Riccaoli—a nephew of the baron. While she lived, the lady said, she could watch over Anastasia and defend her a little, but once she was dead—and she felt that her end was near—who could say what the baron might do? Before the curate went she implored him on her knees to intercede with the baron to let their child marry her cousin before she died.

"How she pleaded no one knows, nor who heard her. Perhaps the curate listened too long; perhaps he dropped some imprudent words; *chi lo sa?* There are secret stairs in this old castle; double walls and concealed doors everywhere. Anyhow, when the priest went out he met the fiero barone waiting for him in the courtyard. The baron smiled upon the curate as he had smiled upon the marquis, bid him good day, and asked him to stay to dinner. But something whispered to the curate that there was trouble in the air, and that he had better get away from Broglio as soon as he could. Instead, however, of letting him go, the baron walked him round and round the ramparts, asking his opinion on various subjects. Just as they were parting, the baron took out his snuff-box and offered the curate a pinch, smiling as he did so. The priest accepted the pinch of snuff, and took his leave. When he reached his own door, the curate fell down on the threshold, and was taken up for dead by his aunt, who kept house for him."

"Oh, why did you bring me here?" cried Madame Beauty hysterically. "Must I see this dreadful man, and speak to him?"

She was leaning over the back of a chair, her eyes riveted upon the picture.

"Come out of this dreadful room," I said to her, "or this picture will haunt you."

"Is not the air oppressive?" she asked with a deep sigh, advancing towards the door. "The moment I entered this house I felt as if I could not breathe."

We were now in the saloon. Instead of

bending over Beauty, who was lying back on a sofa near a window, very pale, Diplomacy took Parliament's arm, and left us ladies to ourselves. Madame Beauty was now sobbing. I implored her to calm herself. What should we do if the baron appeared? How account for her agitation?

A footstep approached. Fortunately it was only the major-domo, who came to announce that the *déjeuner* was served. He looked at us curiously, then glanced at the open door beyond. Did he guess that we had penetrated to Bluebeard's chamber? I felt that I looked guilty.

The banqueting-hall at Broglio was spacious and lofty, with large Gothic windows opening to the ramparts. But even there the baron was not happy in his style of decoration. Rows of plaster knights in tin armour, brightly painted, lined the wall, placed on sham stucco pedestals. The cornice, the roofs, and the panels were equally crude in colour.

At a small table in one corner we found Diplomacy and Parliament already seated. The *déjeuner* was decidedly parsimonious. But the Broglio wine! Diplomacy quite forgot himself in his expressions about the wine. There was but one bottle!

It appeared that Diplomacy, who had borne the horrors of Bluebeard's chamber unmoved, had during his absence with his young friend explored the famous wine cellars—the subterranean dungeons, in fact, of the ancient castle. There they had beheld, piled up against the red stone walls, four hundred thousand bottles of Broglio wine, the dates of each vintage marked, as well as the quality. A museum of minerals could not be kept with greater nicety. Being men, their mouths had watered at the sight of the good liquor, with which they naturally expected to be regaled. And then—one bottle! Diplomacy felt, over and above his own particular wrong, the disrespect shown in his person to his august master. Was he, the representative of the king of——, to share a bottle of wine with four persons!

It was wonderful with what judgment the major-domo doled out that single bottle of wine. Diplomacy snuffed and sniffed and tossed his head every time it was presented to him.

When we were left alone, Diplomacy related that, before visiting the cellar, he and Parliament had been conducted into the chapel, where, in an open vault behind the altar, they had seen the coffin of

the poor lady in the picture lying on tressels, without any pall or covering upon it whatever. The four smaller coffins, in which lay her children, ranged round her own, were in the same condition.

"After that," Diplomacy went on to say, "the guide who volunteered to show us the castle conducted us up a narrow stair in a tower forming a separate part of the castle. Truly," said Diplomacy, "a dreary range of apartments. The small Gothic windows, in walls of great thickness, are turned to the north, and look upon a grove of cypresses. No ray of sunshine can ever penetrate to these chambers. The ceilings are low, and crossed with heavy wooden rafters. There are large open grates, with seats in the chimney corners. One room is hung with embossed leather, faded and torn in many places; another painted in fresco, much injured by the damp. The doors are low, and there appear to be many recesses, leading, perhaps, to secret stairs and outlets. I tried the door of what seemed to be a closet, but was desired to desist. Of these gloomy apartments, opening one into the other, there are six, of various sizes. The largest is the last, forming a kind of angle. There there is a low bedstead, much decayed and worm-eaten. Otherwise all these rooms are unfurnished; therefore not adapted, as was stated to us, for the accommodation of the baron during the summer months.

"But," continued Diplomacy, with increasing gravity—his utterances always are grave and studied, as if he were conscious of a secretary taking notes to transmit to the parliament of his country—"I must confess I did not believe this statement. Not only were there no signs of habitation, but the plaster had fallen from the walls in many places, and the air was confined and damp, as of rooms never opened. I imagine they must have served as a——"

"Prison!" exclaimed Madame Beauty, taking the word out of his mouth in her impetuous way. "Why, my dear minister, those are the rooms in which the poor lady was imprisoned. Can you doubt it? And that is the bed in which she died—the bed in the picture. Oh, what would I give," she cried, clasping her hands, "to go away before the baron returns."

"Impossible, madams!" returned Diplomacy, bridling. "Impracticable! The baron's absence has been explained to me. There was a mistake."

Parliament echoed his friend's words. Parliament would answer for it, all these tales would vanish from our minds when the baron made his appearance.

Madame Beauty burst into tears.

Here was a dilemma. It is amazing, however, how dilemmas disentangle themselves, if one only has patience to wait, and not force the sequence of events.

Whilst we were debating whether we should wait to see the baron or depart, the sharp clink of a horse's hoofs echoed up through the open window, as of a rider hastening rapidly onwards.

"The baron!" cried the major-domo, rushing in. "He will be at the door in a few moments. Will the excellencies move into the saloon? The baron always receives in the saloon."

He entered the room—a tall, spare, dried-up man, with a small intellectual head, and a high forehead, on which lay straight brown hair; sharp aquiline features cut in a mould as hard as granite; eyes intense, yet veiled under thick overhanging eyebrows; the eyes generally half-closed, and resting on the ground, but, when they did open, flashing into a flame.

Although the heat was overpowering, and he had only just returned, the baron was as cool as if he had emerged from an ice-house. Not a speck of dust lay on his well-fitting coat; there was not a turn of the head, not a motion, but what was calm, dignified, and imposing.

Spite of the picture and our hostile intentions, the man himself dominated us. Advancing to where we stood in the centre of the saloon, with the air of a man habituated to receptions, the fiero barone shook hands with Parliament, and addressed to him some lofty excuses as to the misunderstanding which had retarded him; then he requested to be presented to each of us by name, offering us bony fingers absolutely freezing.

And here I must pause to note, that, either from absence of mind on the part of the baron, or want of distinctness in Parliament's introduction, neither then, nor at any moment during our stay, would he be prevailed on to comprehend our personality. All along the baron addressed me as the wife of Parliament—to the intense disgust of that very young man—and Madame Beauty as the wife of Diplomacy—an assumption that seemed to sow seeds of discord between them. It was simply useless to attempt explanation. The fiero

barone looked over our heads, so to say, and paid no heed.

Behold us seated in a circle round our awful host! Madame Beauty was elegantly disposed on a sofa, evidently impressed with the baron's appearance, but as under protest. Diplomacy, his mind at ease with regard to any irregularity in the manner of our reception, yielded himself up a willing victim to the courtesies of the baron; but, somehow or other, the baron failed to accept Diplomacy at his own price, and treated the illustrious representative of "his majesty" like any other common mortal. With his half-shut eyes, he discoursed about his castle and his vineyards; spoke of the years he had spent in bringing the latter into proper cultivation; how he had imported vine-growers from Touraine at great expense to instruct his Italian peasants; and how hard it had been to eradicate their prejudices. At last he had succeeded; the Broglio wine could pass the sea; there were agents in London and Paris.

A question as to who these agents were brought a haughty look on his face. He, personally, knew nothing about it; it gratified him to succeed, as he held that every possessor of land was bound to increase the value of his estate.

He expressed himself with remarkable purity of language, and with the authority of a man accustomed to carry weight in every syllable he utters. His phrases were clear and well turned; his words well chosen. His legislative manner lent absolute dignity to subsoil and manure. The powerful intellect of the man shone out even in such matters; one felt it was only an accident that he had chosen such a subject, and that he would deliver himself with the same masterly lucidity and exhaustive knowledge on any other.

He was intensely formal, but evidently intended to be gracious; much in the same manner as a well-fed tiger might permit a visitor to enter his cage, and to contemplate him under certain conditions.

While the gentlemen talked, I studied him. A great statesman was before me; a man whose name, as great as those of Cavour and Garibaldi, would go down to extreme ages. Within him was passion of dominion that would crush into chaff all that opposed it. Alas, poor lady! Why, in the lightness of her youth and splendour of her beauty, did she trifle with such a man?

After awhile, the sun having declined,

the baron led us upon the ramparts. As his tall erect figure passed along, the baron discoursed learnedly on the archæology of Broglio, speaking in long sustained sentences, as if he were pronouncing an oration. Once he was good enough to address his conversation especially to me, disregarding the claims of Madame Beauty to his attentions, she following languidly at a distance leaning on Diplomacy's arm.

Stopping short, and standing quite still, he raised those veiled eyes of his, and, after contemplating me for a moment, asked me how I should like to live at Broglio? At first I could not find breath to reply. Then I answered that, with books, I could live anywhere.

"You have seen my library?" he asked quickly.

"Yes," I replied.

"Plenty of books," he said. "They want arranging; would you do it for me?"

Before I could answer he turned away with a low laugh, and leant over the ramparts talking politics with Parliament.

Walking among the cypress-groves that shrouded that fatal northern wing where the poor lady had died, he suddenly turned, and, this time addressing the whole party, invited us to stay to dinner. By an extraordinary unanimity of feeling—not even a look had passed between us—we all said "No," in various words, but it was "No" substantially.

Soon after we took our leave. The fiero barone followed us to the door. Before him was the arched doorway leading into the chapel where the poor lady lay in her unburied coffin, her children gathered round her. A little farther on was the open stair in the tower, leading to the rooms which for so many years had been her prison. Above the sun-motes strike upon the grim walls.

Thus we left him standing, bareheaded and unmoved, between the present and the past. A moment, and a turn in the steep descent concealed him from our gaze.

Then Madame Beauty spoke, but what she said appeareth not in this chronicle.

A MEDICAL MYSTERY.

A STORY.

I HAD gone to see an old friend who is now a famous physician in a great city. Years had passed away since we had last met and parted. He then held a variety of official appointments, which looked

rather imposing when put down on paper, but which meant a great expenditure of time and costly medicine at a remuneration that was exceedingly unremunerative. But all good things come to the man who works and waits. I had been delighted to hear of my old friend's success; and when I availed myself of his standing invitation to "bestow myself" upon him for a short time, I was equally delighted to find that prosperity had not in the slightest degree harmed him. It had acted like a kindly sun and soft breezes in eliciting the best flowers and fruits of character.

One night I sat late with him after dinner, discussing the wine and walnuts; the ladies had gone to an evening party, for which, after a busy day, we hardly felt up to the mark. We talked of old friends and times, and of professional chances. I happened to say to him:

"You doctors see an immense amount of character and incident. The medical is certainly a very lively and dramatic profession. I suppose few men know more family secrets than the doctors; more than the lawyers, more than the parsons."

"Yes. Patients often go into the confessional, but we never tell the secrets of the confessional."

"But tell me this. Have you seen much of what is called the romance of crime, or crime without any romance at all; the odd cases which get into the courts, and which the novelists work up for their stories?"

"I am afraid that you have been cultivating a taste for sensational fiction. I am sure I shall not be able to amuse you in that way."

"You have seen nothing of the sort?"

"Nothing. Such cases of course occur from time to time, but they are so lost in the mass of medical practice, that few men, unless they are specialists, by which I mean chiefly the toxicologists, see anything of them. There are doctors who can tell you any amount of tales about poisons, but my own line has always been prosaic, paying, and practical."

"Well," I answered, "there is a theory that every man meets with something remarkable in his time if he can only detect the element of the marvellous."

"No doubt you are right," said my friend; and then, as he smoked the meditative cigar, he exclaimed, after a pause: "You remind me of some odd

circumstances. Yes, there really was something very mysterious which happened to me once, and I have never been able to detect the secret of it. I should be glad to get your opinion of it. This is the story :

"I was called out one night after dinner to attend a lady, who, I was informed, was suffering from sudden and severe illness. Sensible people, when they send to a doctor, are careful to explain the exact symptoms of a case. The doctor when comes prepared. He is often able to bring the precise remedies with him. He saves time, and this is often the same thing as saving life. All that the messenger, a poorish-looking man in a kind of livery, could tell me was 'summat in the stomach.' Most illnesses might, more or less, be referred to something of the kind, and practically the fellow proved more correct than I had supposed.

"It was after dinner, at the end of a hard day's work. I had been in consultation for hours and driving about for hours. I had got my feet into slippers; there was the easy-chair, the evening paper, and a decanter of old port, which had been given me by a grateful and gouty patient. Still, the case was urgent; it might possibly be curative; and a true-hearted doctor, above all things, never allows an appeal in case of suffering to be made to him in vain. I did not think it necessary to send for my carriage, but stepped out into the streets. The wind was roaring in great gusts, sweeping back the rain, which threatened to fall heavily after a time.

"We went to a big house in a big square. I had noticed the house before, and not inquisitorially; walls and windows had always seemed so blank. I had never observed any signs of life in the house. Once I had asked who lived there, and I was told, 'Oh, that's old Miss Brinckman's house.' The interlocutor had evidently thought that I knew all about old Miss Brinckman, but this was by no means the case. I had afterwards found out that she was old, infirm, without near friends and relatives, and somewhat peculiar and eccentric in her ways.

"My old notions about the house were strengthened as I walked upstairs. As I passed from floor to floor, by room after room, there was no sign or sound of habitation. The furniture was handsome, and heavy; the feet fell noiselessly on the thick carpets. Not in the best bedroom, but in quite the second-best bedroom, lay

Miss Brinckman, the mistress of the house. Her features were pinched with suffering, and she was in a state of great restlessness and anxiety. As the man truly said, there was "summat the matter with the stomach." She was very ill; but the symptoms did not present anything especially abnormal. Few medical cases are exactly alike; a fact which perhaps explained one or two slight variations from the usual symptoms of a derangement of this kind. I thought the course of treatment abundantly indicated by the symptoms, and sat down and wrote a customary prescription, which, in the ordinary course, would undoubtedly be followed by beneficial effects. I observed that the bedroom was somewhat dingy and penurious, and out of character with the rest of the house. The nurse, however, told me that this was the invalid's favourite room, and that she preferred it to any other apartment. There was, of course, no arguing about tastes, and I was glad to get back home.

"I generally go out to make my calls as soon as I have finished with my morning receptions—about noon. I felt so perfectly secure about Miss Brinckman's case, that I called upon her nearly last of all. In the ordinary condition of things she ought to have been much better, and fairly getting on towards convalescence. This, however, was by no means the case. The patient was restless, feverish, complained of sickness, pain, and great thirst. The symptoms were perfectly consistent with the supposed complaint; but, on the other hand, they were also consistent with arsenical poisoning. It was of no use, however, to think of unnatural causes when natural causes might suffice. I did not know the patient's constitution, and an alteration in my prescription might produce the desired alteration in results.

"I sat down at a little table and prepared to write. As I did so, I cast up my eyes in meditative fashion and encountered those of the nurse. As soon as they met my gaze they were lowered towards the ground. Before this happened, however, I had caught their expression, which produced an extremely disagreeable impression. It seemed to me that there was a kind of silent laugh in them—a look of pride and contempt. We doctors are occasionally obliged to put up with a little impertinence from grand professional nurses, though even this does not very often happen. Nothing, however, had

occurred in our brief interviews which could account for the circumstance, and I had soon entirely forgotten it.

"I once more took my rounds next day, and made this one of my first calls. I had hoped to have found things much better. On the contrary, they were worse. The illness, whatever it was, was making progress, and the patient was decidedly worse. I really could not understand this untoward condition of things, entirely contrary as it was to my experience and expectations. I had some thoughts of calling in another opinion, but this is a step which I did not quite like. It seemed too much of a confession of weakness. On this occasion I prescribed remedies of an 'heroic kind,' which would deal thoroughly with the case, and took my leave, contented to wait and see what a day might bring forth.

"But as I sat at dinner with my family, my thoughts irresistibly wandered away to the case of Miss Brinckman. There was an unaccountable restlessness and anxiety in my mind. Usually I do not carry the cares of my profession into my family; I am satisfied with knowing that I have done my best, and after that there's no use fretting oneself; but I found that night I couldn't rest in peace. The case puzzled and alarmed me. After one or two vain attempts to settle down, I took up my hat, and started for the big house in the square towards ten o'clock at night.

"It was a good thing that I did so; otherwise, Miss Brinckman would have breathed her last that night. The symptoms had increased with great severity. Her face was positively blue; she was evidently in a state of collapse. I wondered whether it would be possible to revive her. Now I will let you in for a bit of my practice. The most powerful restorative I know is a mixture of champagne and brandy. It is not a pleasant combination—two good things spoilt, in fact—but I have known it do good when everything else has failed. My patient sensibly revived under its influence. Glancing at the mantelpiece, my eye alighted on the bottle of medicine containing my prescription; and as the bottle was nearly full, I saw at once that the proper doses had not been administered. Somehow I felt that the nurse's eye followed mine as it wandered towards the mantelpiece. She hastily arose and moved towards the spot, with an intention, obvious to my mind, of hiding or removing the medicine-bottle.

"Nurse, I said, somewhat peremptorily, 'what is your name?'

"Quillimaine."

"Married or unmarried?'

"I am not married."

"Tell me immediately why my medicine has not been properly administered."

"Miss Brinckman could not take the medicine, sir. She was sick if she tried; and then she would not allow us to give her any."

"I did not think the answer was a true one, but then there was no use in interrogating poor half-dying Miss Brinckman.

"It was your duty under such circumstances to have sent for me at once."

"The woman was silent. A sudden thought flashed across my mind.

"Now look here, Nurse Quillimaine," I said. "Mark my words. If Miss Brinckman is not better to-morrow morning, I shall immediately send for a detective."

"The next morning Miss Brinckman was marvellously better."

"Did she recover eventually?'

"She got quite well, and is still living in the big house in the square. She is much better tempered, and more rational altogether. She is perfectly convinced that I saved her life, which is true enough, and I have to visit her two or three times a week."

"Did you ever talk to her about the nurse's conduct?'

"No; I did not think that it would be of any use. But I told her that I was not at all satisfied with the nurse, and hoped that she would never employ her again. On my asking how she came to engage such a person, she said that she came to her highly recommended by a relative. Pushing my enquiries respecting this relative, the old lady became reserved, and looked annoyed; and so I have never gone farther into matters, and have hardly any idea who she is or who her people may be. Of course I could not resist the idea that there might be someone who might profit by her death, but I have never been able to ascertain any facts."

"It is a very queer story."

"Certainly it is a very queer story, but I have something still queerer to tell. You know that to a great extent I am a season doctor, that I am one of the very few lucky doctors who, if they like, can take a few months' holiday when our town is 'out of season.' Now and then I used to take the practice of some friend less fortunate than myself in this respect. In

his way it happened that, about a twelvemonth after Miss Brinckman's case, I found myself undertaking another man's practice two hundred miles away in the country. My friend had had some prosperous years, and was taking his wife and girls to the Rhine and Switzerland for a change; and none knew better than himself how necessary is a change to the hardly-wrought general practitioner.

"I was called in, one hot summer day, to see a venerable gentleman who had been partaking with the utmost freedom of the luxurious fruit of his garden, to which he attributed various disagreeable symptoms. I ventured to hint to the overed gentleman that a little moderation would not be unfitting his years and his symptoms. I strolled with him through his shady walks, and assuring him that strawberries were very bad for his complaint, partook liberally of them myself. I thought that a very simple prescription would make him all right at once, and I was a little surprised to be awoke up at two o'clock one morning and be told that he was dangerously ill. Now, if there is no other, it is to being called out at two o'clock in the morning. In my time I have been doctor to a local club, and I have been called out at that unearthly hour, across the snow on a winter's night, and have found the patient cheerfully partaking of pipe and grog on my arrival. This old gentleman, however, was very seriously ill. He was worse than I should have thought possible under the circumstances; indeed, he was in positive danger. I told him that he required a nurse. He answered that there was a woman, who had entered his service lately as a housekeeper, who was acting for him in that capacity, I did not see her that morning, but concluded that her duties as a housekeeper were then detaining her from her vocations as a nurse. I administered some brandy at once, as the symptoms seemed to require it, and going home, I myself dispensed the necessary drugs with the greatest care. The boy in buttons took out the medicine, and I had no reason to doubt that they were properly given to the patient.

"But on visiting the patient next day I found that he was worse; if he had taken them, they had done him no good. The symptoms were no longer any that could have arisen from mere errors in diet. They strongly resembled those of arsenical

poisoning. In fact, I felt myself suddenly and irresistibly reminded of Miss Brinckman's case. The course of events had run quite parallel so far.

"I asked to see the nurse, who on this occasion also was out of the way, but after some search came forward. If I had not thought of Miss Brinckman before I should have done so now, for I really thought at the moment that Quillimaine, the nurse, stood before me. A closer examination showed me, however, that I was mistaken. With great points of likeness, there was also manifest unlikeness. At the moment I still felt quite certain that there was some relationship between them. A sudden thought occurred to me, and I said:

"'I think you are a relation of Mrs. Quillimaine, the nurse, who was lately at Netherton?'

"She seemed annoyed and surprised by the question, and delayed her answer for a few moments, and then she said:

"'Yes, sir; Nurse Quillimaine is my sister.'

"'I thought I saw a likeness between you. What is your name? Is it Quillimaine also?'

"'My name is Sarah Mount, sir.'

"'Now, Sarah Mount, I want to speak with you privately before I leave the house.'

"She followed me into the little parlour, positively pale and trembling. I felt convinced that I was on the right track in suspecting her, and yet in the absence of any definite reason for suspicion, it was not at all clear how I could act for the best.

"I resolved that I would adopt exactly the same line of conduct as I had done in Miss Brinckman's case.

"'Sarah Mount,' I said, 'my patient has not improved as I hoped to find him improved. I have a strong idea that this is quite as much a case for the police as for the doctor.'

"She was terror-stricken.

"'I shall bring a policeman with me tomorrow morning, and shall most probably think it my duty to give you in charge.'

"I watched the effect of my words narrowly. Of course an honest woman would have resented them bitterly, and have demanded that I should explain fully this extraordinary language. But no attempt of the sort was made. She cowered before me as I was speaking.'

"I added mercilessly:

“And when I find my patient better, I shall expect that you will give a week's notice, and go away. You are not to go away before a week, that I may see how Mr. Wilson progresses; and you are not to stay a single moment longer than the week unless I give you permission. Do you hear, woman?” I exclaimed angrily, raising my voice and stamping my foot.

“I will do exactly as you say, sir,” she said humbly.

“Then I arose to go. First of all I went upstairs, and saw that my patient took his medicines under my own eye. Part of them had been disposed of; but I felt no confidence that they had been duly administered. I made a careful examination of everything in the bedroom, and, indeed, as far as I could, all about the place; but, I am bound to say, without finding any corroboration of my malign suspicion.

“I went to Mr. Wilson's house next morning, and found him very much shaken indeed, but considerably better. He continued to improve, and in about a week he was quite well.

“At the end of the week the nurse or the housekeeper, whichever she chose to call herself, went away quietly.

“The career of a medical man is not uneventful; but I have always looked upon this as the most singular combination of circumstances that has ever happened to me.”

“And have you no explanation to give?”

“None whatever. The facts are facts, which I cannot explain, and beyond which I am unable to go. I call it simply a Medical Mystery—an unsolved, perhaps an insoluble problem.”

“But I suppose you have an hypothesis, a guess of some sort, to account for the circumstances.”

“Well, to say the truth, I have; but the hypothesis is so strange and far-fetched that I hardly like to mention it.”

“But let me hear it all the same.”

“I have had occasion to notice several times that there are some sorts of medical secrets preserved in families. Probably it may be a simple, useful, innocent concoction, the secret of which may not be known to the local medical man, although he may hazard a shrewd guess as to its composition. For instance, I have known medical men look, not only without displeasure, but with pleasure and approval, on a plaister which had been used

by old grandmothers, inherited from their own grandmothers. Within my own experience I have known such recipes make cures which the faculty have not been able to make. But sometimes these old-fashioned secrets have a darker history. People have left off believing in witchcraft and the evil eye, although there may be still some out-of-the-way places where this is the case to this very day. Occasionally, however, there is a belief, now very rarely found in any part of the country, but not totally extinct, that in such or such a family there may be the art of causing death by certain undiscoverable means. Most probably in the present state of science the so-thought undiscoverable means are coarse and easy of detection. It might happen that the secret of a poison may be in a family; a poison subtle and safe, or if coarse and common, there are people who have it, and are intrepidly wicked enough to use it. We know that in the Middle Ages the knowledge of certain poisons was confined to the members of some Italian families; a knowledge which was regarded as rare, precious, and profitable, and was turned to most lucrative account in what might be almost called a professional practice. Human nature is very much the same everywhere; it is the hardest thing in the world to kill out any special form of evil. It is my impression there are still a few families in whom lingers a special knowledge of poisons, and in the case of some depraved people a disposition to use them. Now, if this hypothesis monstrous as I grant it to be, is true, we shall have the circumstance accounted for that here are two sisters apparently in possession of the dark art of slow poisoning and actually using it.”

“But what would be their object? Who would know of such wretched people and want to employ them?”

“You will observe that in these two cases we have an old woman and an old man, each childless, each evidently with considerable property. Somewhere there would be people who would profit largely by their deaths. Now go a step farther. Imagine the following combination of circumstances. First, that there is a family with a knowledge of a secret—or at least what they suppose to be a secret way of poisoning, with members wicked enough to use it. Secondly, that there are wicked people, in two different parts of the country who are at the same time calling in the aid of two members of

this family for a murderous purpose. Thirdly, that by a marvellous combination of circumstances, I was called into both of these cases. Such a combination of circumstances would yield an explanation of all the facts of the case."

"But such an explanation would be monstrously improbable."

"I grant it. But what you say, you will remember that I said myself just now. I do not guarantee my explanation of the facts. But I guarantee the facts themselves. In all probability they never will be explained. I shall always regard them as a Medical Mystery."

"Still, I think that both of these were cases which you ought to have handed over to the police."

"I think so too; but then, you see, I have always thought it best to set my face against the sensational."

It is not necessary to trouble my readers with any further particulars of the delightful fortnight which I spent with the distinguished physician. I failed to elicit any more narratives from him. But I thought this one so remarkable that I made copious notes, from which I have set in order this true unvarnished narrative.

YOUNG SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET.

"A PIRATED edition, probably from notes taken at the theatre: imperfect and worthless."

This was the verdict pronounced by the critics on a rare and curious Shakespearean "find," in the nature of what appeared to be, and in all probability was, the author's first sketch of the immortal tragedy of Hamlet. When the unique copy of this treasure came to light some fifty years ago (it was reprinted in 1825), these critics were incredulous of the value of what they held in their hands. True, the Duke of Devonshire secured the copy for a hundred guineas or thereabouts, as a curiosity of great interest; but its real worth long remained unrecognised, and there is not yet to be had, so far as we are aware, any variorum edition of Hamlet showing at a glance wherein this, the poet's first crude sketch, differed from his finished work.

Gradually, however, the claims of what is known as the Hamlet of 1603, because it was published one year before the perfect Hamlet of 1604, have come to be acknowledged. Many facts have caused

modern students to reject the conclusion originally drawn from the statement of the editors of the First Folio, that "his mind and hand went together, and what he thought he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers." This was held—and might fairly be held—to mean that the great poet's works were poured forth as if by inspiration, without any need for recasting or revision, perfect as we now peruse them. This we now know was not the case. There is extant a first draft of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; and the more closely the Hamlet of 1603 is studied, the more obvious will it become that it was the Hamlet originally given to the stage, with beauties and characteristics of its own, and capable of both illustrating the growth of the finished work, and of being used to throw light on some of its obscurities. That such a first sketch was published is obvious from the title-page of the edition of 1604, where it is distinctly stated that the tragedy is "enlarged to almost as much again as it was," and there is no reasonable doubt as to this being the sketch in question; while the theory of its being derived from imperfect notes taken down during representation is self-refuted, since it contains certain things not in the perfect play, yet undoubtedly Shakespeare's.

Holding this view, we are glad to find that the value of the sketch of 1603 has been distinctly recognised in the Lyceum edition of Hamlet prepared for Mr. Irving, whose marvellous rendering of the great character has invested everything connected with the tragedy with a new interest; and as the sketch is not generally accessible, a few words respecting it may interest. Mr. Knight held the theory that there was a yet earlier play on the subject, "wherein the poet may simply have proposed to exhibit in the young man a desire for revenge combined with irresolution, perhaps even actual madness;" and in which there was a total absence of the poetical and philosophical beauties of the perfect play. That such a work existed is generally admitted, the date assigned to it being 1589, when the poet was in his twenty-fifth year, but no copy is extant, and therefore this quarto of 1603 is the nearest approach we can make to the Young Shakespeare's Hamlet.

The opening scene of this most important and valuable relic is on the same lines as that with which we are familiar; but

there is an absence of the more characteristic touches. All is brief to crudeness. The verbal alterations may be guessed at from two lines which stand thus :

Thus twice before and "jump" at this dead hour
With martial stalk he [passed through our watch].

"Jump" for "just," and the half-line in brackets for "hath he gone by our watch." There is a total absence of the fine speech beginning :

In the most high and palmy state of Rome ;

the ghost re-entering in the midst of Horatio's explanations about Fortinbras. Indeed, the absence of the poetry which invests all the early scenes with such glamour is exceedingly noticeable. When the Court assemble, Laertes obtains the King's leave for his departure for France in these words :

With all our heart, Laertes, fare thee well ;
to which Laertes responds :

I, in all love and duty, take my leave ;

and goes at once, not waiting for the close of the scene. Then the King turns to Hamlet in these uncouth lines :

And now, princely son Hamlet,
What means these sad and melancholy words ?
For your intent, going to Wittenberg,
We hold it most unmeet and inconvenient,
Being the joy and half-heart of your mother ;
Therefore let me entreat you stay in Court,
All Denmark's hope, our cousin and dearest son.

Very crude this, and equally so the lines in place of the fine speech, "'Tis not alone my inky cloak."

O, that this too much grieved and sallied flesh
Would melt to nothing, or that the universal
Globe of heaven would turn all to a chaos !
O God ! within two months ; no, not two. Married
Mine uncle ! O, let me not think of it,
My father's brother ; but no more like
My father, than I to Hercules, &c.

There is no trace of the manifold beauties which adorn the revised speech except the simile, "Like Niobe all tears." Equally poor is the original "To be or not to be." That speech occurs much earlier in the sketch than in the perfect play, just after Hamlet enters "poring upon a book," and assumes this form :

To be or not to be ? Aye, there's the point.
To die, to sleep—is that all ? Aye, all.
No, to sleep, to dream—aye, marry, there it goes,
For in that dream of death, when we awake
And borne before an everlasting Judge,
From whence no passenger ever returned,
The undiscovered country at whose sight
The happy smile, and th' accursed damn'd.
But for this, the joyful hope of this,
Who'd bear the scorns and flattering of the world,
Scorn'd by the right, the rich curs'd of the poor,
The widow being oppress'd, the orphan wrong'd,
The taste of hunger, or a tyrant's reign,
And thousand more calamities besides,

When that he may his full quietus make
With a bare bodkin ? Who would thus endure
But for a hope of something after death,
Which puzzles the brain, and doth confound the sense
Which makes us rather bear the ills we have
Than fly to others which we know not of ?
Aye, that ? O, this conscience makes cowards of
us all !

Lady, in thy orisons, be all my sins remembered.

This is, in all ; all that we get of a soliloquy so glorious in its perfect form.

To revert for a moment to an earlier scene, it is specially worthy of notice that when Polonius (here called Corambis) gives his precepts to Laertes, they are marked as quotations. Now, it has been offered as a clue to the character of the old courtier that he is really what Hamlet here calls him, an "old, doting fool ;" but with a parrot-store of axioms and aphorisms, on the strength of which, combined with a long Court experience, he sets up as a paragon of wisdom. These quoted sayings would seem to confirm this idea, and suggest whether the old man's address to his son should not be more formal and pedantic in delivery than we usually have it. Significantly enough the quotation marks are retained when Corambis comes to speak with Ophelia in a passage which has not been retained :

Ophelia, receive none of his letters,
"For love's lines are snares to entrap the heart ;"
Refuse his tokens, both of them are keys
To unlock chastity, undo desire.
Come in, Ophelia, such men often prove
"Great in their words, but little in their love."

A great alteration is perceptible in the scene where Ophelia and her father next meet. He asks :

How now, Ophelia, what's the news with you ?
OPH. O my dear father, such a change in nature,
So great an alteration in a prince,
So pitiful in him, fearful to me,
A maiden's eye ne'er looked on.

COR. Why, what's the matter now, my Ophelia ?
OPH. O, young Prince Hamlet, the only flower of
Denmark,

He is bereft of all the wealth he had,
The jewel that adorned his feature most
Is filcht and stolen away : his wit's bereft him.
He found me walking in the gallery all alone, &c.

She proceeds to tell of his treatment with some variations on the ordinary text, using one new, one especially beautiful line :

He doth unclasp his hold and parts away
Silent, as is the midtime of the night.

The advice to the players is printed as blank verse, though without any attempt at cutting up the lines so that they will scan. And in this part we get not only an absolute addition to what we had of Shakespeare ; but a peep at the license of the stage in his days. What is called "gagging" would seem to have been then

as now, the sin of the clowns or low-comedians. Here we find an amplification of Hamlet's remarks about the clowns adhering to what is set down for them. He says :

And then you have some again, that keep one suit of jests, as a man is known by one suit of apparel, and gentlemen quote his jests down in their tables, before they come to the play, as thus, "Cannot you stay till I eat my porridge?" and "You owe me a quarter's wages," and "My coat wants a cullison," and "Your beer is sour," and blabbering with his lips, and thus keeping in his cinkapace of jests, when, God knows, the warm Clown cannot make a jest unless by chance, as the blind man catcheth a hare. Masters tell him of it.

Turning next to the play-scene, we find a very different state of things to that subsequently witnessed. The Player-King and Queen are called Duke and Duchess, and this is how the dialogue progresses :

DUKE. Full forty years are past, their date is gone,
Since happy time joined both our hearts as one :
And now the blood that filled my youthful veins
Runs weakly in their pipes, and all the strains
Of music, which whileome pleased mine ear
Is now a burden that age cannot bear,
And therefore, sweet, nature must pay his due ;
To heaven must I and leave the earth with you.

DUCHESS. O, say not so, lest that you kill my heart,
When death takes you, let life from me depart.

DUKE. Content thyself : when ended is my date,
Thou may'st, perchance, have a more noble mate,
More wise, more youthful, and one—

DUCHESS. O, speak no more, for then I am accurst,
None weds the second, but she kills the first :
A second time I kill my lord that's dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.

HAMLET. O wormwood, wormwood, &c.

It exhibits the artistic power of Shakespeare very strikingly when we find him expunging these flowing numbers, and using in their place stilted and bombastic verse in keeping with the speech first recited by the Player-King, in keeping also with what we may suppose to have been the style of the itinerant Thespians. As it stands now, this play within a play is entirely distinct in tone and character from the piece in which it occurs.

We have quoted enough to show the quality of the early Hamlet ; the range of its value is not so easily indicated. To us it appears singularly important, as throwing light on many of the disputed problems of the tragedy. Volumes have been written on such points as : Was the madness of Hamlet wholly or only partially feigned ? Was the Queen privy to the murder of her first husband ? About Ophelia : Had her conduct been of a nature to warrant the serious apprehensions and jealous fears of her father and brother ; and was she, as Hamlet suspected, a party to the conspiracy against him ? As to the Queen's complicity with the

murder, that is strongly negatived in the sketch. She says distinctly :

But as I have a soul I swear by heaven
I never knew of this most horrid murder.

And she then proceeds in most explicit terms to promise Hamlet her assistance in avenging it. On the other points the light is more diffused, and it is impossible to indicate here the way in which this imperfect original will assist the student.

Looking to minor points, there are many of interest. The stage directions are not very numerous ; but there is one which has justified Mr. Irving in giving effect to a point which has hitherto been neglected. When the ghost first appears, he is properly in armour. "My father's spirit in arms !" cries Hamlet. In the closet scene with the Queen, an exclamation again conveys the appearance of the ghost : "My father, in his habit as he lived !" and this is provided for in this quarto, where the words are : "Enter the ghost in his night-gown ;" that is, in the robe or dressing-gown of domestic life, a direction omitted in the folios. Then as to new readings, one sample will suffice. When the players enter, Hamlet says : "What, my old friend, thy face is vallanced since I saw thee last : com'st thou to beard me in Denmark ?" The folio has "valiant," which may be defended ; but "vallanced" vividly describes a face with a beard hanging round it. At the end of the play, when the King rises in dismay, the half-line spoken by him is more explicit than the substituted one in use. It is not obvious to the audience why the King cries : "Give me some light. Away !" The original had it : "Lights ! I will to bed." Curiously enough, in the directions for the dumb-show preceding the play within the play, "the King and the Queen" are mentioned ; but when they come to speak they are called "the Duke and Duchess." Hamlet explains that "the play is the image of a murder done in Guyana," not Vienna, and calls the Duke Albertus instead of Gonzago. But the names throughout vary : Polonius is Corambis, Ophelia is spelt Ofelia, Laertes we find as Leartes, young Osric has no name—he is called "A Braggart Gentleman"—and the names of Hamlet's false friends are Rossencraft and Gilderstone.

One word more. Shakespeare was born in 1564, so that at the time when this edition appeared he would be in his thirty-ninth year. The very next year the complete tragedy was issued ; that is, the quarto of 1604. But the title-page of this copy states that it is given "as it hath been

divers times acted by his highness's servants in the city of London; as also in the two universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere." The question is whether up to that time the perfect Hamlet had never been seen? The critics assign its revision to this very year, and it is quite possible that the publication of the work before us, if piratical, might have stimulated the poet to cast the play in a form more worthy of his powers, so that to this despised sketch we may actually owe the existence of the tragedy in its magnificent entirety. Of course, on the other hand, it is possible that it had been long recast, but never before printed. Our own opinion, however, is that the idea of Hamlet as the subject of a play, whether derived from Belleforest's novel or direct from Saxo Grammaticus, was from his youth a favourite one with Shakespeare; that he loved it, and had probably drawn out the draft of it as early as when he roved the fields about Charlecote with Anne Hathaway; that it influenced him in giving his son the remarkable name of Hamnet (if that is not a clerical error for Hamlet); and that he gradually worked on the idea as Goethe did on Faust, until, in 1604, it was given to the world in its abounding magnificence—the drama of the world. And since there is no real evidence on the subject—only stray facts and conjectures—we are disposed to look with doubt on surmises as to yet earlier drafts and less perfect skeletons, as also to treat with contempt the imperfect-note theory in relation to this edition (albeit there might have been publication without consent); and so it pleases us to regard this quarto of 1608 as in effect the work of the poet's youth, or, as we call it, Young Shakespeare's Hamlet.

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY,

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE,"
&c. &c.

CHAPTER XXX. "TOO LATE!"

"It is totally impossible for your uncle to go to her, and I'm sure I don't know what is to be done!"

Thus spoke Lady Rosa Chumleigh, in accents of dismay, to Julia Carmichael, some time after Sir Wilfrid Esdaile's telegram had reached Hunsford. The message arrived in the evening, and was received by Lady Rosa, in the absence of the colonel on the invalid list, and a prisoner to his room with a persistent fit of the gout, which severely tried Lady Rosa's temper. Julia

was with her, and it is needless to say that the intelligence of Mr. Thornton's death caused them both a great shock, and keen, though differently felt sorrow. Lady Rosa's heart was not sufficiently tender, nor was her imagination of a sufficiently vivid kind, to force her into a realisation of the grief and the terror of her daughter's position, so that she was not rendered powerless by the pain of such a picture in her mind. Happily her practical habits exerted their influence, and long before Julia could get beyond a horrified vision of Laura, and a dread of how this news might affect the colonel, Lady Rosa was revolving the question of the moment—what was to be done?

"Let me see the telegram again." Julia handed the green paper, on which she had been vacantly gazing, to Lady Rosa. "It does not say that Laura wishes her father to go to her. 'Colonel Chumleigh had better come as soon as possible;' that is Sir Wilfrid Esdaile's own message."

"Yes; but Laura would of course wish it. She would not have been able to send any message of her own; she would have known nothing, been consulted about nothing, under such circumstances."

"True. And there's no one there with any sense, I daresay; her servants are all fools, no doubt; besides, she could not be left to them at any rate."

"Sir Wilfrid has plenty of sense, and the kindest heart in the world; and there is her friend Mrs. Monroe, and that Miss Wells whom Laura said so much about in her last letter. She is not alone, thank Heaven; but still——"

"They are not her own people, and none of them can bring her home. What can be done? I cannot leave your uncle. And I am a wretched person on such occasions, even if I could go to Nice."

"Let me go," said Julia, by a sudden impulse. "My going will be better than nothing. I can take Freeman, and start to-morrow morning. My uncle will not object, I am sure. Do let me telegraph to Sir Wilfrid that I am coming."

On reflection this did seem to be the best thing that could be done, and Lady Rosa went to the colonel's room on the sad errand of telling him what had befallen his darling daughter.

The intelligence affected Colonel Chumleigh very deeply. He had liked Robert Thornton much, and trusted him thoroughly; he had felt perfect ease and security with regard to Laura, founded on the worth and the steadiness of her husband's character; and it had afforded him a

great deal of quiet pleasure to indulge in imaginary pictures—of which no one would have suspected Colonel Chumleigh—of Laura, her home, and her children, in the future years: In all the details of the house that was being prepared for her in London the colonel had taken the utmost interest, and his chief pleasure was the reading of the frequent long talky letters, as Laura called them, that she wrote to him from the various points of her foreign sojourn. He remembered with a pang what a continuous record of Robert Thornton's love and care, of her own happiness and prosperity, those letters formed; he murmured impatiently against the pain and helplessness that held him back from his poor child—his bright Firefly, with her wings so sadly singed—wondering how it was with her, whether in her youth and strength she had found a resource against the dread and the anguish that had overtaken her, sufficient at least to prevent her from being quite prostrated by them. The most difficult thing for Lady Rosa and the colonel was to realise that the dreadful event had happened so recently, that their daughter's widowhood was not yet two days old. Like all who hear of a calamity at a distance, they felt at first as if it were impossible, then as if it had happened long ago. The colonel's distress at being unable to go to Laura was keen, and he immediately assented to Julia's undertaking the journey that was impossible to himself.

Many hours of the night passed in dreary conjecture and sorrowful reminiscence. They were not unmindful of Miss Thornton, and wondered whether the sad intelligence had yet been communicated to her. And then they remembered what a great significance, in addition to its sadness, the death of her nephew would have for the old lady in the lonely house in Scotland.

"To think," said Lady Rosa, "that so much depends upon Laura's health holding out now. If the baby is not born, or does not live, the poor old lady will be a very rich woman. However, there's one comfort; she would certainly leave it all to Laura. She cared for nobody but Robert, and he cared for nobody but Laura, so that she will be safe, I should think, in any case. It will make a terrible difference to her though, if she has to come in after the old lady. Of course there will be no change in any way, until the child comes to settle everything."

At this point the colonel ceased to be able to follow the speculations of Lady Rosa. He could only dwell on the cruel destruct-

his daughter, on his own fears for her health, on the sudden setting of the sun on so fair a day, and his dread that to the early fallen night might be added a deeper darkness still. He was growing old, and Laura might be left without her father before long, and her mother and she never agreed, even when Laura was a girl at home, and had acted, very much for his sake, on the principle of "anything for a quiet life." The colonel was deeply troubled; so deeply that it seemed to him all that had troubled him previously in his life had been mere vexations. His son's boyish mischief, Lady Rosa's railing, the "tightness" of money from which he had never been quite delivered: all these seemed of little account to him now, when one of the really tragic events of human existence came full upon his intimate perception, and the person concerned most nearly was the darling of his own heart.

It had occurred to Julia that it would be well to give Sir Wilfrid Esdaile an opportunity of communicating with her, in case there should be anything that Laura wanted, and she had telegraphed that on reaching London she would go to Mr. Thornton's house in Prince's Gardens. This she accordingly did, and was received by the housekeeper, who handed her a second telegram from Sir Wilfrid, to the effect that Laura was pretty well, and most thankful to know that her cousin was coming to her. The housekeeper informed her that she had been instructed to prepare for the reception of Mrs. Thornton, who would come to London as soon as she was able to travel.

"And a sad coming home too," she added.

Julia had to dispose of some hours before she could start for Dover, and she employed a portion of the time in going over the house. It was with a half stunned feeling, in which there seemed to be an unreal, impossible side to the awful reality that was oppressing her mind, that she wandered through the rooms.

Though the smaller touches of individual taste, and the comfortable air of habitation were wanting to the house, it had not the more formal and staring grandeur of a mansion which has been fitted up by a fashionable upholsterer, according to a hardly-limited order. The decorations and the furniture were neither slavish in their following of a school, nor fantastic in the avoidance of sameness, and there was nothing to mark the vulgar exaltation

simple abode which the son of the self-made man had prepared for his wife. Not the strictest or the most exclusive of the noble Neases could have desired a more perfect suite of rooms for herself, than that of which Robert Thornton had carefully considered all the details that were to render them worthy of his Laura; not the self-made man, Robert's father himself, in the old days at Bedford Square, had been content with plainer furniture, and simpler surroundings, than those of the rooms intended for the master of the house. Julia recognised the manliness and simplicity which she had admired in the friend they had all lost when she passed through his "own rooms," which were never to know him, with the pain of that loss at her heart, and saw how they testified to his contempt for the effeminacy and self-indulgence of the day. The only articles de luxe in the "own rooms" of the master were books. Of them there was a noble store; one that would have astonished the self-made man, who in his time had not held with books, with which, indeed, the origin of his fortunes had had no connection. His portrait, in a brown coat, and a wig of the same colour, and seemingly similar texture, occupied a place of honour in the study, and Julia recognised in that fact also a trait of Robert Thornton's character.

Julia had completed her survey of the upper rooms, and was getting ready to resume her journey, when another message reached her. This time the sender was Laura herself. "Pray rest for a few hours in Paris. Rooms are retained for me at Meurice's. Go there, and come on by the night train."

Julia's first idea was to disregard this injunction. She did not think she should be tired, and her chief object was to reach Laura with as little delay as possible. She reckoned, however, without that troublesome element, her maid. Absorbed in anticipation of the scene to which she was hastening, busy with the past and the future, Julia did not think about the weather, and was indifferent to fatigue; but Freeman had no such motives for rising above circumstances, and she arrived in Paris in a state of physical and moral limpsness, which reduced Julia to the alternative of giving her time to recover herself, or going on without her. She would have preferred to do the latter, but prudence prevailed, and she drove to Meurice's, so heavy of heart, so weary of eye, that the fresh and sunny beauty of

the lovely city passed before her utterly unheeded, though seen for the first time.

Partly in rest, partly in writing to John Sandilands, Julia passed the interval before she could resume her journey. When she had finished her letter, she took it herself to the bureau of the hotel, and while she was asking about the necessary postage-stamp, and the time of departure of the mail, a lady and gentleman, who had just alighted from a carriage at the entrance, passed through the hall towards a staircase on the right. The lady's face was turned away, but her tall slight figure seemed familiar to Julia, also the rich chestnut curls that clustered at the back of her neck, and showed brightly against the deep blue of her velvet dress. She had but a glimpse of them; the next moment the lady had passed out of sight, and the gentleman coming back across the hall, met Julia face to face.

The gentleman was Captain Dunstan. It gave her a strange shock and pain to recognise him; the recollection of him had never crossed her mind among all the thoughts that had occupied it since the news came.

"Miss Carmichael! You in Paris! This is an unexpected pleasure."

This hurriedly, while they shook hands, and he saw by her face that there was something wrong.

"Mrs. Dunstan will be delighted. Is your party staying here?"

Julia had not spoken yet an intelligible word. She now said she was merely passing through Paris on her way to Nice, to join her cousin, Mrs. Thornton. Perhaps Captain Dunstan had heard?

No; he had heard nothing. Had anything happened? There were several people near, and recollection had come to Julia in a full tide. She could not speak of her errand there; so she asked Captain Dunstan to accompany her to Mrs. Thornton's rooms. Greatly wondering, he did so; and then Julia told him, told him with far more agitation than she had betrayed since the intelligence had reached Lady Rosa and herself. The mere passing of the knowledge on to another person who also knew Laura, seemed to break through her enforced composure.

But the tears with which she told the story of Robert Thornton's death, and her own errand, were quickly arrested by her astonishment at the effect of the communication upon Captain Dunstan. His quiet, rather languid manner had never given her the impression that he had much

feeling in him, or the gift of profound sympathy. What was this which shook him now, which drove every tinge of colour from his face, and set his hands and lips trembling; which made him hardly able to utter the commonplace, "Very sorry, a dreadful event indeed!" He stood for a few seconds after she told him, then sat down and hid his face in his hands.

What could it mean, Julia asked herself, either that he should feel so much about this calamity, or that he should betray the feeling to her, between whom and himself there had been no confidence or particular friendship? But she could not answer her own question, or ask it of him; and presently he spoke again, in a vague kind of way, about her journey and her plans, asking when she would be in Paris again.

"I don't know," Julia answered. "I am quite ignorant as yet of my cousin's intentions, except that she is expected at her house in London. I conclude she will return as soon as she is able to travel."

"And she—Mrs. Thornton—is alone there?"

"But for her friends, yes. But, now that I think of it, I am surprised you had not heard, for Mrs. Monroe is with her, as well as Sir Wilfrid Esdaile."

"Esdaile! He there! How came he to be with them—with Mrs. Thornton?"

"Did you not know? I have not told you the story clearly. He was on board the yacht when it happened. It was he who sent the news to us. He had been a great deal with them of late."

"I have not heard of him for some time."

Again a spasm of pain seemed to seize him, changing all his features by its grip.

"I am sure he has been most kind. I don't know what would have become of my poor cousin if she had not had a friend."

"Ah," he interrupted her, "that will not bear talking of. And now, about yourself. You will not be starting for another hour, you will let Mrs. Dunstan be with you for that time. I have unfortunately an engagement which I must keep"—he was striving hard for composure, with little success, and Julia felt that he could see her wonder—"but I will send for her to come to you, or perhaps you would go to her. She has just come in; you will have some tea with her."

"No," said Julia, speaking on an impulse which in the time to come she remembered well; "I would really rather not, if you please. I don't feel able to see her; I could not bear to make her so unhappy as she would be—for I know how she feels for others—at our first meeting. Pray don't ask me to see her, Captain Dunstan; pray don't trouble her by letting her know I am here. She does not know my cousin; she did not know the poor fellow who is gone; she will not be upset by hearing of it only in the ordinary course. I would have no right to trouble and grieve her; and, indeed, it would distress me more, and make me less fit for my journey. Tell her afterwards, give her my love, and say to her that we shall meet in London. I am sure to be with my cousin there."

"If you are quite sure you would rather not—"

"I am, indeed, quite sure. And pray say nothing to Mrs. Dunstan. She might be hurt; she might not understand; but indeed I could not see her. And I know you will excuse me if I ask you to leave me now; I have several things to attend to before I go."

She held out her hand in farewell, and he took it in silence. When he had left the room Julia felt oppressed by the sense that there was a sort of secret which she understood but dimly, if at all, between herself and Captain Dunstan.

He went to the bureau, wrote a line upon a card, and sent it to his wife; then went out, across the busy Rue de Rivoli, all alive with the bustle and gaiety of Paris in the springtide, into the gardens of the Tuileries. He walked like a man in a hurry, like a man pursued, but it was not on account of the engagement of which he had spoken to Julia; for when he had reached the river terrace, he went no farther, but walked up and down under the tender green canopy of the prim beautiful trees, heedless of the loiterers there, many of whom looked enquiringly at his handsome weary face, with the bent brows and the frowning troubled eyes. There were many elements in the storm that was let loose in his heart—rage, pity, forbidden love, resentment against his fate—and their work was wild with him; as all their voices gathered into one utterance, which drove and goaded him by its intolerable whisper, "Too late; too late!"

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXIII. A BAD BEGINNING.

THAT walk through the Forest was very pleasant to Violet. It was a day on which mere existence was a privilege; and now that her spirits had been soothed by her confidential talk with Rorie, Vixen could enjoy those sights and sounds and sweet wild scents of the woodland that had ever been a rapture to her.

This Forest-born girl loved her native woods, as Wordsworth loved his lakes and mountains, as Byron loved the bleak bare landscape round the city of Aberdeen. Their poetry and beauty filled her heart with a deep contentment. To walk or ride alone through pathless forest glades, or in the scented darkness of fir plantations, was enough for happiness. But it was comforting to-day—on this day when her heart had been so cruelly wounded—to have Roderick Vawdrey by her side. It was like a leaf out of the closed volume of the past.

They talked freely and happily during that long homeward walk, and their conversation was chiefly of bygone days. Almost every speech began with "Do you remember?" Vixen was gayer than she had been for a long time, save once or twice, when a pang shot through her heart at the idea that Bullfinch was being shaken about in a railway-box, oscillating helplessly with every vibration of the train, and panic-stricken in every tunnel.

The sun had declined from his meridian; he had put on his sober afternoon glory, and was sending shafts of mellow gold along the green forest aisles, when

Miss Tempest and her companion drew near the Abbey House. They went in at the gate by the keeper's cottage, the gate which Titmouse had jumped so often in the days when he carried his childish mistress. They went through the wood of rhododendrons, and past the old archway leading to the stables, and round by the shrubbery to the porch. The door stood open as usual, and the squire's old pointer was lying on the threshold; but within all was commotion. Dress-baskets, hat-cases, bonnet-boxes, gun-cases, travelling-bags, carriage-rugs, were lying about in every direction. Mrs. Winstanley was leaning back in the large chair by the fireplace, fanning herself with her big black fan; Pauline was standing by in attendance; and the gipsy-table, with the Bristol tea-set, was being brought in by Forbes the butler, whose honest old face wore a troubled aspect.

Captain Winstanley was standing with his back to the hearth, his countenance and whole figure wearing the unmistakable air of the master of a house who has returned to his domicile in an execrable temper.

Violet ran to Mrs. Winstanley, every other thought forgotten in the pleasure of seeing her mother again. These six weeks were the longest parting mother and daughter had ever known; and, after all, blood is thicker than water, and there is a natural leaning in a child's mind even to the weakest of parents.

Mr. Vawdrey stood in the background, waiting till those affectionate greetings natural to such an occasion should be over.

But to his surprise there were no such greetings. Mrs. Winstanley went on fanning herself vehemently, with a vexed

expression of countenance, while Violet bent over and kissed her. Captain Winstanley swayed himself slowly backwards and forwards upon the heels of his boots, and whistled to himself sotto voce, with his eyes fixed upon some lofty region of empty air. He vouchsafed not the faintest notice of his step-daughter or Mr. Vawdrey.

"It's really too bad of you, Violet," the mother exclaimed at last.

"Dear mamma," cried Vixen, in blank amazement, "what have I done?"

"To go roaming about the country," pursued Mrs. Winstanley plaintively, "for hours at a stretch, nobody knowing where to find you or what had become of you. And my telegram lying here unattended to."

"Did you telegraph, mamma?"

"Did I telegraph? Should I come home without telegraphing? Should I be so mad as to expose myself knowingly to the outrage which has been offered to me to-day?"

"Dearest mamma, you alarm me. What has happened?"

"One of the deepest humiliations I ever had to endure. But you were roaming about the Forest. You were following the instincts of your wild nature. What do you care for my mortification? If I had telegraphed to my housekeeper, it would not have happened. But I trusted in my daughter."

"Dear mamma," pleaded Vixen, looking anxious and bewildered, "if you would only explain. You make me miserable. What has happened?"

"Violet, your step-father and I had to drive home from the station in a fly!"

"Oh, mamma!" cried Vixen, with a gasp. "Is that all?"

"Is that all? Do you think that is not enough? Do you understand, child?—a fly—a common innkeeper's fly—that anybody may have for half-a-guinea; a fly with a mouldy lining, smelling of—other people! And on such an occasion, when every eye was upon us! No; I was never so degraded. And we had to wait—yes, a quarter of an hour, at least, and it seemed ages, while Pycroft's fly was got ready for us; yes, while a rough Forest pony was dragged out of his wretched stable, and a man, whose face had not been washed for a week, shuffled himself into an old watchman's coat. And there were all the porters staring at me, and laughing inwardly, I know. And, as a last drop in the cup, Colonel Carteret

drove up in his phaeton to catch the up-train just as we were getting into that disgraceful looking vehicle, and would stop to shake hands with us both, and insisted upon handing me into the horrid thing."

"Dear mamma, I am more sorry than I can say," said Vixen gently; "but I was afraid it was something much worse."

"Nothing could be worse, Violet."

"Then the telegram was to order the carriage to meet you, I suppose."

"Of course. We telegraphed from the Grosvenor at nine o'clock this morning. Who would imagine that you would be out of doors at such an hour?"

"I am not often out so early. But something happened this morning to put me out of temper, and I went for a ramble."

"A ramble lasting from nine in the morning till half-past four in the afternoon," remarked Captain Winstanley, with his gaze still fixed upon empty space. "Rather a long walk for a solitary young lady."

Vixen appeared unconscious that any one had spoken. Roderick Vawdrey felt a burning desire to kick the new master of the Abbey House.

"Shall I pour out your tea, mamma?" asked Vixen meekly.

"If you like. I am utterly prostrate. To have no carriage to meet me on such an occasion! I daresay everybody in the Forest knows all about it by this time. When I came home from my honeymoon with your poor papa, the church-bells rang all the afternoon, and the road was lined with people wanting to get a glimpse of us, and there were floral arches—"

"Ah, mamma, those things cannot happen twice in a lifetime," said Vixen, with irrepensible bitterness. "One happy marriage is as much as any woman can expect."

"A woman has a right to expect her own carriage," said Captain Winstanley.

"I am afraid I have paid my visit at rather an unfortunate moment," said Roderick, coming forward and addressing himself solely to Mrs. Winstanley; "but I could not go without saying how-do-you-do. I hope you had a pleasant journey from Scotland—bar the fly."

"How do you do, Roderick? Yes; it was all pleasant except that last contretemps. Imagine the Duchess of Dovedale's feelings if she arrived at the station adjoining her own estate, and found no carriage to meet her!"

"My aunt would tuck up her petticoats

and trudge home," answered Roderick, smiling. "She's a plucky little woman."

"Yes, perhaps on an ordinary occasion. But to-day it was so different. Everybody will talk about our return."

"Most people are still away," suggested Rorie, with a view to comfort.

"Oh, but their servants will hear it, and they will tell their masters and mistresses. All gossip begins that way. Besides, Colonel Carteret saw us, and what he knows everybody knows."

After this, Roderick felt that all attempts at consolation were hopeless. He would have liked to put Mrs. Winstanley into a better temper for Violet's sake. It was not a pleasant home atmosphere in which he was obliged to leave his old playfellow on this the first day of her new life. Captain Winstanley maintained a forbidding silence; Mrs. Winstanley did not even ask anyone to have a cup of tea; Violet sat on the opposite side of the hearth, pale and quiet, with Argus at her knee, and one arm wound caressingly round his honest head.

"I've been looking at the kennels this morning," said Roderick, looking at the new master of the Abbey House with a cheerful assumption that everything was going on pleasantly. "We shall begin business on the 1st. You'll hunt, of course."

"Well, yes; I suppose I shall give myself a day occasionally."

"I shall not have a happy moment while you are out," said Mrs. Winstanley. "I used to be miserable about poor dear Edward."

Vixen winced. These careless references to the dead hurt her more than the silence of complete oblivion. To remember, and to be able to speak so lightly! That seemed horrible.

"I doubt if I shall hunt much this season," pursued Captain Winstanley, as much as to say that he was not going to be grateful to the new master of the foxhounds as a public benefactor, however many hundreds that gentleman might disburse in order to make up the shortcomings of a scanty subscription. "I shall have a great deal to occupy me. This place has been much neglected—naturally—within the last few years. There is no end of work to be done."

"Are you going to pull down the Abbey House, and build an Italian villa on its site?" asked Vixen, her upper lip curling angrily. "That would be rather a pity. Some people think it a fine old place,

and it has been in my father's family since the reign of Henry the Eighth."

To the captain's ear this speech had a covert insolence. The Abbey House was to belong to Violet in the future. Neither he nor his wife had a right to touch a stone of it.

"I hope I shall do nothing injudicious," he said politely.

"My aunt will be back in a week or two, Mrs. Winstanley," said Roderick. "I shall bring her over to see you directly she settles down at Ashbourne. And now I think I'd better be off; I've a long walk home, and you must be too tired to care about talking or being talked to."

"I am very tired," answered Mrs. Winstanley languidly; "but I should have liked to hear all your news."

"I'm afraid that's not much. I only came home last night; I've been shooting grouse in Renfrew."

"Plenty of birds this year?" enquired the captain, with a languid interest.

"Pretty fair. The rainy spring killed a good many of the young birds."

"Do you remember any year in which that complaint was not made?" retorted Captain Winstanley.

Rorie took his departure after this, and contrived to give Violet's hand an encouraging squeeze at parting, accompanied with a straight steady look, which said as plainly as words: "You have one friend who will be stanch and true, come what may."

Vixen understood him, and sudden tears welled up to her eyes—the first that had clouded them since her parting with Bullfinch. She brushed them away hurriedly, but not so quickly as to escape Captain Winstanley's observation.

"If you'll excuse me, mamma, I'll run and dress for dinner," she said, "unless there is anything I can do for you. Your rooms are quite ready."

"I'm glad of that," replied Mrs. Winstanley fretfully; "for really, after our reception at the railway station, I expected to find everything at sixes and sevens."

"Dear mamma, you must know that was quite an accident."

"An accident very likely to occur when a young lady indulges in tête-à-tête forest rambles with an old friend, instead of waiting at home for her mother's letters and telegrams," remarked Captain Winstanley, caressing his neat whisker with his irreproachable hand.

"What do you mean?" said Vixen,

turning sharply upon him. "I went out alone this morning. Mr. Vawdrey and I met at the kennels by accident."

"A chapter of accidents," sneered the captain. "I have no objection to make, Miss Tempest, if your mamma has none; but I am rather sorry for the young lady Mr. Vawdrey is going to marry."

"Mr. Vawdrey was my father's friend, and will never cease to be mine," said Vixen, with flashing eyes. "There can be nothing offensive to Lady Mabel Ashbourne in our friendship."

She was gone before her step-father could reply, or her mother reprove her want of respect for that new relative.

"I suppose I had better go and dress too," said Mrs. Winstanley, "and in the evening we can talk about our first dinner-party. I daresay we shall have a great many people calling to-morrow afternoon. It will be rather trying. There is such a painful feeling in being a bride and not a bride, as it were. People's congratulations hardly sound hearty."

"I daresay they have rather a vapid flavour, like a warmed-up dinner," said the captain. "That is the result of living in a neighbourhood where your first husband was known and popular. If we went among strangers, their congratulations would be a great deal heartier. But I hope you don't begin to repent already, my dear Pamela."

"Conrad! How can you imagine such a thing?—after your delicate attentions, your devoted care of me during our tour. What dress shall I wear this evening? Do you like me best in blue or amber?"

"To my eye all colours suit you. But I think a woman"—he was going to say "of your age," but checked himself and substituted—"in the maturity of her beauty looks best in velvet, or some rich and heavy material that falls in massive folds, like the drapery in a portrait by Velasquez. A border of fur, too, is an artistic introduction in a woman's dress—you see it often in Velasquez. Heavy old laces are, of course, always admirable. And for colour, I like the warmer hues best—wine-dark purples or deep glowing reds; rich ruddy browns, with a knot of amber now and then for relief."

"How beautifully you talk," cried Mrs. Winstanley, delighted. "I only wish Theodore could hear you. It would give her new ideas; for, after all, the best dressmakers are bornées. It is too early in the year for velvet; I shall put on my

dark green brocade with the old Flanders lace. I am so glad you like lace. It is my chief weakness. Even dear Edward, who was so generous, thought me a little extravagant in the matter of lace. But when one once begins to collect, the study is so interesting, one is led on."

"Good heavens! is my wife a collector?" thought Captain Winstanley, horrified. "That must be put a stop to, or she will ruin me."

And then he went off to his dressing-room rather wearily, to put on full dress for a home dinner; a sacrifice to his new state of existence which he found very irksome. He would have liked to dine in a shooting-jacket, and smoke all the evening. But his smoking now, instead of pervading the whole house, as it had done in his snug bachelor quarters, was an indulgence to be taken out of doors, or in a room appointed for the purpose. He was not even to smoke in the fine old hall, for it was one of the family sitting-rooms, and Mrs. Winstanley could not endure smoke.

"I am not at all fanciful or capricious," she told her husband early in the honeymoon, "but smoking is one of my horrors. I hope, dear Conrad, it is not too much to ask you never to smoke in any room I use."

Captain Winstanley pledged himself to respect this and every other wish of his wife's. It was his policy to be subservient in small matters, in order to be master in things of importance. But that daily dressing for dinner was something of a bore; and the dinners themselves—tête-à-tête dinners, in which he had to take as much trouble to be amusing as at a dinner-party—had been apt to hang heavily upon him. He had even proposed dining at the table-d'hôte, but this idea Mrs. Winstanley rejected with horror.

"I have never dined at a table-d'hôte in my life, Conrad," she exclaimed, "and I certainly should not begin during my wedding tour."

SEAFARING USAGES.

THE rude and boisterous customs formerly observed on board ship, such, for instance, as the ceremonies on "crossing the line," as related by nautical writers, are familiar to all our readers; these sports, the offshoot of others practised in earlier times, have, in their turn, yielded

to the more refined and reasonable mode of whiling the tedium of a long voyage by theatricals, recitations, concerts, &c. Grose gives some curious instances of the way in which the "salts" of former times enjoyed their pastimes at sea. He mentions a custom called the "ambassador," practised upon "ignorant fellows or landsmen" in warm latitudes. The sport was thus managed: A large tub was filled with water, and two stools placed on each side of it. Over the whole, a tarpaulin or old sail was thrown. This was kept tight by two persons, who represented the king and queen of a foreign country, and were seated on the stools. The person intended to be ducked was called the ambassador, and after repeating a ridiculous speech dictated to him, he was led in great state to the throne, and there seated between the king and the queen, who rising suddenly, the ambassador fell back into the tub of water.

Another observance practised near the line was called "autour," or King Arthur. A sailor, who represented the king, ridiculously dressed, and having an immense wig, made of oakum, or some old stuff, was seated at the side of, or over, a large vessel of water. Every sailor in his turn was to be ceremoniously introduced to him, and to pour a bucket of water over him, crying, "Hail, King Arthur!" If during this ceremony any seaman laughed or smiled (to which he was provoked by the wry faces and facetious gesticulations of the monarch), he had to change places and assume the throne, until relieved by some other brother tar who had as little command over his facial muscles as himself.

Another game on board ship was called "hoop." To run the hoop was an ancient marine custom. Four or more boys, having their left hands tied fast to an iron hoop, and in their right a rope, called a "nettle," being naked to the waist, waited the signal to begin. This was done by the application of a stroke of the cat-o'-nine-tails given by the boatswain to the back of one of the boys, who struck at the next to him, and so on, until all became engaged in what can scarcely be called an amusing game; for although at first the blows were gently administered, each boy, irritated at the strokes of his neighbour, at length laid on lustily, and the play became earnest. This custom was practised when a ship was wind-bound.

This boy-flogging brings to mind a practice of the French seamen in former days, who believed that the spirit of the

storm would be propitiated by thrashing unfortunate middies at the mainmast.

"Cob," or "cobbing," was a punishment formerly inflicted on seamen for petty offences and irregularities. This consisted in striking the offender with a cobbing-stick or pipe-staff. The number of strokes was usually a dozen. At the first stroke the inflicter repeated the word "watch," on which all the persons on board took off their hats on pain of like punishment. The last stroke was always given as hard as possible, and was called the "purse."

"Keel-hauling" was a barbarous punishment in the navy, but the following account of "keel-raking" was a refinement on such cruelty. It is described in *Six Dialogues about Sea Services* (1685). "If the offence be foul, he (the seaman) is also drawn underneath the very keel of the ship, and being thus under water, a great piece is given fire to, right over his head, as well to astonish him more with the thunder thereof, which proveth much offensive to him, as to give warning to all others to look out and beware."

A punishment to sailors for swearing is mentioned in the *Diary of the Rev. Henry Teonge, chaplain of H.M.S. Assistance* (1675-76): "David Thomas and Martin the cook, and one master's boy, had their hands stretched out, and with their backs to the rayles, and the master's boy with his backe to the mainmast, all looking one upon the other, and in each of their mouths a mandler-spike, namely, an iron pinneclapt close into their mouths, and tyed behind their heds, and there they stood a whole houre till their mouths were very bloody. An excellent cure for swearers!"

The custom of having, in ships and vessels for sale or hire, an old broom attached to the masthead, originated, according to Brand, from the ancient practice of putting up boughs upon anything which was intended for sale. It has been contended, however, that the custom dates from the period when Van Tromp and the Dutch fleet hoisted a broom, indicative of an intention to sweep the ships of England from the seas. To repel this insolence, the English admiral exhibited a horsewhip, equally significant of his intentions towards the Dutch. The pennant, which the horsewhip symbolised, has ever since been the distinguishing mark of English men-of-war.

The present custom of "christening" ships may be considered a relic of the ancient libation practised when they were

launched. The action of "blessing" ships is alluded to by the monks of St. Denys. In July, 1418, the Bishop of Bangor was sent to Southampton to "bless" the king's ship, the *Grâce Dieu*, and received five pounds for his expenses. In the fleet commanded by John de Outremarins against the Tunisians, according to ancient custom, and to ensure success, the ships were blessed by the priests; and being afterwards exposed to storms, the captains desired the soldiers and sailors to invoke the Lord, and while they were at prayer the wind became suddenly favourable.

In 1242, when Henry the Third was at war with France, a fleet was prepared in which that monarch embarked, after visiting the shrines of many saints, to propitiate their influence against storms, and to ensure success to his arms.

Before the Reformation, it was usual for the priests at Yarmouth to give a blessing to the fishing vessels yearly, and it was afterwards customary for the minister of the parish to preach a "fishing" sermon.

In early times the Virgin was believed to exercise a miraculous influence over the destiny of mariners, and a similar sentiment still prevails among many Roman Catholic seamen in foreign countries. In 1228, the Earl of Salisbury, on returning to England, was so nearly shipwrecked on his voyage, that everything, including articles of great value, were thrown into the sea to lighten the ship. In the moment of greatest danger a brilliant taper was seen at the top of the mast, and near to it a damsel of surpassing beauty, who protected the light from the wind and rain. This sight inspired the earl and the sailors with courage, and the presence was assumed to be that of the Virgin, to whom the earl, from the day of his knighthood, had devoted a taper, to be burnt at her shrine constantly during canonical hours.

Edward the Third, after the surrender of Calais, on his return to England, encountered a violent storm. "Oh, blessed Virgin!" he exclaimed; "holy lady! why is it, what does it portend, that in going to France I enjoyed a favourable wind, a calm sea, and all things prospered with me; but, on returning to England, all kind of misfortunes befall me?" Of course, the monkish historians relate that this expostulation had the desired effect, and the storm suddenly subsided.

Joinville, in his *Memoirs*, relates that a sailor falling overboard, during the voyage of St. Louis to France, on being

picked up was asked why he did not swim. He replied that he had no need to do so, for, while falling into the sea, he had exclaimed, "Our Lady of Valbert!" and that she had supported him by the shoulders until he was taken on board.

The Sardinians appear to have indulged in a plurality of saints to favour their vocation. Tyndale, in his account of that island, says: "Amidst the cheers of the fishermen at having made a good capture of fish, a general silence prevailed; the leader in his little boat, having checked the hilarity, assumed a pontifical as well as piscatorial character. Taking off his cap—an example followed by all the company—he commenced a half chant, or half recitative prayer; a species of litany, or invocation of the saints, to which an *ora pro nobis chorus* was made by the sailors. After the Virgin Mary had been appealed to, and her protection against accidents particularly requested—as the ancients did to Neptune—a series of saints were called over, whose names I know not, but who were, evidently, influential in the fishing department. St. George was supplicated to drive away all enemies of the tunny, from the imaginary 'lammia,' or sorceress, to the real shark or sword-fish. Peter was reminded of the holy miracle performed by him by an application to confer a similar miraculous draught on the present occasion; and, perhaps to counterbalance the difficulty in case of his refusal, a petition was offered up to San Antonio di Padua, imploring him to perform some more of his fishing wonders."

According to Cetti, it is customary on the vigils of the day to draw by lot the name of a saint, and to constitute and invoke him as the protector and patron of the time; and he is paid for the trouble and honour by a present of one of the largest fish, which the priest obligingly takes care of in his own larder.

In the early ages, besides streamers containing a representation of the saint after whom the ship was named, his image seems to have been placed on board. When Edward the Third embarked on board the *Thomas* in 1350, before the battle with the Spaniards, an image of that saint was sent to ensure divine protection. It appears, also, that a figure of Our Lady, which had been captured in a ship at sea, was carefully conveyed to the monarch while at Eltham in 1376.

In his discovery of a new world, Columbus had fearful conflicts with the

elements. In one particular instance, on his return to Europe, he was exposed to a tremendous storm. Seeing all human skill baffled and confounded, he endeavoured to propitiate heaven by solemn vows and acts of penance. By his orders a number of beans, equal to the number of persons on board, were put into a cap, and on one of these was cut the sign of the cross. Each of the crew made a vow that, should he draw forth the marked bean, he would make a pilgrimage to the shrine of Santa Maria di Guadalupe, bearing a wax taper of five pounds weight. The admiral was the first to put in his hand, and the lot fell upon him. From that moment he considered himself a pilgrim bound to perform a vow. The tempest still raging, the admiral and sailors made a vow that, if spared, wherever they first landed, they would go in procession, bare-footed, and in their shirts, to offer up thanks and prayers in some chapel dedicated to the Virgin. In another danger, the whole crew made a vow, in case their lives were spared, to fast upon bread and water for a few days.

Votive offerings were common among the Norwegian fishermen. A legend states that a mariner wished on Christmas Day to give the spirit of the waters a cake; but when he came to the shore, lo! the waters were frozen over. Unwilling to leave his offering on the ice, and so to give the spirit the trouble of breaking the ice to obtain it, the fisherman took a pickaxe, and set to work to make a hole. In spite of all his labour, he was only able to make a very small hole, not nearly large enough to put the cake through. Having laid the cake on the ice while he thought what was best to be done, suddenly a very tiny little hand, as white as snow, was stretched through the hole, seized the cake, and crumpling it up together, withdrew with it. Ever since that time the cakes have been so very small that the water-spirits have had no trouble with them. In this legend originated the compliment so often paid to a Norwegian lady, "Your hand is like a water-sprite's."

In former times peculiar customs were attached to certain seasons of the year and to saints' days. The old practice of setting the nets at Christmas Eve was general throughout Sweden. Abraham Brahe notes in his *Tanke-bak*, December 24th, 1618: "On Inlafston (Christmas Eve) God granted me a glorious haul of fish." At Ofved's Kloster, in Sweden, it was the

custom of the peasants every Christmas Eve to go by torchlight and fish for their Christmas supper, first invoking the name of the demon of the waters. Many years ago a fisherman promised the spirit a stool to sit upon, and in return the demon sent him home with well-filled nets. The fisherman, however, broke his word, and the demon in revenge kept all the fish on the coast to himself, and none could be got afterwards.

The fishermen of Folkestone, in Kent, chose eight of the largest and best whittings out of every boat when they came home from the fishery, and sold them apart from the rest. Out of the profit arising from these they made a feast every Christmas Eve, which they called a "Rumbald." The master of each boat provided the feast for his own company. The whittings were sold around the country as Rumbald fish. The word was probably derived from the old cant word, *rumboyle*, to watch, an allusion to the Christmas vigils.

All Hallow's Even, or the vigil of All Saints' Day, was held in great veneration by mariners. At this period the fishermen of Orkney sprinkled what was called "fore-spoken" water over their boats when they had not been successful. They used, also, to make the sign of the cross on their boats with tar. The Rev. Mr. Shaw, in his account of the Isle of Lewis, says that the inhabitants had an ancient custom of sacrificing to a sea-god, called Shony, at Hallowtide, in the following manner. They came to the church of St. Mulvay, each seaman having his provision with him. Every family furnished a peck of malt, and this was brewed into ale. One of their number was selected to wade into the sea up to his middle, and carrying a cup of ale in his hand, he cried: "Shony, I give you this cup of ale, hoping that you will be so kind as to send us plenty of sea-ware;" and with these words the cup of ale was thrown into the sea.

Among the fishermen of Dieppe, even to a late period, All Saints' Day was religiously observed. Those mariners who ventured out to sea on this anniversary were said to have the double sight; that is, each one beheld a living likeness of himself, seated in close contact, or, when engaged in any work, doing the same. If the nets were cast out, they were found, on drawing them in, to contain nothing but bones, portions of skeletons, or fragments of winding-sheets. On the same

night, towards midnight, a funeral car was heard, driven through the Pollet or fish-market. It was drawn by a team of eight white horses, preceded by dogs of the same colour, who ran and barked around them. Few persons were bold enough to look upon this fearful scene. Those who listened might hear the voices of the seamen who had died in the course of the year.

Martin, in his account of the Western Islands of Scotland (1716), alluding to the Isle of Lewis, says: "The fishermen in the village of Barvas retain an ancient custom of sending a man very early on May Day to Barvas river, in order that any female may be prevented from crossing it first; for, if such happened, it would hinder the salmon from coming into the river all the year round."

Saint Peter's Day, June 25th, was consecrated to several curious observances by mariners. In an old account of the lordship of Gainsborough, in Cleveland, Yorkshire, it is stated "That the fishermen, on St. Peter's Daye, invited their friends and kinsfolk to a festyvall kept after their fashion, with a free heart and no show of niggardnesse; that day their boats are dressed curiously for the showe; their masts are painted, and certain rytes observed amongst them, with sprinklyng their bowes with good liquor, solde with them at a groate a quarte, which custome or superstition, suckt from their ancestors, even continyeth down to this present time."

Sailors have always had their prejudices with regard to certain days of the week. As everybody knows, Friday was, and is still considered by some mariners, a blank day for sailing. The Wellesley, bearing the flag of the Earl of Dundonald, on leaving Plymouth for the West Indies, got under weigh on Friday, March 24th, 1848, and after she had got outside the breakwater she was recalled by the port admiral, and did not leave again until the following day. The object of this delay was to send the mail-bags; but the seamen firmly believed that the gallant admiral left something behind, purposely to avoid going to sea on a Friday. A Cornish saying places Candlemas Day as ill-omened for sailing. Bishop Hall, speaking of a superstitious man, says: "He will never set to sea except on Sunday." At Preston Pans the clergyman of the town was said to have preached against the fishermen for casting their nets on the Sabbath; and they, to prevent any ill befalling them in

consequence, made a small image of rage, and burnt it on the top of their chimneys.

Various practices were adopted in former times to influence the winds, and ensure a prosperous voyage to the seamen. The good wives of Winchelsea hit upon an ingenious plan of their own for this purpose, in the success of which they, no doubt, implicitly believed. The Kentish perambulator, Lambarde, speaking of this town, says: "And because our portsmen traded the sea, and lived by quicke returne, they were not unprovided with an Æolus, also, that mighte directe the wind for their desire. For, within memorie, there were standyng in Winchelsey three parish churches, St. Lennard, St. Giles, and St. Thomas; and in that of St. Lennard there was erected the picture of St. Lennard, the patrone of the place, holding a fane, or Æolus scepter, in his hand, which was moovable at the pleasure of any that would turn it to such pointe of the compasse as best fitted the returne of the husbände or other friend whom they expected." This was, to say the least, an innocent way of "working the winds." One would scarcely expect that the mere turning of a stone would have a sensible effect in procuring favourable breezes; yet we learn that the inhabitants of Fladda Chuan, in the Western Islands, had implicit faith in this charm. In a chapel on this island there was fixed in the altar a blue stone, of a round form, which was always moist. It was an ordinary custom with any fishermen who were detained in the island by contrary winds, to wash this blue stone with water, expecting thereby to obtain a favourable wind. So great was the regard paid to this stone, that any oath sworn before it could never be broken. Another mode of these primitive islanders to secure auspicious winds consisted in hanging a he-goat to the masthead.

A similar feeling with regard to the efficacy of stones, though for another purpose, existed among the fishermen of Iona. This took the shape of a pillar, and the sailor who stretched his arm along it three times in the name of the Trinity, could never err in steering the helm of a vessel.

The Finlanders are said to have used a cord with three knots for raising the wind. When the first was loosed they would expect a good wind; if the second, a stronger; if the third, such a storm would arise that the sailors would not be able to direct the ship and avoid rocks, or to stand upon the decks.

At Peel, in the Isle of Man, a witch, with a basin of water, said once that the herring-fleet would not return. Every ship was lost, and she was rolled down the hill in a barrel set with spikes. The grass has never grown since in the barrel's track.

Connected with the fisheries we may notice that the custom of giving bribes, under the more agreeable appellation of presents, appears to have been a common practice in former times. We give the following instance as connected with the fisheries of Yarmouth. It is extracted from the Assembly Book, preserved in the archives of that town, and bearing date 1577. "The agreement which Mr. Bailiff Felton made at London, with the Judge of the Admiralty, to give him yearly a barrel of herrings, for life, not to be impeached of our Admiralty jurisdiction; confirmed."

One of the oldest customs or prerogatives in regard to fish, was, in the time of Henry the First, the right to what are now termed "royal," but which were formerly called "great" fish, namely, the sturgeon and the whale. "Of sturgeon," says the royal autocrat, "caught on our lands (sic), we will that it shall be ours, saving to the finder his costs and expenses. Of whales, so found, we will that the head shall be ours, and the tail our consort's." Wise discrimination, for the head was considered the daintiest part, the tongue being a *bonne bouche*. Fishermen would offer, as their costliest gift to the church, a whale's tongue; and it was, no doubt, highly relished by the ecclesiastics, for William the Conqueror gave a yearly grant of one to the monks of Marmoutier.

A curious custom is mentioned by Nash, in his *Lenten Staffe*, 1599. "Every year," he says, "the sherifes of Norwich bake certayne herring pies (four-and-twenty, as I take it), and send them as a homage to the lord of Caster, hard by there, for lands that they hold of him, who, presently upon the like tenure, in bouncing bampers, covered over with his clothe of armes, sees them conveyed to the court in the best equipage. When they are arrived, his man enters, not rudely at first, but knocketh very civilly, and then officers come and fetch him in with torchlight; where, having disfraghted, and unloaded his luggage, to supper he sits him downe like a lorde, with his wax-lights before him, and hath his messe of meate allowed him with the largest, and his horses are provendred as epicurely."

The fishermen of Filey, in Yorkshire, previous to their setting out for the herring fishery, used to send a piece of sea-beef on shore from each boat, to such of their friends as were interested in their success.

At Redcar, in the same county, a custom prevailed among the fishermen of presenting their first customer with a fine fish. This bait was likely to bring good luck if the proverb holds well that "liberality begets liberality."

SONNET.

EACH joy we cherish slowly fades away.
The sweet Spring blossoms perish, one by one,
The roses scarcely glow 'neath Summer's sun,
Ere Autumn, with her skies of chilling grey,
Shows their bright petals, dulled on sodden clay,
While her own royal robes grow sere and dun,
As she shrinks back, grim Winter's clutch to shun,
Where from his frozen lair he nears his prey.
Yet, as we bury our dead darlings deep,
Beneath the kindly turf and flowers of Time,
We may not linger by their rest to weep,
Before us lies the pass we needs must climb;
Smile in grave Duty's face—and hand in hand,
With Work and Love, make for the better land.

THE HAUNTED PRECINCT.

THE window at which I am now writing—where I have written many more pages and columns than I care to recollect—looks straight across to the chambers occupied by Pip and Herbert Pocket, after they forsook their old rooms in Barnard's Inn. My rooms are quite as ancient, and quite as ramshackle as Pip's were. I hear the wind howling round the place, and the rain pattering against the windows; I can fancy myself in a storm-beaten lighthouse, I have the smoke come rolling down the chimney, just as Pip did when he lived over the way. I have often listened to the wild rattling of the ill-fitting window-sashes, to the mysterious thumping and groaning on my ancient staircase. I have gazed out into the dark, wild, wet night, and I have seen the lamps on the bridge and the shore shuddering. I have noted the coal-fires on barges on the river "being carried away before the wind like red-hot splashes in the rain," just as Pip did many years ago. Late at night—especially on a wet, wild, windy night—I have found a strange fascination in gazing across the greensward, over the glistening pavement, and keeping my attention riveted to the doorway leading to Pip's staircase, and to the dim light that I see flickering in Pip's chambers. Often and often have I fancied I have seen Magwitch steal in at that door-

way, and imagined I saw Old Orlick slink stealthily after him. When I have seen a change or a movement in the lights in the topmost chambers, I have pictured the meeting between Pip and his patron, and I have subsequently thought of the former groping his way down the dark staircase, and stumbling over the vengeful Orlick crouching in the corner. Being so on the spot, so to speak, the whole scene has sometimes taken such a hold on me, that I would not have descended my own grim staircase that night for fifty thousand pounds, for fear I should find Old Orlick waiting in ambush, to call me "Wolf," to rush upon me and brain me with a stone-hammer.

The other evening I came in very late—no uncommon occurrence with me—and the night-porter gave me a letter that had been left for me at the Fleet Street gate. There was nothing of importance in the letter, but as he held a light for me to read it by, suddenly the whole scene came back to my mind of the note which Wemmick left for Pip, which contained the words, "Don't go home." These words rang in my ears as I took my way down Middle Temple Lane, which is as deserted, as ill-paved, and as badly-lighted as it might have been fifty years ago. I kept on murmuring to myself, "Don't go home"; and if it had not been for the very shame of the thing, I protest I would have turned back and taken a bed at the Tavistock for the night. Weird, silent, ghostly, uncanny, is my grim staircase. I toil slowly up. I stare at the names painted on the sported oaks—I never notice them in the day-time. I wonder how it is Mr. Crumbrash, Mr. Berkley Bunnidge, and Mr. Thomas Timpitt can live in the same chamber without quarrelling. I am annoyed with the gigantic letter-slit on the door of Messrs Burray and Ruffem, and find myself wondering whether they use it to post themselves, pantomime fashion, into their chambers when they have forgotten the keys. And here I recollect that Burray is a stout and dignified personage, and I think how funny he would look if he stuck half-way, and the laundress and the head-porter had to pull him out by the heels in the morning. With all these wild ideas running through my brain, I cannot get rid of the possibility of Orlick crouching behind a balustrade, or in the shadow of a forgotten "oak" that some careless clerk has left unported. My staircase is Orlick-haunted, there is no doubt.

When I reach the top landing I see a

stalwart figure, and I hear a gruff voice. I start. It is not, however, Orlick. It is my trusty policeman. He wishes me a gruff, but good-natured "Good morning," and asks if there is any news. He sees me often come home in the small hours; he has found out that I am connected with journalism—how he found this out, I do not know—so he imagines I have come direct from the Times office, having previously had a confidential interview with Lord Beaconsfield; and he half expects that, at three o'clock in the morning, I shall give him an anticipatory summary of the news that he will buy for a penny in five hours' time. I wish him "Good night"—I hate saying "Good morning" to people when it is dark—and he goes clumping downstairs. I bang to the oak, I slam the inner door, I tumble into bed. The wind howls down the chimney, the window-sashes clatter, the doors rattle as if somebody were trying to break in, the rain patters on the panes like fine shot, I pull the clothes over my head and dream about Orlick. I wake up in a fright, and I come to the conclusion that my chambers are more haunted than ever. I go to sleep again, and when the full morning has arrived, and chimes all round and about are endeavouring to trip one another up with the energy with which they are ringing out the large hours, I am well satisfied that not only my chambers, but the whole precinct of the Temple, from Whitefriars in the east to Essex Street in the west, from Fleet Street in the north to the Embankment in the south, is as thoroughly haunted as the most romantic and imaginative mind could desire. By day and by night is this precinct constantly haunted by a thousand spirits of the old time and the new.

Lights in the second floor of Number Two, Brick Court. Sounds of laughter and merriment. Music, more laughter, a song, applause, and more laughter again. You possibly think this is a party of rollicking law-students who are celebrating the "call" of one of their number, or what is quite as likely, are comforting an unsuccessful candidate by a carouse. You are quite mistaken in both your suppositions. We have, if you please, drifted back more than a century, and these are the rooms to which Dr. Oliver Goldsmith removed, after he had unexpectedly landed five hundred pounds by the success of The Good Natured Man. These are the pleasant chambers that the open-handed pittle doctor furnished with blue morino-

covered mahogany sofas, blue morino curtains, Wilton carpets, and looking-glasses—together fitting them up regardless of expense. I am inclined to think, from the uproarious merriment, that the doctor is unbending to-night: that he has, so to speak, taken off his literary pinafore. There is no overbearing, lexicographical party by the name of Johnson here this evening; there is no obsequious Boswell; there is no Reynolds, deaf and courtly, in maroon velvet; Percy, Bickerstaff, Topham Beaudere, Edmund Burke, Kelly, and Macklin are conspicuous by their absence. Goldie has quite forgotten that he is a great man, and is enjoying himself tremendously. A lot of his Irish friends are here to-night; there are the Seguins, the Pollards, and a host of others, who are being entertained right royally.

Look at the kindly host. How bravely he is arrayed in his Tyrian-blue satin-grained coat, his garter-blue silk breeches, his marvellous embroidered waistcoat (for all of which I am afraid Mr. William Filby will suffer). See how attentive he is to those two bright-eyed laughing girls in the corner of the room. How the blue-eyed one bandages his eyes—she does not blind him at all—for blind man's-buff, and how the doctor takes his revenge when he catches her! What fun they have over a game of forfeits, and what a glorious, prodigal, rollicking supper they have afterwards! A rubber at whist is proposed subsequently, but everyone is much too merry to take part in it. Over a bowl of punch the dear little doctor is induced to sing Johnny Armstrong, and the Three Jolly Pigeons. Then the blue-eyed one sings a song, and the doctor insists on toasting her. Why not have a dance? says someone. But then it is recollected that they have no music, and that the doctor cannot play the flute and dance at the same time. Mr. Seguin comes to the rescue; he hums the first few bars of a minuet then very popular, and several other good voices join him. The doctor and Mrs. Seguin step through the measure with a mock courtly grace which is irresistible. Presently Seguin, who has a rare vein of sly humour about him, changes the air to an Irish jig, and the pair foot it right blithely, accompanying it with the yelps indispensable to such a performance. At last the doctor becomes almost wild with excitement, whirls his wig up to the ceiling, and sinks exhausted in an arm-chair. The company then begin

to be conscious of a prolonged knocking underneath. At first this is supposed to be applause, but it is continued in such a very angry and staccato fashion, that the host winks and points downwards with his thumb, and explains there is a rising young barrister, occupied on a somewhat abstruse work on law, residing beneath; and this is Mr. Blackstone's way of intimating that he cannot get on with his Commentaries satisfactorily if they continue to kick up that tremendous row. Some people are so very unreasonable. I once knew a man who objected to the Plantation Breakdown and Hop Light Loo over his head at three in the morning, because he wanted to study Fearnie on Contingent Remainders.

Middle Temple Lane by daylight is a pleasanter place than by night, albeit it is quite as much haunted. Though the Temple Stairs, with their wherries and watermen, have long since dissolved into the limbo of the past, the lane has still all the old peculiarities of a thoroughfare leading to the water. It has quite the most ancient look of any part of the Temple, especially if you raise your hand and shut out from view the new gateway which is rapidly approaching completion. The nineteenth century costume is quite out of harmony with the background; and those young ladies in otter and sealskin, those damsels in homespun ulsterettes, those big babies in short skirts, black stockings, and snowy frills, you meet going down to see the chrysanthemums just now, though very charming in their way, rather mar the picture from an artistic point of view.

It would be much more agreeable—from a strictly pictorial point of view, mind you—if one saw the full-skirted coats, the long embroidered waistcoats, the ruffles, the swords, and the flowing wigs of Mr. Spectator and his friend Sir Roger de Coverley. Cannot you picture this worthy couple amid the clamouring crowd of watermen? and Sir Roger picking out a waterman with a wooden leg, and saying to his friend in the rounded, somewhat pompous manner of the period: "You must know I never make use of anybody to row me that has not lost neither a leg nor an arm. I would rather bate him a few strokes with his oar than not employ an honest man that has been wounded in the Queen's service." And do you remember the Spectator tells us that his friend, "after having seated himself, trimmed the boat with his coachman, who

being a very sober man, always serves as ballast on these occasions." Fancy getting a coachman to serve as ballast in the present day! I should like to see the face of anybody's coachman to whom the proposition was made. And supposing the ballast did not happen to be sober, how very awkward it would be.

It seems a pity that the water entrance to the Temple is entirely abolished. They might have had a little dock at the bottom of Middle Temple Lane for the barges of benchers, the outriggers of barristers, or the skiffs of solicitors. Imagine Mr. Serjeant Parry and Mr. Serjeant Ballantine going up to Westminster in a steam-launch; or Mr. Montague Williams, Mr. Douglas Straight, and Mr. George Lewis pulling thither in a randan; or Sir Henry Hawkins paddling up in a canoe. But this by-the-way. Old Dr. Johnson, with his unwieldy body, his ill-groomed wig, his faded murrey-coloured coat, shabby with wine-stains, certainly haunts this thoroughfare. I often fancy him toddling down this lane on his way to The Sycamore, the ruins of which still remain in the gardens of the Inner Temple, where he will sit and thunder forth his opinions, and air his dogmas, and be generally disputatious and disagreeable for hours; where he will be toadied by Boswell and others, who will subsequently invite him to dinner at The Mitre. When twilight falls there are five black cats, who sit in solemn conclave and make hideous noises at the bottom of the lane. They are said to be the disembodied spirits of five eminent lawyers, who once drove a thriving practice within the Temple. I have heard the names mentioned, but would not venture to divulge them even if you would make me a bencher on the spot.

Are you conscious of the scent of tobacco smoke? Are you critical on tobaccos of the past, and sufficiently versed in fine distinction of odours to recognise Orinooko? If so, follow your nose up a narrow, cross-grained, wrong-headed staircase, much nearer to Fleet Street than Goldsmith's, and on the other side of the way. If you can manage to slip in when the door is open, you will find you have just dropped in at the very best part of the night. There has been whist going on during the evening; subsequently there has been cold roast beef—and how they cut and came again, both the players and the lookers-on, at that excellent joint!—there has been veal-pie,

and bread and cheese, and porter. Now there are glasses and bottles on the table, and a ceaseless flow of talk. If your eyes can pierce through the clouds of smoke, you will see a little spare man dressed in black sitting at the head of the table. He has dark curly hair tinged with grey, his face lights up when he speaks, and he is continually saying something with a slight stammer, as his quick glittering eyes seem to thoroughly take all the company into his confidence, and invite them to participate in the joke. A fund of quaint fancy and delicate humour gives an infinite charm to all the little man in black has to say.

If I mistake not, there is Mr. Hazlitt just filling his glass, and Mr. Leigh Hunt has just whispered something to the host that has amused him very much. That enthusiast with white hair, who is talking so volubly, is, I fancy, Mr. Coleridge. The solemn gentleman leaning against the chimney-piece, who spoke just now in such a ponderous voice, looks a good deal like Mr. Wordsworth. I really hope he will not be prevailed upon to recite any of his own poetry. He with the dome-shaped bald head, who has just entered, is, I am inclined to think, no less a personage than Mr. Haydon. He has evidently got some fresh grievance about High Art and the Royal Academy. Yes; and there are lots of other well-known men in the room, but they are talking so much, and the smoke is so thick—What did you say? Who is the host? Did not I tell you? Why that is our gentle Elia, our dear Charles Lamb. A veritable genius of the Temple. He was born in Crown Office Row, and lived there long before he inhabited these chambers. When I come to think of it, he is the only man I ever heard of who was born within the precinct of the Temple. Many people have lived there the greater part of their lives, not a few have died there, but Charles Lamb is the only one I ever heard of as confessing to the Temple as his birthplace.

There are yet some more "haunted chambers" that cause us to linger for a long while in their neighbourhood. Through a narrow turning, across a paved court, up a dark staircase to the third-floor, and of course you know where you are—Number Six, Lamb Court. If you were to scrape the paint off the lintel of that battered door as carefully as if you were cleaning a Titian, I should not be at all surprised if you came upon the name

of "Mr. George Warrington," and under it that of "Mr. Arthur Pendennis." Here, you may recollect, Pen was taken ill; here he was found delirious by Captain Costigan; and here he was faithfully and lovingly nursed by sweet little Fanny Bolton. Here came kind-hearted Doctor Good-enough; and here, subsequently, came Pen's mother, Miss Laura, and the major. And then poor little Fanny was used somewhat hardly; the loving little creature, who had saved his life with her touching care and devotion, was treated with scorn and contumely when the family came down in all their glory of overpowering respectability. The tender little nurse was turned out of doors when there was no further occasion for her services; and when "the family" were making merry over the convalescence of her hero, a poor pale little girl in a black bonnet used to stand at the lamp-post in Lamb Court, looking up at the windows, listening to the music, and weeping.

Up this staircase, too, if my recollection serves me, came dear old Colonel Newcome and Clive, came also Pidgeon, came that tiresome Mr. Bows one Sunday evening, came innumerable printer's devils, came Mr. Finucane, came Mrs. Flanagan the laundress, and Morgan the valet. If you descend to the floor below, and proceed to flay the door in a similar fashion to the one you have just now operated upon, I should not be surprised if your labours were rewarded by coming upon the name of "Mr. Percy Sibright," and "Mr. Bangham." It was these gentlemen's chambers, if you remember, that were devoted to Miss Laura's use during Arthur's illness. Here she amused herself with inspecting Mr. Sibright's rows of boots, his museum of scent and pomatum pots, his gallery of female beauty, and his miscellaneous collection of books. Here it was whispered she once read a certain fashionable French novel, and here she positively had the temerity to take Mr. Percy's wig out of the box, place it over her own pretty locks, and laughingly gaze at herself in the glass. It would be difficult to find any part of the Temple more pleasantly haunted than this dingy old staircase.

A mellow light, a subdued hum of conversation, in some chambers on the first-floor within earshot of the fountain, irresistibly recalls to my mind a marvellous dinner which Mr. "Original" Walker talks of having given once upon a time in the Temple. The dinner was marvellous

in respect of being simple and, in its way, perfect. He tells us he began with spring soup from Birch's in Cornhill, then a moderate-sized turbot, with excellent lobster-sauce, cucumber, and new potatoes. This was followed by ribs of beef from Leadenhall Market, roasted to a turn and smoking hot from the spit, French beans, and salad. Then came a dressed crab, and finally some jelly. The dessert was oranges and biscuits, with "occasional introductions" of anchovy toast; and the wines were champagne, port, and claret. The number who sat down were six; they were all of great experience as diners-out, and professed to be absolutely charmed with the banquet. The great charm of the whole affair was not only its absence of ostentation, but everything being of the best quality, and the cooking perfection. He speaks of the cooking having been done by a Temple laundress, and the admirable way in which it was accomplished. I fear laundresses must have deteriorated very much since Mr. Original Walker's time, and I think there are but very few within the precinct who could accomplish any triumph of culinary art in the present day.

Another thing with regard to this dinner was, that the guests were chosen with as much care and with as much thought for harmony as the food and the drink. A most important fact which most dinner-givers overlook. His idea of an invitation was excellent. He said he should issue it thus: "Can you dine with me to-morrow? I shall have herrings, hashed mutton, and cranberry tart. My fishmonger sends me word herrings are just now in perfection, and I have some delicious mutton, in hashing which I shall direct my cook to exercise all her art. I intend the party not to exceed six, and observe, we shall sit down to dinner at half-past seven. I am asking as follows——" This invitation is, in its way, perfect. You know what you are going to eat, and whom you are going to meet, and you can accept or decline, as seems good unto you. Nowadays, you never know what you are going to have for dinner; and the chances are you may find yourself seated with your bitterest enemy on one side, and the greatest bore in London on the other. I must not trust myself to say much about Temple banquets. I could tell you of a wonderful Christmas party that Jack Coniston and his wife gave, long before he came into his property and they moved to Onslow Square; I

could tell you of a certain bachelor who was invaded one afternoon by an army of sisters and cousins, who clamoured for afternoon tea; and I could write you a poem concerning a wonderful steak and flowery potatoes, perfectly cooked by one of the prettiest girls you could wish to behold at her brother's chambers one day when I dropped in unexpectedly to luncheon. I recollect we all went to see Ours at the Prince of Wales's in the evening, and laughed tremendously over the famous pudding-making scene.

There is one especial set of rooms over in King's Bench Walk that is haunted with a thousand and one pleasant recollections. Here dwelt one of my dearest friends, and here have we often sat and talked and laughed into the small hours. I could tell of a many pleasant evenings, and not a few makeshift bohemian dinners. We were a merry crew in those days; the cabmen knew those chambers better than any in the Temple; the policeman knew them, for he had the pleasure of drinking the proprietor's health not a few times; so did Prosser's men; so did the expert waiters from The Rainbow; so did the active and intelligent gentlemen in white aprons, who look like retired bankers, or unfrocked rural deans with a taste for sporting. If I began to write the history of these chambers I should have no room for anything else; so with countless joyous reminiscences jostling one another and clamouring to be chronicled, I will pick out one which seems to me to be especially charming. It was in the middle of June, after the opera. I forget what the opera was, but it was a long one, and it was over late. We had difficulty in getting cabs, but we had all determined to go down to King's Bench Walk to supper. Some, I believe, walked down; three or four cabs discharged their cargoes at the Inner Temple Gate; and the night-porter was considerably astonished—it takes a good deal to astonish a Temple porter, I can tell you—at the apparition of ladies in light dresses and without bonnets, gentlemen in evening dress, trooping through the gateway.

It was great fun, and the newly-married couple who came to play propriety enjoyed the affair as much as anybody. How the corks popped, how musical was the laughter, and how quickly the time sped away! There were some good songs sung that night, and there is a sweet voice that carolled an exquisite ballad in a minor

key that even now comes back and haunts me in dreams. At last someone says it is getting light. I have seen the blinds getting bluer and bluer for the last half hour. The blinds are drawn up, the windows are thrown open, the fresh air is wafted in, bringing with it a scent of lilac and new-mown hay. The sun is rising; we can see its reflection in the barely cold lamps on Waterloo Bridge, its gleams on the Embankment, and its glow on the grand old river. The sparrows are just beginning to twitter, and every moment the grey of dawn is giving way before the rose of sunrise. It is indescribably beautiful. At last we break up. There is hunting for wraps and shawls. I find my gibus, and get away first, for I am somewhat sad at heart. When I get outside, I hear my name called, I look up, and see the belle of the evening leaning out of the window, and looking, in the sweet morning light, just like a picture by Leslie. I see she plucks something from her hair and flings it down. A rose falls at my feet. I pick it up, and hear a sweet musical laugh. I hear a voice singing, "Dreaming by night, dreaming by day." So clear is the morning and so still that I can hear this right across the Temple till I turn into my own rooms. I can scarcely tell whether the effect is tenderly sorrowful or touchingly sweet; perhaps it is a little of both. "Ah, my brethren!" I say aloud, to the great astonishment of a policeman, who stands blinking in the sunshine; "we are all dreaming by day as well as by night, and so it will continue to the end of the chapter."

There is, after all, no part of the Haunted Precinct so pleasantly haunted as that of Fountain Court. It is haunted in the day, in the sweet summer time, in the brilliant sunshine, when the leaves are greenest and the breezes are softest, when the musical plash of the fountain and the whispered rustle of the ancient elms is mingled with the subdued roar from the Strand. Do you not recollect how years ago "merrily the fountain leaped and danced, and merrily the smiling dimples twinkled and expanded more and more, until they broke into a laugh against the basin's rim and vanished." Do you not recollect this? Of course you do. Here came honest simple-minded Tom Pinch, on his way to his occupation of arranging and cataloguing a library in those mysterious chambers, and here would come his sweet little sister Ruth to meet

him when his day's work was done. Here came courteous John Westlock by the merest chance, quite by accident. Here he met, also by the merest chance and quite by accident, Miss Ruth Pinch alone one day. And here—but of course everyone knows of that sweet little bit of love-making, so skilfully drawn, so delicately touched, and so admirably pictured, with the sweet musical accompaniment of the plashing fountain. I never pass through the court but what I think of this tender little idyll.

I wonder whether it occurs to that youth who is sitting on the bench smoking a very short pipe and reading a penny newspaper; or to the man who is dawdling with a pile of tin covers and a green baize cloth; or to the nursemaid whose attention seems divided between a swollen baby, some needlework, and the 'Apenny' Orrer; or to the stalwart official in uniform and a Crimean medal; or to the misanthropic jack, that sulks in the basin from one year's end to the other; or to the impudent boy-clerk from Sniggleby and Danglefish's? I daresay not.

Fountain Court is not so quaint, so umbrageous, so behind the age, as it was ten years ago. They have cut down trees, they have removed some particularly picturesque and curved steps, they have abolished the ancient railings, and they have given a spick and span, somewhat tea-gardening aspect to the place. The benchers have done all this and a great deal more; but they cannot plane out of existence the pleasant reminiscences of this quaint little corner. "The chirping sparrows, bred in Temple chinks and crannies, might have held their peace to listen to imaginary skylarks as so fresh a little creature passed; the dingy boughs, unused to droop otherwise than in their puny growth, might have bent down in a kindred gracefulness, to shed their benediction on her graceful head; old love-letters, shut up in iron boxes in the neighbouring offices, and made of no account among the heaps of family papers into which they had strayed, and of which in their degeneracy they formed a part, might have stirred and fluttered with a moment's recollection of their ancient tenderness as she went lightly by." Notwithstanding all the alterations and innovations by that modern demon Improvement, the Temple fountain still babbles pleasantly of the good old days of long ago, it still sparkles in the sunshine, and its surroundings are still

haunted by the gentle spirit of sweet little Bath.

The Temple Gardens have been so much altered these last few years; so many shrubs have been uprooted; there has been such a straightening of paths, and such a removal of quaint seats and odd corners; that by daylight the spirits of the old time delight not to lounge in this pleasure as of yore. If, however, you are able to wander there after dark—as I have done many a time—you will find that the mantle of the night casts a rare halo of romance around the old gardens. One might almost then call back the days when the Temple Gardens were a fashionable promenade in the evening; when the leading counsel used to walk up and down by the side of the Thames; when cocked hats, ruffles, satin breeches, and silk stockings were worn; when there would be peals of laughter following the good things said by the stumpy little Lord Erskine; when there was a joviality, a heartiness, a good fellowship among the profession that one seeks in vain for at the present day. Drifting in imagination farther back, drifting back more than two centuries, we find that the hilarity and conviviality of the Templars was of the most unbounded description. Evelyn, who was elected one of the comptrollers of the revels of the Middle Temple, thus wrote: "Went to see the revelles at the Middle Temple, which is an old, but riotous custom, and hath relation neither to virtue or policy." Probably he would think just the same with regard to a call-party in the present day.

In the days of Queen Anne there was a rookery, a great glory to these gardens, which was organised by Sir Edward Northey. Leigh Hunt comments upon the fitness of this establishment. He says: "The rook is a grave legal bird, both in his coat and habits; living in communities, yet to himself, and strongly addicted to discussions of meum and tuum." Not long ago I saw two grave old rooks, one with a white feather, strutting about the lawn, swinging in the trees under King's Bench Walk, and cawing and shaking their heads very ominously. Possibly they thought, as there is a rage just now for Queen Anne architecture and Queen Anne furniture, there might be an opening for a well-organised Queen Anne rookery. I saw these two old birds in grave consultation one or two mornings; since then they

have disappeared altogether. I suppose they could not make any satisfactory arrangements, and were unable to float the company after all. Anyway, the sparrows have had it all to themselves ever since, and the Temple sparrows, I should tell you, are the most friendly, the most impudent, and the plumpest birds of their kind you ever saw. Why the benchers of the Lamb and Flag and their brethren of the Winged Horse do not make sparrow-pudding one of their great dishes on high days and holidays, I fail to understand.

And, after all, I am inclined to think that the chambers in which I am now writing are possibly quite as much haunted as any part I have been talking about. So closely are they haunted, so thickly are they peopled with spirits of past pleasures, so densely are they filled with the ghosts of dead banquets: such an echo of past laughter, such a ring of bygone song still clings to them, that it is difficult to say whether pleasure or pain would predominate in its chronicle. And what pen could chronicle it? And would it be worth while to chronicle it if it could? Who shall tell of the brave boys who have trolled out the merry song beneath this roof-tree? Who can tell of the good men and true who have belaboured the oak? Who can remember half the good stories that have been told as the smoke wreathed up and the fun was kept going till the small hours were getting larger, and till the "accusing splendour of the morn" sent the goodly company laughing down the grim old staircase? Is the world changed? Is there no more fun, laughter, truth, and good fellowship? A former proprietor of these rooms, many years ago, used to wear a pigtail, and dressed in a sage-green coat and black-silk small-clothes; he was a great connoisseur in port-wine, and might be seen passing sometimes from the adjoining chambers, where he had his cellar, with a fine old cobwebby bottle, carefully nursed in a basket. People say this phantom may be occasionally seen on my landing in the present day. I confess I have never seen it. My chambers are, nevertheless, haunted. How? Well, it was at one of those chrysanthemum luncheons that bachelors are expected to give from time to time. She was among the company. I can see her now; the sweetest little Gainsborough face you could wish to behold—fathomless brown eyes that seemed the essence of truth. How charming she

looked in her dark velveteen, her otter-skin jacket, and her quaint little hat! Her chaperon, a charming married woman, behaved admirably; for they stayed long after luncheon, till the twilight was deepening, till the fire was burning red, till gloom gave a glory to glow. And then? Ah, well! it is a long tale, and I daresay will not interest you. I have half-a-dozen portraits of her in that drawer; that clever water-colour landscape on the wall is her work; there is the old piano which she laughed at for being so "tin-kettly," but from which, nevertheless, she managed to evoke an excellent accompaniment to a sweet song; there is the sketch by John Leech that amused her so much; there is the ancient chair she sat in, the carved cabinet she admired, and the Venetian mirror that reflected her pretty face. And here is the old room, with its prints, pictures, curios, and rubbish, looking much the same as it ever did. But the pretty girl, with the Gainsborough face and the fathomless brown eyes, where is she?

I have been writing till I am tired. I pull up the blind and look out to see what sort of a night it is. It is still wild and wet; the wind is blowing in angry gusts, and the rain is beating in angry spirits against the panes, the pavement is wet and glistening, the lamps are flickering, the window-frames are chattering, and the whole place is creaking and banging and hammering like a ship in a storm! There is a faint light in Pip's chambers, but there is no one below on the pavement or going in at the entrance. The night is too wet even for Magwitch or for Old Orlick. I pull down the blind, and dismiss them from my imagination. I drop my pen, and sit down by the dying fire, thinking somewhat sadly that my own chambers are more effectually haunted than any other portion of the Haunted Precinct.

THE OLD FRENCH STAGE.

MADemoiselle GAUSSIN.

It is not always advisable to investigate too closely so delicate a subject as the origin and parentage of theatrical princesses; the result of such indiscreet curiosity being more frequently productive of disappointment than gratification. We are loth to disturb the illusions created by our fancy, and instinctively shrink from exchanging these pleasant vagaries for the disenchantments of reality. Where, however, as in the instance now before

us, the existence of positive and strictly authentic details inexorably debars us from indulging in conjectural suppositions, we are bound, in our capacity of conscientious biographer, reluctantly to despoil our heroine of any borrowed plumes with which our imagination may have invested her; and, following the example of the uncompromising Mr. Gradgrind, confine ourselves purely and simply to fact.

Mdlle. Marie Madeleine, then—or, as some pretend, Jeanne Catherine Gaussin—was born in Paris, December 25th, 1711. Her father, Antoine Gaussin or Gaussem, was coachman to the celebrated Baron, and her mother, Jeanne Collot, handmaid to the no less illustrious Adrienne Lecouvreur. Both these great artists officiated as sponsors at her baptism, and, as she grew up, fulfilled their self-imposed duties by contributing largely to the expenses of her education. From her earliest years the youthful Madeleine, as she was usually called, evinced a decided predilection for the stage; and the progressive development of her rare personal attractions and graceful piquancy encouraged her parents to devote her to a profession which she seemed naturally destined to adorn. Her first essays were in a private theatre belonging to the Duc de Gevres at Saint-Ouen, and the promise there held out by the young actress procured her at the age of seventeen an engagement at Lille, where she became a general favourite, and was already cited as a model representative of the leading characters in juvenile tragedy and comedy. Eighteen months later, April 28th, 1731, she appeared at the Théâtre Français as Junie in Britannicus, and so charmed the audience that the performance was repeated, contrary to custom, on three successive evenings. She subsequently continued her débuts as Chimène, Monime; Andromaque, Iphigénie, and Agnès in l'École des Femmes, crowning the whole by a brilliant display of versatility as vocalist and dancer in Lamotte's *Italie Galante*. On July 24th she played Chimène before the Court at Fontainebleau, and four days after was received a member of the society. So greatly superior, indeed, was she considered in every respect to Mdlle. Labat, who had played the same line of parts for the last ten years, that the latter, finding her attractive powers totally eclipsed by those of her gifted rival, retired from the stage at the close of the theatrical season in 1733.

The reputation of Mdlle. Gaussin may be said to have fairly commenced on August 13th, 1732, the date of the first performance of Voltaire's *Zaire*, in which tragedy she had been entrusted by the author with the character of the heroine. From that evening her claim to be ranked among the most promising of contemporary actresses was universally recognised, and none were more enthusiastic in her praise than the celebrated writer, whose latest dramatic conception she had personified with such exquisite tenderness and grace. His admiration of her beauty and talent is happily expressed in the following lines, addressed to her immediately after her creation of *Zaire*:

Jeanne Gaussin, reçois mon tendre hommage,
Reçois mes vers au théâtre applaudis;
Protège-les, *Zaire* est ton ouvrage,
Il est à toi, puisque tu l'embellis.
Ce sont tes yeux, ces yeux si pleins de charmes,
Qui du critique ont fait tomber les armes;
Ton seul aspect adoucit les censeurs.
L'illusion, cette reine des cœurs,
Marche à ta suite, inspire les alarmes,
Le sentiment, les regrets, les douleurs,
Le doux plaisir de répandre les larmes.
Le Dieu des vers qu'on allait dédaigner
Est par ta voix aujourd'hui sûr de plaire;
Le Dieu d'amour à qui tu fus plus chère
Est par tes yeux bien plus sûr de régner.

Car le prophète de la Mecque
Dans son sérail n'a jamais eu
Si gentille Arabe que on Grecque.
Son œil noir, tendre et bien fendu,
Sa voix et sa grâce intrinsèque
Ont mon ouvrage défendu
Contre l'auditeur qui rebrique;
Mais quand l'auditeur morfondu
L'aura dans sa bibliothèque,
Tout mon honneur sera perdu.

A similar tribute of homage was subsequently offered her by the poet on her performance of *Alzire*, and his example was imitated by the majority of those whose works were mainly indebted to her for their success; but their efforts, although eulogistic in the extreme, seldom rise above mediocrity, and fall far short of the graceful and facile versification which invariably distinguishes the muse of Voltaire.

During the thirty years of her artistic career, the principal tragic characters originally played by Mdlle. Gaussin, besides the two already mentioned, were *Adelaide* in Piron's *Gustave*, *Irène* in Mahomet the Second, *Andromaque* in *Les Troyennes*, and *Briscis* in Poinset de Sivry's tragedy of that name; several others less suited to the nature of her talent were, to her great regret, entrusted by their authors to Mdlle. Clairon, and among these may be particularly instanced *Arétie* in Marmontel's *Denis le Tyran*. A very curious

passage in the memoirs of this prolific writer gives a detailed account of the reasons which induced him to resist the solicitations of the charming Madeleine, and confide the much coveted part to her haughty and energetic rival; and containing, as it does, a sufficiently minute description of our heroine, may be appropriately inserted here:

"When I obtained from the comedians the privilege of a free admission to the theatre, the most untiring advocate in my behalf was Mdlle. Gaussin. Her line of parts was the young princesses, and no one excelled her in the delineation of characters requiring a natural sensibility and touching naïveté. Endowed with rare personal beauty, with a voice of the sweetest and most sympathetic tone, and an enchanting expression of countenance, she realised the line addressed by Orosmane to Zaire:

L'art n'est pas fait pour toi; tu n'en as pas besoin.

With all these qualities, however, the possession of which rendered her so deservedly a favourite, she was incapable, from her lack of passion and physical force, of adequately embodying those strictly tragic conceptions demanding unusual energy; and that very voluptuous softness, so admirably adapted to the personation of love-sick maidens, was exactly the opposite of the ideal I had endeavoured to depict in my heroine. She earnestly wished, nevertheless, to play the part, and had already manifested this desire in a most flattering manner by repeatedly expressing, after each of the two readings of *Denis*, the interest with which both the piece and its author had inspired her. In those days a new tragedy was a comparative rarity, and one which held out reasonable hopes of success especially so; but she had another and a stronger motive in her anxiety to obtain the preference over a rival, whose encroachments on her hitherto unquestioned supremacy had daily become more frequent and more alarming. Mdlle. Clairon, although inferior to her fascinating colleague in feminine charm, was immeasurably her superior in stateliness of figure and majesty of demeanour, and possessed every requisite for the perfect interpretation of such characters as Camille, Didon, and consequently *Arétie*. It was impossible, therefore, for me to hesitate between the two; and notwithstanding my regret at being forced to disoblige one of the fair

claimants, I felt bound to offer the part to the other.

"Gaussin was deeply mortified by my decision, and did not scruple to hint—I need hardly say without foundation—that Clairon had used every species of seduction in order to influence me. Clairon, hearing this, requested me to accompany her to her rival's dressing-room in the theatre. 'Mademoiselle,' she said, throwing my manuscript on the table, 'the best proof I can give you that I have not solicited the part is my unalterable determination not to play it unless I receive it from your own hand;' on which she retired, leaving me tête-à-tête with Mdlle. Gaussin.

"My position was embarrassing. The loveliest creature in the world stood before me, her trembling hands clasped in mine, and her eloquent eyes fixed on me with an expression of suppliant reproach. 'What have I done,' she murmured, 'to deserve the pain and humiliation inflicted on me? When you read your piece, no one listened to it with more emotion, no one appreciated its beauties more cordially than I did. I identified myself too completely with the part of *Arétie* not to be certain of rendering it effectively. Why then take it from me? It is mine by right of precedence, and I doubt if it be to your advantage to give it to another. Think well ere you decide; ambitious as I am with respect to my own success, I am not less anxious for yours, and nothing would afford me greater pleasure than to have in some degree contributed to it.'

"I confess that for a moment my resolution was shaken; exposed to the witchery of her pleading accents, I felt as it were spell-bound, and was almost ready to fall at her feet, and at once confess my inability to resist the entreaties of so dangerous a siren, but reflection came to my aid. I felt that my future prospects depended on the success or failure of my piece, and that, in the interest of my children and my own, it was incumbent on me to abide by my original decision, and as far as lay in my power to ensure the co-operation of the only actress on whom, all circumstances considered, I could safely rely. 'Mademoiselle,' I replied, 'had I the good fortune to have written a part like *Iphigénie*, *Zaire*, or *Inès*, I need scarcely say how earnestly I should have implored you to confer on it an additional charm by consenting to be its interpreter. Some day, perhaps, I may hope to enjoy

the privilege of associating my name with yours, and of affording you an opportunity of displaying your inestimable qualities to greater advantage than in *Arétie*. For the present, let her who is willing to run the risk of supporting my first attempt undertake the part; the honour of having voluntarily resigned it will be yours, and——' 'Enough!' she cried, interrupting me in a deeply mortified tone. 'Your wish shall be gratified, and she shall have it.' Then, taking the manuscript from the table where it lay, she hastily left the room, and perceiving *Clairon* in the foyer, delivered into her hand the object of contention. 'I return you,' she said, 'the part which you seem to regard as a certain source of success and glory; I give it back to you without regret, for I think,' she added ironically, 'as you do, that you are far better suited to it than I can pretend to be.'"

All the talent, however, of the great actress failed to infuse vitality into *Marmontel's* soporific production, and in this instance, at least, *Mdlle. Gaussin* had little cause to complain of the preference shown to her rival; her share, moreover, of the standard *répertoire* was sufficiently considerable to enable her in her own particular line to defy competition, and, even at a comparatively advanced period of her life, to stand alone as the acknowledged representative of youthful tragedy. But, whatever laurels she may have gained as an exponent of *Melpomene*, her triumphs in comedy were still more decisive and incontestable; there she reigned supreme, and during her entire theatrical career displayed in an extensively varied range of characters an unchallenged superiority. Among her most effective personations may be mentioned *Lucile* in *Les Dehors Trompeurs*; *Nanine*, *Sophilette* in *La Magie de l'Amour*; and *Lucinde* in *L'Oracle*; she also created *Cénie* in *Madame de Graffigny's* masterpiece, and *Lanoue's Coquette Corrigée*. *Fagan* entrusted her with the principal character in *La Pupille*, and the sensation excited by her in this pleasant little comedy may be imagined from the following lines addressed to her by *Arnaud Bacnard*, the future correspondent of *Frederick the Great*:

En ce jour, pupille adorable,
Que ne suis-je votre tuteur!

Un seul mot, un soupir, un regard enchanteur,
Ce silence éloquent, cet embarras aimable,
Tout m'instruirait de mon bonheur.

Vos yeux, en m'apprenant leur secrète langueur,
M'embraseraient d'une flamme innocente.

Une pupille aussi charmante
Mérite bien le droit de toucher son tuteur!

So extraordinary, moreover, was her versatility that, when it pleased her, as it occasionally did, to put aside the trammels of the legitimate drama, and amuse herself and others by the exhibition of her pantomimic talent, she completely outshone in grace and vivacity the best actresses of the *Comédie Italienne*. She is even said to have more than once assumed the grotesque part of *Cassandre* in the then highly-relished entertainment called *Parades*, and to have rivalled in drollery and smartness of repartee the most popular mountebanks of the *Pont Neuf*.

Contemporary critics vied with each other in extolling the merits of this delightful artist; even *Collé*, by no means an over-partial judge, assenting to the general verdict in her favour. "It is impossible," he says, "that anyone could play better certain parts, such as *l'Oracle* and *La Magie de l'Amour*; though she is forty years old, she hardly appears in them to be more than sixteen. In comedy her voice is soft and sweet; but it has scarcely strength enough for tragedy. Her face is charming, and her manners are imprinted with a natural grace which no woman has ever surpassed. Much as I dislike the sentimental pieces of *La Chaussée* and his imitators, I do not believe that any actress could play them as well as she does."

It is not surprising that the society of so lovely and in every respect so attractive a woman as *Mdlle. Gaussin* should have been courted by a legion of admirers, nor that she should have indulged—perhaps a little too freely—in the dissipation universally prevalent at that period in the French metropolis. Her train of adorers comprised a singular medley of high and low, rich and poor, from the prince to the student, from the capitalist to the struggling playwright; for, to her credit be it said, she was thoroughly disinterested, and, unlike the majority of her colleagues, unhesitatingly sacrificed the most brilliant social and financial advantages to the caprice or fancy of the hour.

The *fermier général*, *Bouret*, had been sincerely attached to her in the days of his prosperity, and in a moment of expansion had signed and delivered to her a paper, which she was at liberty to fill up with whatever sum she chose. Many years after, when he was reduced to comparative poverty, and had entirely forgotten the circumstance, he was surprised one morning by the visit of a notary's

clerk, announcing that he came from Mdlle. Gaussin, and producing the document duly signed by the financier, and containing a single line in the handwriting of the lady, which ran as follows: "I promise to love Gaussin as long as I live. Bouret." On reading these words, the recipient, who in all probability had anticipated a very different claim, was moved, it is said, to tears. "Poor Gaussin," he murmured, "always the same. I remember the last time we dined together at the Porcherons, it was she who paid the reckoning."

Her proverbial inconstancy in matters of sentiment was a constant source of gossip to the Bachaumonts of the day. During a performance of Destouches's *Force du Naturel*, one of the actors, speaking of a young girl personated by Mdlle. Gaussin, had occasion to say:

*C'est un pauvre mouton,
Je crois que de sa vie elle ne dira non.*

This appropriate allusion was hailed with a burst of laughter, in which, slyly remarks the narrator, everyone joined except the Duc de Richelieu, who happened to be present.

Time laid its hand lightly on Mdlle. Gaussin: at fifty years of age, like our own contemporary, Mdlle. Mars, she retained almost unimpaired the charm and graces of her youth, and at fifty-two created her last original part, that of Mariane in Collé's *Dupuis et Desronais*. This comedy was first performed January 17th, 1763; and two months later, March 19th, she finally retired from the stage with a modest pension of fifteen hundred livres. The remaining years of her life were far from happy. She had married in 1759 a dancer, who is reported to have treated her according to the fashion adopted by Sganarelle in the *Médecin malgré lui*. He died in 1765, after having squandered whatever remnant of property she possessed. From that date until her own decease, which took place June 6th, 1767, she lived in strict retirement, and, as one of her biographers touchingly observes, expired not only without the means of bequeathing a single legacy, but, sadder still, without a single friend to whom she might have wished to leave it.

Several portraits exist of Madeleine Gaussin: one by Nattier in the collection of the *Comédie Française* is of doubtful authenticity, and represents her, says Arsène Houssaye, "as a vestal of the

eighteenth century;" another by Drouais is stated to be an excellent likeness. There is also a charming and extremely rare little engraving of her in the character of Constance, by Le Mere, after Cochin the younger, underneath which are inscribed the following lines:

*Quand tu nous peins l'horreur de ton destin affreux,
GAUSSIN, qui ne ressent comme toy les disgrâces;
Mais à tort tu te plains d'être seule en ces lieux,
Car près de toy toujours on aperçoit les Grâces.*

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOBY.

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRIFITH'S DOUBLE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXI. WHAT IS IT?

THE spring was abroad in all its tender and hopeful beauty, when Captain Dunstan and his wife came home to Bovis. The place that Janet loved so much wore at that season the aspect she loved best; when the leaves upon the trees were just unfolding their pale tints, and there were breaks and vistas in the plantations not yet filled by the plenitude of the rich robes of the summer. The old English garden was prolific of spring flowers, and of the slender reed-like plants that have a dozen different names in the various English counties, where they are growing scarce, and the beds of lilies of the valley were crowded with the fairy bells and the dark close-wrapping leaves of the purest and sweetest of flowers. There was a pleasant stir of life and expectation about the place, and the house had a brisk air of preparation. Probably, if Captain Dunstan had not himself been little more than a stranger, his marriage with Miss Monroe would not have been so well taken by his neighbours and his dependents; but they all knew more about Janet than they knew about him, and public opinion was almost unanimous in her favour.

Mrs. Manners was in a condition of high importance and self-complacency. She did not approve of bachelor households. Being an exemplary person in her own sphere, she preferred having a lady of the house, who knew when things were properly done, who could appreciate the blessing of a thoroughly good house-keeper, with the active thankfulness by which such a boon ought to be acknowledged, and would not regard it merely with the taken-for-granted air that occasionally tried her patience in the case of Captain Dunstan. Then, she knew the

"ways" of the new lady of Bevis, and they were pleasant and considerate ways. To her household Janet would be welcome, and she was not one to hold such an assurance in light esteem. There was something more than formal attention to orders in the preparations that were made for her, and many little fancies of hers, in the old times, were remembered and carried out in the arrangement of the rooms in the Admiral's Corridor for her occupation; a fact which Mrs. Manners pointed out with much complacency to Mrs. Cathcart and Miss Ainslie, who called at Bevis to ascertain when Captain and Mrs. Dunstan were expected to arrive.

"I never saw the place looking more beautiful," remarked Amabel, as the two ladies stepped out on the stone terrace from the library window; "the very spirit of rest and peace seems to dwell upon it to-day."

They took their way to the Vicarage through the park, talking of Janet, and speculating as to whether they should find her changed at all by her introduction to the world of which she had previously known nothing.

"One can never tell by letters," said Amabel, "unless they're the letters of somebody with a special talent for writing them, which Janet hasn't; but I cannot help thinking she is more bewildered than pleased by Paris. She will get on better next time she goes there."

"I fancy she will stay at home a good deal. Janet will not get into fashionable ways, depend upon it."

"She will do whatever Captain Dunstan likes, and he will be bored at Bevis."

"Amabel, you don't like him. Why?"

"Yes, I do. I like him well enough, but I think of him now exactly as I have always thought of him, and I am afraid Janet will not find me half enthusiastic enough about her husband."

"Don't distress yourself, my dear," said Mrs. Cathcart dryly, and with an air of matronly superiority which she occasionally assumed when she thought Amabel would be the better for a little snubbing; "Janet will not want anybody to be enthusiastic about her husband. Her own enthusiasm will suffice for her, and for him also."

"Oh, I daresay," answered Amabel, quite indifferent to the snub; "but for all that I should not like her to know as well as you do, for instance—that I think she is a million times too good for him,

and a great deal too fond of him. How nice it is to think," she added, with great animation and a sudden change of topic, "that by this time to-morrow we shall have seen her, and in a few days we shall have settled down into the habit of seeing her mistress of Bevis and the happiest woman in the world."

"How delighted the old ladies at Bury House will be!"

"Yes, won't they! And that reminds me to tell you a piece of news. Miss Carmichael is coming to Bury House next week. Janet will be very glad of that. We shall be all—or nearly all—together again."

"Yes, with the exception of Sir Wilfrid Esdaile, and he will come down to Bevis before long, I daresay."

"He cannot, for some time, at all events, for he has gone out to Ceylon again."

"Indeed! When and where did you hear about him?"

"On Monday, when I drove over to Bury. I met that dear Miss Susan at the post-office, and did half an hour's shopping with her. You have no idea what friends we are! She told me all the news, and there is really a good deal of it, in addition to the strictly parochial intelligence with which Miss Susan is always supplied. Julia Carmichael is coming to Bury House; Sir Wilfrid Esdaile has gone to Ceylon; the plantation that Mr. Sandilands—the incomparable nephew of his incomparable aunts—is managing is doing so well that he is much better off, and the marriage is likely to take place in the autumn."

"But not here, I suppose? Miss Carmichael would be married from her uncle's house, would she not?"

"I don't know; nothing is settled yet, I fancy. I promised that I would go and see Julia very soon after her arrival, so I shall hear all about it then."

"It is very soon for her to be at Bury House again. I thought I understood from the dear old ladies that she was not allowed to make them more than one visit in the course of the year, and that this was one of their mild grievances."

"That was the case, but things are all changed, it seems, by the death of Mr. Thornton. You remember he was drowned somewhere in the Mediterranean; and his poor wife—Julia's pretty cousin, whom she used to talk about—came back to England. Julia went to her, and took care of her; she behaved very well indeed, Miss Susan Sandilands says; and then Mrs. Thornton went up to Scotland—to

her husband's place, where his aunt lives, I believe—and now Colonel and Lady Rosa Chumleigh are going to join her there, and so Julia got a little bit of extra leave, and is coming to Bury House.”

“I remember she used to speak very highly of Mr. Thornton. It is a sad story.”

“Sir Wilfrid Esdaile was on board Mr. Thornton's yacht when the accident happened, and he behaved with the greatest kindness to poor Mrs. Thornton; made every arrangement for her, and came back as far as Paris with her and Julia.”

“I wonder whether he saw Janet there? She did not mention him at all in the two letters I have had from her. But of course she did; he would be sure to see Captain Dunstan.”

“I have no idea,” said Amabel, who would have been glad to know that the friends had met. She had but little hope of this; she believed herself too well acquainted, by force of sympathy, with Sir Wilfrid's feelings, to expect that he had “got over it” to the extent of being able to see Janet just yet, in all the brightness of her bridal happiness.

“The sad story of poor Mr. Thornton,” she added, “is an illustration of the saying about an ill wind, for her cousin's great trouble has had a good effect on Julia's prospects.”

“Indeed! How is that?”

“I wish I could relate the matter to you as Miss Sandilands related it to me,” and Amabel laughed at the recollection. “It was very funny to observe her anxiety to put everybody concerned in the best possible light, and to avoid censuring anyone, though it was quite plain that some blame must attach somewhere. I could not help thinking of Jane Bennet, in *Pride and Prejudice*, when she hits on a happy combination by which it is just possible that Mr. Darcy and Wickham may both be right. Miss Susan's dilemma was this. If Julia was not wrong in keeping the fact of her engagement to Mr. Sandilands concealed from her uncle, because she was afraid of how Lady Rosa Chumleigh would take it, Lady Rosa must be a rather despotic and uncomfortable personage. But far be it from Miss Susan to admit any such evident alternative; and you should have heard her amplifying and explaining, and all the time perfectly inaccessible to the consideration that it could not possibly matter to Lady Rosa Chumleigh what I thought about her

temper, and her “ways” with her family. It all came to this, that the engagement was divulged by Mrs. Thornton, who can do anything just now with her mother, and Lady Rosa took it very well indeed. Mrs. Thornton, and the baby that is coming, and the fortune that depends on the baby, are of paramount importance. Julia may marry whom she pleases, and go to Bury House if she likes. That is the real meaning of it all. Here we are at the gate, and there is his reverence, reproachfully posted at the window, looking for us, and, like Mrs. Gamp, ‘droppin’ for his tea.’”

With her usual acuteness, Amabel, though she was acquainted with Julia Carmichael only, had rightly apprehended the position of affairs at Hunsford. The future was fair enough now before Julia, who, preparing for her return to Bury House after the departure of Lady Rosa and the colonel for Scotland, whither they went at the earnest invitation of Miss Thornton, almost reproached herself that she could feel so happy while the calamity that had stricken Laura was yet so recent. The last words Sir Wilfrid Esdaile had said to her, as he bade her adieu in Paris, were an intimation that he meant to bring John back with him; and now she had not only that to think of, but the unexpected solution of her difficulties with respect to her uncle as well. And besides, there was Janet, sweet, kind, sympathising Janet, she would have returned to Bevis, and it would be delightful to see her, happy, in her beautiful home.

The day came, and the hour, and Janet and her husband arrived at Bevis. The occasion was one of the deepest moment to her, and full not only of the feelings of the present, but of the memories and associations of the past. They reached home late in the afternoon; and as the carriage turned into the avenue, and Janet was acknowledging the bows of the gatekeeper's children, who, with scrupulously clean faces and pinafores, were clustered about the entrance to the lodge, the vicar came towards it.

“Welcome home,” said Mr. Cathcart. “I promised Mrs. Cathcart that I would bring her news of you, and make her congratulations.”

“We shall see you soon,” said Captain Dunstan graciously.

“Certainly; and my wife to-morrow, I suppose. You have been most anxiously looked for, I assure you, Mrs. Dunstan.”

Janet thanked him with a smile; and

they went on, leaving him to a renewed impression of her beauty and grace, but with a notion that there was something changed in her expression. Mr. Cathcart was not enthusiastic, like his wife, about Janet—he was not, indeed, enthusiastic about anything—but he was a quick observer; and the brightness he had often noted of late in Janet's face—a lambent light of the countenance, which no one seeing her could have failed to remark—was certainly there no longer.

The arrangements made for her met with entire approval from Janet, and when she joined her husband in the library before dinner, and he politely hoped she had found all right, she tried very hard to answer as if there had been nothing wanting to this coming home. But he had not gone with her to the rooms that were so familiar and so strange; he had not looked or spoken as though he had the remotest comprehension of her feelings; this coming home might have been to him the taking up his abode in a hotel, or in somebody else's house let furnished. He was perfectly kind; he was faultlessly polite; there was not the smallest objection to be taken to his manner towards his wife. But it was "manner." This was not the first, though it was the most significant occasion on which Janet had felt that between him and herself there was an unacknowledged, incomprehensible barrier. What was it? She asked herself the question with remorseless iteration; she sought the reply in unrelenting self-examination; and resented its evasiveness by unceasing self-reproach. She might have found that reply easily enough, if she had only examined why it was that she could not put the question to Dunstan himself; and, finding it, have exchanged doubt and misgiving for an entire relinquishment of hope. But she did not think of this; she had so little knowledge outside of her own experience to guide her, her single-heartedness was so complete, that she could not divine or dread any cause for the sure and certain blight that had fallen on her, except some fault, some shortcoming, some unfortunate error or deficiency of her own.

Did her husband find fault with her then? No; there had never been a word of dissension between them. No hasty squabbles, no tiffs had come to break the decorous calm of their life together; and if Dunstan had been called upon to name an instance in which Janet

had given him the slightest offence or annoyance, he could not have done so. He would have protested, indeed, that she was incapable of anything which could be found fault with by the most fastidious. And he would have been profoundly amazed had he been told that she was not happy; for he behaved very well to her. He had not been false to the compact he had made with himself when he came to the resolution that the best thing he could do would be to marry Miss Monroe; and Edward Dunstan had a keen sense of the respect and observance due to himself, necessary to the preservation of himself from self-reproach. The fates were indeed against him; the one woman whom he loved—for he never hesitated to say so to himself in his thoughts—he had twice lost; the first time by her marriage, the second by his own; but that was his own trouble, his own deep, bitter, abiding trouble, which, after the fashion of a companion of the kind, not to be routed or shaken off, filled his life with profound ennui. His wife, however, had nothing to do with that—certainly nothing to suffer by it; and Dunstan was untroubled by any misgiving of the excellence of his own conduct. Janet was a more silent person than he had imagined her to be, less easy to amuse; she had not been so much delighted with all she saw in Paris as he expected; on the whole, he fancied her intelligence had been a good deal overrated by her friends; and there was a strange sort of timidity about her at times which he hoped she would get over, for it was decidedly bad form; but she was very good—and—it was no fault of hers! Dunstan felt quite magnanimous when he repeated this to himself, as he frequently did, and persuaded himself that he was honestly rallying against the consuming ennui, and distaste for his life and surroundings, that had hung about him ever since the passion of regret and reviling of fate into which his interview with Julia drove him had subsided, and under the full influence of which he had come back with his wife to Bevis.

Several times during their stay in Paris there had come over Janet an almost terrifying sense of loneliness and strangeness; one which she had tried to put away from her as we thrust back the phantoms that come to us in the sleepless dark. How should this be, when she had done with strangeness and loneliness for ever; when she was Edward's wife? It was only because she knew nothing of the world he

had lived in, only because she had so little acquaintance with the incidents of his past life, and the persons concerned in them, that now, when they were away from the place with which only she was familiar, they seemed to have no subjects of thought or conversation in common, and there was a distracting kind of newness in all their topics and surroundings. Perhaps it was also because she was so isolated an individual; she had no family stories to tell; there was no taking on of fresh interests, no adding to the ties and charities of life, and her husband seemed to have no curiosity about her. She could not recall a question of his relative to the many things which might be supposed to be of interest when two lives become united and merged for ever. However that might be, Janet, true as steel to the lofty love and the stainless faith that were in her, the life of her life, put the intrusive feeling from her with all her might; he loved her, he had chosen her, she was his wife. Was there not the fulness of joy, of content, of blessedness, of companionship, of home, in the fact? What right had she to admit a misgiving, to listen to a suggestion of want or incompleteness in her life. It would be treason to him, and utter ingratitude if she did so, and she would not, no, she would not. But steadfast as was her will, and strong, there was something stronger still. It was that incomprehensible barrier that existed between herself and her husband. She blamed herself, wildly and blindly. She felt at times as though it were something that she was striving to tear down with her hands, a prison wall closing upon her; the realisation of the ghastly story of the woman who sat bound while the workmen reared the vault around her, and it rose, layer of stone by layer of stone, from her fettered feet to her shrinking eyes. And this when she had been his wife for but two short months; while the friends who loved her were thinking of her happiness in its first bloom of romance and wonder and beauty, and the external circumstances of her lot had not a flaw in all their harmonious

order! What was it that came thus like a nightmare to sweet sleep, and spoiled it all? Janet was not merely learning the ordinary lesson of human experience, that the worship of a human being is idolatry, and that it involves the sure and certain penalty of that sin. No; there was something more.

Never had that sense of loneliness and strangeness come so strongly to her as on this day, from which of all days it surely ought to have been banished. She was back again in the dear home of the past, and it was her own, the gift to her of the husband she loved; it was to be the scene of their future, the sphere of all her duties, of all her joys, of such sorrows as might, indeed, be in store for her. She ought to be happy, she would be happy, she must be happy.

But Janet was only gay, and that by an effort which Dunstan, had he been thinking at all about her, could not have failed to perceive. She talked more than usual, and sang not quite so well, pleaded fatigue as an excuse for the failure of her voice, and left him early.

A note from Amabel Ainslie lay on Janet's toilet-table, and she took it up eagerly; almost as if in it she should find that true welcome home which somehow she had missed. It was an affectionate little missive, and it did Janet good. Strange that she should feel the need of it just then when all things seemed to be at their very best. Strange that when she stood gazing from the window of the old familiar room, over the old familiar scene, serene and beautiful in the moonlight, the restless question that haunted her rose from her heart to her lips, and she said aloud: "What is it? What is it?"

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXIV. ON HALF RATIONS.

CAPTAIN WINSTANLEY entered upon his new position with a fixed determination to make the best of it, and with a very clear view of its advantages and disadvantages. For seven years he was to be master of everything—or his wife was to be mistress, which, in his mind, was exactly the same. No one could question his use of the entire income arising from Squire Tempest's estates during that period. When Violet came of age—on her twenty-fifth birthday—the estates were to be passed over to her in toto; but there was not a word in the squire's will as to the income arising during her minority. Nor had the squire made any provision in the event of his daughter's marriage. If Violet were to marry to-morrow, she would go to her husband penniless. He would not touch a sixpence of her fortune till she was twenty-five. If she were to die during her minority the estate would revert to her mother.

It was a very nice estate, taken as a sample of a country squire's possessions. Besides the New Forest property, there were farms in Wiltshire and Dorsetshire; the whole yielding an income of between five and six thousand a year. With such a revenue, and the Abbey House and all its belongings rent-free, Captain Winstanley felt himself in a land of Canaan. But then there was the edict that seven years hence he was to go forth from this land of milk and honey, or, at any rate, was to find himself living at the Abbey House

on a sorely restricted income. Fifteen hundred a year in such a house would mean genteel beggary, he told himself despondently. And even this genteel beggary would be contingent on his wife's life. Her death would rob him of every-thing.

He had a mind given to calculation, and he entered upon the closest calculations as to his future. He meant to enjoy life, of course. He had always done that to the best of his ability. But he saw that the chief duty he owed to himself was to save money; to lay by against the evil inevitable day when Violet Tempest would despoil him of power and wealth. The only way to do this was by the cutting down of present expenses, and an immediate narrowing of the lines on which the Abbey House was being conducted; for the captain had discovered that his wife, who was the most careless and incompetent of women as regards money matters, had been spending the whole of her income since her husband's death. If she had not spent her money on society, she had spent it on travelling, on lace, on old china, on dress, on hot-house flowers; on a stable which was three times larger than she could possibly require; on a household in which there were a good many more cats than were wanted to catch mice; on bounties and charities that were given upon no principle, not even from inclination, but only because Squire Tempest's widow had never been able to say no.

Captain Winstanley's first retrenchment had been the sale of Bullfinch, for which noble animal Lord Mallow, a young Irish viscount, had given a cheque for three hundred guineas. This money the captain put on deposit at his bankers, by way of a

nest-egg. He meant it to grow into something worth investing before those seven fat years were half gone.

He told his wife his views on the financial question one morning when they were breakfasting tête-à-tête in the library, where the squire and his family had always dined when there was no company. Captain and Mrs. Winstanley generally had the privilege of breakfasting alone, as Violet was up and away before her mother appeared. The captain also was an early riser, and had done half his day's work before he sat down to the luxurious ten o'clock breakfast with his wife.

"I have been thinking of your ponies, pet," he said, in a pleasant voice, half careless, half caressing, as he helped himself to a salmon cutlet. "Don't you think it would be a very wise thing to get rid of them?"

"Oh, Conrad!" cried his wife, letting the water from the urn overflow the teapot in her astonishment; "you can't mean that! Part with my ponies?"

"My dear love, how often do you drive them in a twelvemonth?"

"Not very often, perhaps. I have felt rather nervous driving lately—carts and great waggon-loads of hay come out upon one so suddenly from cross-roads. I don't think the waggons would care a bit if one were killed. But I am very fond of my grey ponies. They are so pretty. They have quite Arabian heads. Colonel Carteret says so, and he has been in Arabia."

"But, my dear Pamela, do you think it worth while keeping a pair of ponies because they are pretty, and because Colonel Carteret, who knows about as much of a horse as I do of a Megalosaurus, says they have Arabian heads? Have you ever calculated what those ponies cost you?"

"No, Conrad; I should hate myself if I were always calculating the cost of things."

"Yes; that's all very well in the abstract. But if you are inclined to waste money, it's just as well to know how much you are wasting. Those ponies are costing you at the least a hundred and fifty pounds a year, for you could manage with a man less in the stables if you hadn't got them."

"That's a good deal of money certainly," said Mrs. Winstanley, who hated driving, and had only driven her ponies because other people in her position drove ponies, and she felt it was a right thing to do.

Still the idea of parting with anything

that appertained to her state wounded her deeply.

"I can't see why we should worry ourselves about the cost of the stables," she said; "they have gone on in the same way ever since I was married. Why should things be different now?"

"Don't you see that you have the future to consider, Pamela. This handsome income which you are spending so lavishly——"

"Edward never accused me of extravagance," interjected Mrs. Winstanley tearfully, "except in lace. He did hint that I was a little extravagant in lace."

"This fine income is to be reduced seven years hence to fifteen hundred a year, an income upon which—with mine added to it—you could not expect to be able to carry on life decently in such a house as this. So you see, Pamela, unless we contrive between us to put by a considerable sum of money before your daughter's majority, we shall be obliged to leave the Abbey House, and live in a much smaller way than we are living now."

"Leave the Abbey House!" cried Mrs. Winstanley with a horrified look. "Conrad, I have lived in this house ever since I was married."

"Am I not aware of that, my dear love? But, all the same, you would have to let this place, and live in a much smaller house, if you had only fifteen hundred a year to live upon."

"It would be too humiliating! At the end of one's life! I should never survive such a degradation."

"It may be prevented if we exercise reasonable economy during the next seven years."

"Sell my ponies then, Conrad; (.) them immediately. Why should we allow them to eat us out of house and home. Frisky shies abominably if she is the least bit fresh, and Peter has gone so far as to lie down in the road when he has had one of his lazy fits."

"But if they are really a source of pleasure to you, my dear Pamela, I should hate myself for selling them," said the captain, seeing he had gained his point.

"They are not a source of pleasure. They have given me some awful frights."

"Then we'll send them up to Tattersall's immediately, with the carriage."

"Violet uses the carriage with Titmouse," objected Mrs. Winstanley. "We could hardly spare the carriage."

"My love, if I part with your ponies

from motives of economy, do you suppose I would keep a pony for your daughter?" said the captain with a grand air. "No; Titmouse must go, of course. That will dispose of a man and a boy in the stables. Violet spends so much of her life on horseback, that she cannot possibly want a pony to drive."

"She is very fond of Titmouse," pleaded the mother.

"She has a tendency to lavish her affections on quadrupeds—a weakness which hardly needs fostering. I shall write to Tattersall about the three ponies this morning; and I shall send up that great raking brown horse Bates rides at the same time. Bates can ride one of my hunters. That will bring down the stable to five horses—my two hunters, Arion, and your pair of carriage horses."

"Five horses," sighed Mrs. Winstanley pensively; "I shall hardly know those great stables with only five horses in them. The dear old place used to look so pretty and so full of life when I was first married, and when the squire used to coax me to go with him on his morning rounds. The horses used to move on one side, and turn their heads so prettily at the sound of his voice—such lovely, sleek, shining creatures, with big intelligent eyes."

"You would be a richer woman if it had not been for those lovely, sleek, shining creatures," said Captain Winstanley. "And now, love, let us go round the gardens, and you will see the difference that young able-bodied gardeners are making in the appearance of the place."

Mrs. Winstanley gave a feeble little sigh as she rose and rang the bell for Pauline. The good old grey-haired gardeners—the men who had seemed to her as much a part of the gardens as the trees that grew in them—these hoary and faithful servants had been cashiered, to make room for two brawny young Scotchmen, whose dialect was as Greek to the mistress of the Abbey House. It wounded her not a little to see these strangers at work in her grounds. It gave an aspect of strangeness to her very life out of doors. She hardly cared to go into her conservatories, or to loiter on her lawn, with those hard unfamiliar eyes looking at her. And it wrung her heart to think of the squire's old servants thrust out in their old age, unpensioned, uncared for. Yet this was a change that had come about with her knowledge, and, seemingly, with her consent. That is to say, the captain had

argued her into a corner, where she stood, like the last forlorn king in a game of draughts, fenced round and hemmed in by opponent kings. She had not the strength of mind to assert herself boldly, and say: "I will not have it so. This injustice shall not be."

A change had come over the spirit of the Abbey House kitchen, which was sorely felt in Beechdale and those half-dozen clusters of cottages within a two-mile radius, which called themselves villages, and all of which had turned to the Abbey House for light and comfort, as the sunflower turns to the sun. Captain Winstanley had set his face against what he called miscellaneous charity. Such things should be done and no other. His wife should subscribe liberally to all properly organised institutions—schools, Dorcas societies, maternity societies, soup kitchens, regulated dole of bread or coals, every form of relief that was given systematically and by line and rule; but the Good Samaritan business, the picking up stray travellers, and paying for their maintenance at inns, was not in the captain's view of charity. Henceforward Mrs. Winstanley's name was to appear with due honour upon all printed subscription-lists, just as it had done when she was Mrs. Tempest, but the glory of the Abbey House kitchen was departed. The beggar and the cadger were no longer sure of a meal. The villagers were no longer to come boldly asking for what they wanted in time of trouble—broth, wine, jelly, for the sick, allowances of new milk, a daily loaf when father was out of work, broken victuals at all times. It was all over. The kitchen doors were to be closed against all intruders.

"My love, I do not wonder that you have spent every sixpence of your income," said Captain Winstanley. "You have been keeping an Irish household. I can fancy an O'Donoghue or a Knight of Glyn living in this kind of way; but I should hardly have expected such utter riot and recklessness in an English gentleman's house."

"I am afraid Trimmer has been rather extravagant," assented Mrs. Winstanley. "I have trusted everything to her entirely, knowing that she is quite devoted to us, poor dear soul."

"She is so devoted, that I should think in another year or so, at the rate she was going, she would have landed you in the bankruptcy court. Her books for the last ten years—I have gone through them carefully—show an expenditure that is

positively ruinous. However, I think I have let her see that her housekeeping must be done upon very different lines in future."

"You made her cry very bitterly, poor thing," said his wife. "Her eyes were quite red when she came out of your study."

"Made her cry!" echoed the captain contemptuously. "She is so fat that the slightest emotion liquefies her. It isn't water, but oil that she sheds when she makes believe to weep."

"She has been a faithful servant to me for the last twenty years," moaned Mrs. Winstanley.

"And she will be a much more faithful servant to you for the next twenty years, if she lives so long. I am not going to send her away. She is an admirable cook, and now she knows that she is not to let your substance run out at the back door, I dare say she will be a fairly good manager. I shall look after her rather sharply, I assure you. I was caterer for our mess three years, and I know pretty well what a household ought to cost per head."

"Oh, Conrad!" cried his wife piteously; "you talk of us as if we were an institution, or a workhouse, or something horrid."

"My love, a man of sense ought to be able to regulate a private establishment, at least as well as a board of thick-headed guardians can regulate a workhouse."

Poor Mrs. Trimmer had left her new master's presence sorely bowed down in spirit. She was so abased that she could only retire to her own snug sitting-room, a panelled parlour, with an ancient ivy-wreathed casement looking into the stable-yard, and indulge herself with what she called "a good cry." It was not until later that she felt equal to communicating her grief to Forbes and Pauline, over the one o'clock dinner.

She had had a passage of arms, which she denominated "a stand further," with the captain; but it appeared that her own stand had been feeble. He had been going over the housekeeping accounts for the last ten years—accounts which neither the squire nor his wife had ever taken the trouble to examine—accounts honestly, but somewhat carelessly and unskillfully made out. There had been an expenditure that was positively scandalous, Captain Winstanley told Mrs. Trimmer.

"If you're dissatisfied, sir, perhaps I'd better go," the old woman said, tremulous

with indignation. "If you think there's anything dishonest in my accounts, I wouldn't sleep under this roof another night, though it's been my home near upon forty year—I was kitchenmaid in old Squire Tempest's time—no, I wouldn't stay another hour not to be doubted."

"I have not questioned your honesty, Trimmer. The accounts are honest enough, I have no doubt, but they show a most unjustifiable waste of money."

"If there's dissatisfaction in your mind, sir, we'd better part. It's always best for both parties. I'm ready to go at an hour's notice, or to stay my month, if it's more convenient to my mistress."

"You are a silly old woman," said the captain. "I don't want you to go. I am not dissatisfied with you, but with the whole system of housekeeping. There has been a great deal too much given away."

"Not a loaf of bread without my mistress's knowledge," cried Trimmer. "I always told Mrs. Tempest every morning who'd been for soup, or wine, or bread—yes, even to broken victuals—the day before. I had her leave and license for all I did. 'I'm not strong enough to see to the poor things myself, Trimmer,' she used to say, 'but I want them cared for. I leave it all to you.'"

"Very well, Trimmer. That kind of thing must cease from this hour. Your mistress will contribute to all the local charities. She will give the vicar an allowance of wine to be distributed by him in urgent cases; but this house will no longer be the village larder—no one is to come to this kitchen for anything."

"What, sir?—not in case of sickness?"

"No. Poor people are always sick. It is their normal state, when there is anything to be got by sickness. There are hospitals and infirmaries for such cases. My house is not to be an infirmary. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir; I understand that everything is to be different from what it was in my late master's time."

"Precisely. Expenses are to be kept within a certain limit. They are not to fluctuate, as they do in these books of yours. You must get rid of two or three women-servants. There are at least three too many. I am always seeing strange faces about upstairs. One might as well live in an hotel. Think it over, Trimmer, and make up your mind as to which you can best spare, and give them a month's

wages, and pack them off. I don't care to have servants about me who are under notice to quit. They always look sulky."

"Is that all, sir?" enquired the house-keeper, drying her angry tears upon her linen apron.

"Well, yes, that is all at present. Stay. What wages has my wife given you?"

"Sixty pounds a year," replied Trimmer, quite prepared to be told that her stipend was to be reduced.

"Then I shall give you seventy."

At this unexpected grace Trimmer began to tremble with an excess of indignation. She saw in this bounty a bribe to meanness.

"Thank you, sir; but I have never asked to have my wages raised, and I am quite contented to remain as I am," she answered with dignity. "Perhaps, if the ways of the house are to be so much altered, I may not feel myself comfortable enough to stay."

"Oh, very well, my good soul; please yourself," replied the captain carelessly; "but remember what I have told you about cadgers and interlopers, and get rid of two or three of those idle young women. I shall examine your house-keeping accounts weekly, and pay all the tradespeople weekly."

"They have not been used to it, sir."

"Then they must get used to it. I shall pay every account weekly—corn-merchant, and all of them. Bring me up your book on Saturday morning at ten, and let me have all other accounts at the same time."

Here was a revolution! Trimmer and Forbes and Pauline sat long over their dinner, talking about the shipwreck of a fine old house."

"I knew that things would be different," said Pauline, "but I didn't think it would be so bad as this. I thought it would be all the other way, and that there'd be grand doings and lots of company. What awful meanness! Not a drop of soup to be given to a poor family; and I suppose, if I ask my aunt and uncle to stop to tea and supper, any-when that they call to ask how I am, it will be against the rules."

"From what I gather, there's not a bite nor a sup to be given to mortal," said Mrs. Trimmer solemnly.

"Well, thank Providence, I can afford to buy a bit of tea and sugar and a quart loaf when a friend drops in," said Pauline, "but the meanness isn't any less disgusting. He'll want her to sell her cast-off dresses

to the secondhand dealers, I shouldn't wonder."

"And he'll be asking for the keys of the cellars, perhaps," said Forbes, "after I've kept them for five-and-twenty years."

THE ORIGIN OF HAMLET.

SHAKESPEARE was wont to build upon foundations laid by other hands. The splendid superstructure was all his own unmistakably—his name was writ large upon it; but it was reared upon borrowed or appropriated materials. In considering his plays, it has been usual to look, not only for their themes pre-existing in certain popular collections of fables or novels, but for a dramatic treatment of such themes by earlier authors. He was a sort of Providence to small, rude, and primitive playwrights, shaping their rough-hewn ends; and assuredly, like that poet's pen he has himself described, giving to "airy nothings, a local habitation and a name."

Shakespeare's tragedy of Hamlet was, without doubt, preceded by a drama dealing with the same subject. In an epistle by Thomas Nash, prefixed to Robert Greene's *Menaphon* published in 1589, allusion is made to a tragedy called Hamlet; and on June 9th, 1594, Henslowe the manager records in his diary a performance of Hamlet by his company in the theatre at Newington Butts. Even then it was an old play, producing only a small receipt in comparison with the profits arising from the representation of new works. Malone, confidently though conjecturally, assigned to Thomas Kyd the Hamlet thus mentioned by Nash and Henslowe. As Mr. Collier says, "it is often alluded to by contemporaries, and there is not a moment's doubt that it was written and acted many years before Shakespeare's tragedy of the same name was produced."

The earliest known edition of Shakespeare's Hamlet is the quarto published in 1603 by Nicholas Ling and John Trundell. The title-page describes the play as a tragical history, "as it hath been divers times acted by his Highnesse servants in the city of London, as also in the two universities of Cambridge and Oxford and elsewhere." In the following year a second quarto edition appeared, "newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect copy." These words imply that the quarto

of 1608 was not printed from a true and perfect copy.*

The only known copy of the novel called *The Hystorie of Hamblet* bears date 1608, and was printed by Richard Bradocke for Thomas Pavier, and sold at his shop in Cornhill. It is believed that there were many previous issues of the book; but no evidence is forthcoming on this head. *The Hystorie of Hamblet* is a rude translation by an unknown hand from the French of Belleforest, who began to publish about 1560, in conjunction with Boaistnau, a series of translations of the Italian novels of *Bandello*; amongst these was the story of *Amleth*. Belleforest gave it the following additional title: *Avec quelle ruse Amleth, qui depuis fut Roy de Dannemarch, vengea la mort de son père Horvendile, occis par Fengon, son frère, et autre occurrence de son histoire.* The novel, it may be added, is founded upon events in the mythical annals of Denmark, narrated by Saxo Grammaticus in the twelfth century.

The period of the story is described as a "long time before the kingdom of Denmark received the faith of Jesus Christ and embraced the doctrine of the Christians;" the common people were barbarous and uncivil, their princes cruel, without faith in loyalty, seeking nothing but to offend and depose each other. King Roderick was then reigning in Denmark, and he had appointed the brothers, Horvendile and Fengon, two valiant and warlike lords, to be joint governors of the province of Jute (Jutland). Horvendile was a famous pirate who had scoured the seas and havens of the north. Challenged to single combat by Collere, king of Norway (the Fortinbras of the play), who is grieved to find himself surpassed in feats of arms, Horvendile slays Collere, buries his adversary in a tomb with all honourable obsequies, and carries away much treasure to King Roderick. The grateful monarch bestows the hand of his daughter Geruth upon the victor. Of the marriage of Horvendile and Geruth is born Hamblet.

Fengon grows jealous of the success of Horvendile, and desires to rule alone in Jute. He secretly assembles a band of men, suddenly sets upon Horvendile while he is banqueting with his friends, and cruelly slays him. Before he had thus committed "parricide upon his brother,"

as the novelist describes the crime, Fengon had secured the illicit love of Geruth, a courteous princess "as any then living in the north parts, and one that had never so much as once offended any of her subjects, either commons or courtiers." Fengon, slandering his victim, gives out that he had interfered to defend Geruth from the blows of Horvendile, who was threatening the life of his consort, and that in the struggle ensuing Horvendile was slain; and false witnesses, the very men who had aided Fengon to murder his brother, depose in support of this story; so that instead of pursuing and punishing the malefactor for his crime, all the courtiers admired and flattered him in his good fortune. Thus encouraged, Fengon ventures to take Geruth to wife, "in that sort spotting his name with a double vice, and charging his conscience with abominable guilt and two-fold impiety."

Meantime Prince Hamblet perceived himself in danger of his life, abandoned of his mother, and forsaken of all men. He was assured that Fengon, apprehensive that if he attained to man's estate he would not long delay to avenge the death of his father, was only looking for an opportunity to murder him. He resolved, therefore, in imitation of Brutus, to counterfeit the madman. This he did with much craft, so that he seemed to have utterly lost his wits; he rent and tore his clothes, wallowing and lying in the dirt and mire, his face all filthy and black, running through the streets like a man distraught, not speaking one word but such as seemed to proceed from madness and mere frenzy, in such sort that he seemed fit for nothing but to make sport to the pages and ruffling courtiers that attended in the court of his uncle and father-in-law. "But the young prince noted them well enough, minding one day to be revenged in such manner that the memory thereof should remain perpetually to the world." And under this veil he "covered his pretence, and defended his life from the treasons and practices of the tyrant his uncle."

Fengon suspects that the insanity of his nephew is assumed, and seeks in various ways to entrap him into a confession that he does but counterfeit madness, subjecting him to some such temptation as good St. Anthony underwent; but Hamblet, receiving timely warning from a friend, avoids betraying himself. It is then proposed to Fengon that he "should make

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, No. 530, p. 138 of the present volume, January 25th, 1879, "Young Shakespeare's Hamlet."

as though he were to go some long voyage concerning affairs of great importance, and that in the meantime Hamlet should be shut up alone in a chamber with his mother, wherein some other should be secretly hidden behind the hangings unknown either to him or to his mother, there to stand and hear their speeches;” Fongon being assured that if there were any point of wisdom and perfect sense in Hamlet’s spirit he would easily discover it to his mother, as being void of all fear that she would betray him. Fongon approves this suggestion, and his counsellor offers to be the man to stand behind the hangings to harken and bear witness of Hamlet’s speeches with his mother. Fongon quits the palace, affecting to go a long voyage, but really proceeds only to hunt in the forest; meantime, the counsellor secretly enters the queen’s chamber and hides himself behind the arras. The queen and her son presently draw near, when Hamlet, doubting some treason, uses his ordinary manner of dissimulation, and begins beating with his arms, as cocks strike with their wings, upon the hangings of the chamber; “whereby,” the novelist continues, “feeling something stirring under them, he cried, ‘A rat! a rat!’ and, drawing his sword, thrust it into the hangings, which done, he pulled the counsellor, half dead, out by the heels, made an end of killing him, and, being slain, cut his body in pieces, which he caused to be boiled and then cast into an open vault, that so it might serve for food to the hogs,” &c. He then in a speech of considerable power, which Mr. Collier suggests may have been supplied by an abler writer, better versed in translation, upbraids Geruth for her sins against his father and himself. “Weep not, madame,” he says, in conclusion, “to see my folly, but rather sigh and lament your own offence, tormenting your conscience in regard of the infamy that hath so defiled the ancient renown and glory that in times past honoured Queen Geruth.” In reply the queen admits that she had wronged her son greatly in marrying Fongon; but pleads as her excuse her small means of resistance, the treason of the palace, and the little confidence she could repose in the courtiers, all wrought to the will of the tyrant. She declares that she had never consented to the murder of Horvendile, swearing by the majesty of the gods that if it had lain in her power to resist the tyrant, although it had been with the

loss of her blood, she would surely have saved the life of her lord and husband, “with as good will and desire,” she protests, addressing Hamlet, “as since that time I have often been a means to hinder and impeach the shortening of thy life, which being taken away, I will no longer live here upon earth, for seeing that thy senses are whole and sound, I am in hope to see an easy means invented for the revenging of thy father’s death.”

Fongon returns, affecting to have been away on a long journey, and asks concerning the man who had engaged to hide behind the hangings and entrap Hamlet. That prince tells him the simple truth—that his spy had been slain, cut up, and eaten by hogs. Fongon, entertaining fears for his own safety, determines to send Hamlet to England, and appoints two faithful ministers to bear him company. These carry “letters engraved on wood” to the King of England, charging him to put Hamlet to death. But being at sea, the subtle Danish prince, while his companions sleep, reads their letters, and learns his uncle’s treason, “with the wicked and villainous minds of the two courtiers that led him to the slaughter.” He accordingly alters the letters, and so contrives that Fongon seems to ask that the two courtiers may be put to death, and, further, that the hand of the King of England’s daughter may be bestowed upon Prince Hamlet.

The novel then deals with matters which find no reflection in the drama. Hamlet discovers the King of England to be the son of a slave, and his queen to be the daughter of a chambermaid; it is agreed, however, that Hamlet shall wed the princess born of this curious union. He affects to be much offended at the death of Fongon’s ministers, but is appeased with a gift of a great sum of gold, which he melts and encloses in two hollow staves. At the end of a year he returns to Denmark, and entering the palace, finds his funeral being celebrated; for all believe him to have died in England. Great “store of liquor” is provided, and drunkenness, described as “a vice common and familiar among the Almaines and other nations inhabiting the north part of the world,” prevails generally. Hamlet, finding so many of his enemies, their “drunken bodies filled with wine, lying like hogs upon the ground,” causes the hangings about the hall to fall down and cover them all over; he then fastens down the hangings with sharp nails, so that none can loose themselves or get

from under them; finally he sets fire to the four corners of the hall, so that all therein are consumed by "the inevitable and merciless flames." Fengon had previously withdrawn to his chamber; Hamlet, with his sword naked in his hand, seeks him there. Fengon endeavours to defend himself, but his sword has been nailed to the scabbard, so that he cannot unsheath it. "As he sought to pull out, Hamlet gave him such a blow upon the chine of the neck that he cut his head clean from his shoulders, and as he fell to the ground said: 'This just and violent death is a first reward for such as thou art; now go thy ways, and when thou comest in hell, see thou forget not to tell thy brother, whom thou traitorously slewest, that it was his son that sent thee thither with the message, to the end that being comforted thereby his soul may rest among the blessed spirits and quit me of the obligation which bound me to pursue his vengeance upon mine own blood.'" Having thus slain his uncle, Hamlet makes an oration to the Danes, explaining to them the wickedness of Fengon, and demanding at their hands "the price of his own virtue and the recompense of his victory." The Danes are much moved, and the affections of the nobility are won; "some wept for pity, others for joy;" with one consent they proclaim him King of Jute and Chersonese.

Here the story of Hamlet might have concluded happily; but further adventures are in store for him. He returns to England to marry the king's daughter. But the king's feelings change towards his son-in-law. It seems that in early times Fengon and the King of England had been friends and companions-in-arms, and had sworn together that if either chanced to be slain by any man whatsoever, his death should surely be avenged by the survivor, who should take the quarrel upon him as his own, and never cease till he had done his best endeavour in the matter. The king desires to accomplish his oath, but without defiling his hands with the blood of his daughter's husband; he is unwilling, moreover, to break the laws of hospitality, or to pollute his house by the traitorous massacre of his friend. He determines, therefore, to make a stranger the avenger of Fengon's death; and, being a widower, sends Hamlet to demand for him the hand in marriage of Hermetrude, the Queen of Scots. Now this Hermetrude was a maid of haughty courage, who despised

marriage, "not esteeming any worthy to be her companion," and, by reason of this arrogant opinion, there never came any man to desire her love but she caused him to lose his life. But on the arrival of Hamlet, regarding him as the greatest prince then living, she determines to make him her husband, and to deprive the English princess of her lawful spouse. She reveals to him that the King of England had with a treacherous motive sent him to Scotland, purposing that he shall there lose his life; altogether she so welcomes and entices Hamlet, kissing and toying with him, that forgetful of the affections of his first wife, he resolves to marry the Queen of Scots, "and so open the way to become king of all Great Britain." His English wife, much distressed at his inconstancy, warns him that her father is seeking means to destroy him, and that Hermetrude will one day surely cause his overthrow. Invited to a banquet by the king on his return to England, Hamlet is in danger of assassination; but he prudently wears armour under his clothes, his friends doing likewise, and so all escape with life. Soon the King of England pays the penalty of his treachery: he is slain by his son-in-law in a pitched battle, and the whole country of England is thereupon, for the third time, overrun and sacked by the barbarians of Denmark and the islands.

But Hamlet's career now draws near its end. Setting sail for Denmark, after his victory, laden with spoil and accompanied by his two wives, he learns that his uncle Wiglere, the son of King Roderick, and the brother of Geruth, had seized upon the kingdom, "saying that neither Horvendile nor any of his held it but by permission, and that it was in him, to whom the property belonged, to give the charge thereof to whom he would." For a time, with rich presents, Hamlet buys peace of Wiglere and his withdrawal from the kingdom. But the treacherous Hermetrude, notwithstanding Hamlet's deep love of her, holds secret communication with Wiglere, promising to marry him if he will but take her out of the hands of her husband. Wiglere thereupon sends to defy Hamlet, and to proclaim open war against him. As the novelist records: "The thing that spoiled this virtuous prince was the over great trust and confidence he had in his wife Hermetrude, and the vehement love he bare unto her, not once repenting the wrong in that case

done to his lawful spouse, and but for which peradventure misfortune had never happened unto him, and it would never have been thought that she whom he loved above all things would have so villainously betrayed him." Hamlet fights a battle with Wiglere; Hermetrude betrays her husband to the enemy; Hamlet is slain, and Hermetrude yields herself with all her dead lord's treasures into the hands of Wiglere, who gives orders for presently celebrating his marriage with his nephew's widow. "Such was the end of Hamlet, son to Horvendile, Prince of Jute; to whom, if his fortune had been equal with his inward and natural gifts, I know not which of the ancient Grecians and Romans had been able to have compared with him for virtue and excellency."

It is "a far cry" from Hamlet, the rude Viking of the early novel, to Shakespeare's Hamlet:

The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers.

But the germs of the tragedy are certainly discoverable in Bandello's story. There are marked and curious resemblances, indeed, between the two productions, for all the dull prose of the one and the divine poetry of the other. But while in the novel may be perceived rough antitypes of Hamlet and Gertrude, Claudius, Fortinbras, Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern, there are no traces of the fair Ophelia, of Laertes, of Horatio, of Osric, and other minor characters. The novel is without mystery or subtlety of any kind; it is plain to baldness, intelligible to the meanest capacity. In it no question arises touching the hero's mental condition; it is made clear that he simulates madness because he believes his own life threatened by the king, quite as much as in order to avenge his father's murder. The antic disposition of Shakespeare's Hamlet is not due to fear of Claudius. The Hamlet of the novel never doubts or hesitates for a moment, and has not the slightest need of a supernatural visitant from the other world to assure him of his uncle's guilt, and prompt him to revenge a foul and most unnatural murder; still less does he require the performance of a troop of players to catch the conscience of the king. The novelist fails to satisfy the demands of poetical justice. Fengon is sufficiently punished, if the circumstances of his doom are rather brutally contrived; but nothing

is told of the fate of Queen Geruth, or of the English princess, Hamlet's first wife; and at the end the wicked Hermetrude is left prosperous and happy in the love of Hamlet's uncle, the victorious Wiglere. It may be only an accident, but it is certainly curious, that the first syllable of Geruth and the last syllable of Hermetrude form the word Gertrude, the name of Shakespeare's queen.

It is possible, of course, that Shakespeare had no direct acquaintance with this prose History of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark; there is no absolute proof that it existed in print before the publication of the first quarto edition of the tragedy, and it is held certain that he did not go straight to Belleforest or Bandello for his materials. Mr. Carew Hazlitt, indeed, suggests that Shakespeare knew nothing of the prose story, and simply resorted "to the earlier drama on the subject, and made the piece what it is out of the inexhaustible resources of his own marvellous mind." But in this earlier drama, attributed to Thomas Kyd, the incidents of the novel, and even certain of its phrases, must assuredly have been employed, or their presence in Shakespeare's tragedy cannot be accounted for. However, the earlier drama by Kyd—if Kyd is to be credited with it—having become extinct, we are left to surmise the extent of Shakespeare's obligations to it, and the amount of poetic invention he grafted upon his original. Kyd, as a dramatist, dealt largely in crimes, atrocities, and horrible catastrophes; to gratify the crowd he did not hesitate to outrage sense and discretion. But he was a skilful writer of blank verse. In this respect, "I am inclined," says Mr. Collier, "among the predecessors of Shakespeare to give Kyd the next place to Marlow." Nevertheless, from what is known of Kyd's plays, there need be little hesitation in ascribing to Shakespeare all or nearly all that is admirable in the tragedy of Hamlet.

It may be noted that Hamlet has been a source of some perplexity to the costumiers of the stage. Is the early period of the story to be assigned to the play? Are Shakespeare's Danes to be regarded as Vikings ignorant of Christianity? Mr. Marshall writes upon this subject: "The period of Hamlet's existence in Saxo Grammaticus is placed about the second century before Christ; but the chronology of Saxo is utterly worthless. As after 794 we have the names of all the kings of Denmark preserved, Hamlet must have

existed, if he really did exist, before then; and as England could not have paid tribute to Denmark before 783, the number of years, arguing from the allusion in the text, within which Hamlet could have existed, is very limited. The fact is, it is utterly impossible to ascertain the exact period of the events in this play; and, therefore, all the attempts that have been made from time to time to secure accuracy in the costumes are mere waste of ingenuity. Any time during the ninth or tenth centuries might be taken, according to fancy; but the spirit of the principal character, and many trifling allusions that occur in the play, would even then strike us as anachronisms." The university of Wittenberg, for instance, was not founded till 1502. The tone of the play throughout pertains to Shakespeare's own time, and originally, of course, the actors assumed costumes of an Elizabethan pattern. Mr. Boaden writes, in his *Life of John Kemble*, 1825: "We have for so many years been accustomed to see Hamlet dressed in the Vandyke costume, that it may be material to state that Mr. Kemble played the part in a modern court dress of rich black velvet with a star on the breast, the garter, and pendant ribbon of an order, mourning sword and buckles, with deep ruffles; the hair in powder, which, in the scenes of feigned distraction, flowed dishevelled in front and over the shoulder." Later Hamlets have worn costumes of an earlier period than Vandyke's, so far as they could be assigned any date whatever; tunics of black velvet, trimmed with bugles; silk stockings; short cloaks; and low-crowned hats or flat bonnets, heavily laden, after a hearse-like fashion, with black ostrich plumes. In his careful and picturesque revival of Hamlet at the Lyceum, in 1864, Mr. Fechter sought to give "an antique Danish colouring" to the tragedy. He retained the blonde wig, the black stuff-dress with ample cloak, he had first donned at the Princess's, in 1861; the scenery represented "massive architecture of the Norman style;" and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern no longer appeared "in that conventional costume which is vaguely associated with the courtiers of Spain or Italy, but were dressed as northern warriors—bluff fellows, with thick beards, coarse leggings, and cross garters; and the other characters were after the same model." Mr. Bellew, reading Hamlet in front of a representation of the tragedy by mute performers, hung the stage with

curtains imitative of the Bayeux Tapestry, and caused the hero to appear as "a princely figure of the tenth century," exhibiting upon his cloak the favourite Danish bird of fate, the raven. "Had I altogether followed my own convictions," explained Mr. Bellew, "I should have preferred the figure of Hamlet entirely dressed in royal purple—the proper colour for kingly mourning—and draped with the 'inky cloak.' It would have been more correct, but perhaps too startling a novelty for the English eye." Mr. Tom Taylor, who, in 1873, produced a version of Hamlet at the Crystal Palace, attired the dramatis personæ in the costume of the thirteenth century, "because," as he writes, "it seemed to me both dignified and picturesque." On the other hand, Mr. Irving has apparently decided, for like reason, in favour of the style of the fifteenth century; and the grace and picturesqueness of the dresses now worn at the Lyceum in Hamlet are quite unquestionable.

AN "ESCROQUERIE."

"I OFTEN wonder," said the old gentleman, when he told me the story, "I often wonder whether there really was any swindling in it or not; and if so, on which side the swindling was. But it was a terrible business anyway."

The narrator was, perhaps, on the whole, the most constant frequenter of the trentet-quarante in the whole of Spielbad-vor-der-Höhe, where my wife and I were then spending a day or two on our way into Switzerland. Indeed, he seemed more at home in the Kursaal than anywhere else, and was on friendly terms, not only with the chefs-de-parti and inspectors, but with pretty nearly every croupier and employé about the place. I won't mention his real name, though few habitués of Spielbad will have much difficulty in guessing it. We used to call him "Socrates;" not from any very specially philosophical tendencies about him, but on account of his domestic arrangements, which were tolerably notorious. When the amiable Madame X. used to make the house in the Unter Promenade too warm to hold him, poor Socrates would come over to the Kursaal in search of peace; and as this happened on the average about twice in every twenty-four hours, the administration made a very good thing out of

Socrates, and, when Madame X. died, no doubt bewailed her loss at least as deeply as most of her acquaintances.

There had been a slight misunderstanding that afternoon at the roulette, owing to an endeavour on the part of one of the "professors" of that noble science to possess himself of my stake, and Socrates, who was standing close by, had come to my rescue. A word from him was of course enough. The professor had already absorbed the disputed coins, and was permitted to retain them; but, at a sign from the inspector to the presiding employé, an equal number were dealt out to me, so all parties were satisfied. I noticed that my late antagonist, who, it appeared, was a new importation from a neighbouring establishment, contented himself with losing a florin or two under the evidently close supervision, not only of both inspectors, but of the chef-de-parti, who, at a look from one of them, had glided quietly behind him, and presently retreated without beat of drum.

There is no doubt a line to be drawn between your professor proper and your escroc. But I am afraid it is rather a thin line, and one of rather wavering tendencies. Wavering, too, I am afraid, in the majority of cases, in relation rather to the amount of temptation than to any higher consideration. In this particular case, for instance, there could have been but very small opening for any bonâ fide error on the professor's part, inasmuch as my new friend Socrates had been watching him, and was quite ready to swear that he had not been playing at all.

"He saw you were new at it, sir," said he, "and thought you would be safe prey. In fact, it was a suspicion of this that made me watch him."

Of course I thanked my new acquaintance, and we soon fell into conversation, the principal part in which naturally turned upon our professional friend and his brethren; a subject, this, in which I soon found that Socrates was well up—as he was, indeed, in every other relating to his favourite tables. One anecdote he told amused me particularly.

There are, of course, various ways in which your escroc will contrive, as occasion offers, to possess himself of the stray property of unwary players. But his best chance is when someone, raking in his winnings in a hurry, or with that undue eagerness on which your beau joneur looks with such supreme contempt, leaves

behind on the table some stray coin which he has overlooked in the scramble, and which the watchful professor promptly marks down as his own. Of course it would not do for him to take it up at once; in the first place, because after all it may have been left intentionally; and in the second, because it would be at once obvious that a stake which had just won could not possibly consist of a single coin. Cases have, indeed, been known in which an enterprising professor has calmly drawn the croupier's attention to the waif on which his affections were set as to a stake which had not yet been paid. But this is the very sublimity of escroquerie, a daring height to be reached but by few. As a rule, your picker-up of these unconsidered trifles will take his chance of leaving them on the table for at least one or two coups; venturing at the utmost no further than just to shift it with his rake, perhaps to some other part of the table, perhaps only to a greater distance from a neighbouring stake. Should this minor assertion of proprietorship draw any remonstrance either from the rightful owner or from any watchful inspector, our cautious friend can still back out with an apology for his inadvertence. Should the manoeuvre escape unnoticed he is of course safe, and has only to wait till the next turn of the cards shall have proved favourable to carry off the double stake for which he has been working so carefully.

It was Socrates who told me a story, which many of the habitués of the tables will no doubt remember, how one day at Spielbad a young Englishman left unheeded on the red, not a mere five-franc piece, or louis even, but a hundred-franc note.

At first our professor—it is, perhaps, the less invidious term—could hardly believe that it was really an oversight, and every moment expected to see the tempting little waif reclaimed. Twice again the rouge came up. The hundred-franc note became four hundred-franc notes, and still the professor, watching it with hungry eyes, could not realise the fact that it was in truth a possible prey. When suddenly the young Englishman threw a mille-franc note upon the black. The professor almost cried aloud with surprise and delight. Even an Englishman would hardly bet on both the red and the black at the same time. The hundred-franc note was a derelict after all.

But now a fresh difficulty presented itself in the very magnitude of the prize. It

was hardly likely that the occurrence should have escaped the notice of the inspectors on duty, one of whom happened unluckily to be the sharpest of the whole staff. Besides—a hundred-franc note! That was the initial stake. Who in the whole room would be persuaded into believing that he, Professor Minimum, had ever been lawfully possessed of even half the sum?

Time flew by as poor M. Minimum vainly cudgelled his brain for some feasible means of appropriating the coveted prize, which every moment seemed more and more certain to escape him. Already another rouge had swelled the amount to eight hundred francs. The series could not last for ever. And yet the only plan he had as yet been able to hit upon presenting even a chance of success was dangerous, if not desperate. It was just possible that the inspector might not have “spotted” the Englishman’s error, while the difficulty as to the amount of the stake might be got over by pretending that the hundred-franc note had been given him to play on someone else’s account. But then suppose they should insist on knowing who that someone else was? They were quite capable of it. Or suppose the inspector had observed the original blunder? Poor M. Minimum stole a furtive glance at the inspector’s face, and felt that on that point, at all events, there was not much doubt.

And yet his fingers itched to handle that little bundle of soiled and crumpled notes. Itched at length so furiously, that he had fairly made up his mind to face the danger, and had actually laid his hand upon a rake wherewith to draw it from the board, when again came the words of fate:

“Le jeu est fait. Rien ne va plus.”

“Un!” The chance is surely gone. At the best, rouge cannot now win this coup, whilst the chances are something like seventy or eighty to one against even the possible redemption of a refait. Poor M. Minimum holds his breath as the second row of cards is dealt; and before it is completed, it seems to him as if he had been holding it the better part of his lifetime. One would think that all the aces and twos and threes in the pack had congregated together for the express purpose of prolonging his suspense. “Twelve—thirteen—fifteen—eighteen—nineteen—twenty-one.” The feeble hope is vanishing with every card that falls. A single high card now, and all is lost. But no.

“Twenty-three—twenty-four—twenty five—twenty-seven—twenty-eight—thirty!” There is but one chance now. Nothing can save him but another ace—the eighth in that single point! Poor M. Minimum shuts his eyes, and as he does so the ace of spades drops upon the board, and amid a buzz of amazement from the galerie the dealer proclaims:

“Un après!” and the eight hundred francs are pushed into the prison of “the line.”

M. Minimum’s mind is made up now. He will run no further risk of seeing those coveted notes, already looked upon as his own property, swept back into the bank. Let them but once get out of prison, and he will claim them at any cost. Nay, he will not even wait for their release. Half of such a loaf as this is better than the no bread which would follow upon an adverse turn of the cards, and M. Minimum’s mouth is already open to declare his option to “partager,” when suddenly a brilliant idea flashes across him, and it shuts again as with a spring. In another moment he is by the Englishman’s side, his hand upon his sleeve.

“Monsieur—monsieur!” he whispers eagerly.

“Hold hard a bit,” replies the Englishman, eagerly busy with his stake on the forthcoming coup; and poor M. Minimum has to fret and fume in vain. There is no audience to be had until the next coup, even now dealing, shall have come off. But our professor’s star is in the ascendant. Another rouge releases the whole eight hundred francs once more, and the Englishman, laughing heartily as another of his mille-franc notes flutters before the croupier’s rake from the black to the bank, turns round at last and demands briskly:

“Well, old chap! And what do you want?”

M. Minimum confounds himself in apologies; but would monsieur be so gentil as to do him one little favour?

“All right, old chap. What is it?”

Well; monsieur will pardon M. Minimum, but—perhaps monsieur is himself married? Not monsieur, he thanks goodness. Nor does not want to be yet.

Ah, well; but that is equal. Monsieur is very gentil, and can sympathise. The fact is that he—M. Minimum—has promised his wife never to play again. What will you? They are exacting, these poor little women. And now behold Madame Minimum, who comes from entering the

room, and if he dares but to remove his money, son Dieu! but she will make him a scene.

Very likely, the Englishman thinks. But, by Jove! how can he help that, you know?

And then M. Minimum tells him how he can help it. Which is simply by withdrawing the eight hundred francs as if they were his own, and handing them over to M. Minimum by-and-by on the terrace outside.

Oh, yes. Monsieur will be happy to do that. And the next moment the inspector, astonished at seeing the oblivious Englishman suddenly reclaim his long-neglected property, and walk off with it in his pocket, asks himself wonderingly what possible access of honesty can have come over M. Minimum, who, you may depend upon it, is not long in giving the slip to the imaginary Madame M., and appearing upon the terrace to touch his well-earned prize.

"And now," said my new acquaintance, when I had at length done laughing over M. Minimum's successful coup, "let me tell you that other story, which did not end by any means so satisfactorily, and about the true history of which I have not, as I said, even yet been able to make up my mind.

"M. Dorien had been through life, if his account of himself to me could be trusted, an unlucky man. Perhaps his account was not to be trusted. Certainly the chef-de-parti, when I happened casually to mention the subject, shrugged his shoulders and charged me to beware of escrocs. Dick Thornton, too, who, though rather a harum-scarum fellow, had—or was supposed to have, I never quite knew which—some insight into character, laughed loudly at M. Dorien, whom he christened 'Dismal Jemmy.' I'm not very brilliant myself, and don't pretend to know. But it certainly seems to me that, if he were an impostor, it was rather an unfortunate line to take for a man whose livelihood, such as it was, was earned solely by placing his luck at the service of other people.

"Sometimes I used to fancy that his misfortunes, if they existed, might be traced, to some extent, to this very cause. It had its compensations, no doubt. In my own brief acquaintance with him I can recall more than one instance in which tender-hearted people have been so struck with the tale of his ill-fortune, that they

have, simply on that account, risked in his hands money they would not otherwise have thought of employing in that way. But, on the whole, I can't help thinking that, if a man be unlucky, the less he says about his ill-luck the better. It may be, of course, because I am dull; but I know that if I wanted anyone to play for me—which I don't—I certainly should not employ a man who told me beforehand that he was quite sure to lose.

"M. Dorien, however, seemed to wear his heart upon his sleeve. I don't know whether he confided his private history to everyone as he confided it to me. Indeed, I don't think he did, if only for the reason that few people would have been weak enough to submit to being bored by the confidence. Perhaps, when he thought it politic, he told a different story. I often wish that I had not been so foolishly punctilious, and had compared notes a little with other people. But in what few enquiries I did make, I must say that, though I often found points in the story as told to me which were quite new even to those who fancied they knew all about M. Dorien, I never yet happened to mention one which met with anything like a downright contradiction.

"And a melancholy story it was, false or true. According to it M. Dorien had begun life with fair prospects enough, which had gradually vanished one by one, not by any fault of his own, but through sheer ill-luck. His father had been connected in some way with the Paris press, and, young Dorien himself being a lad of considerable promise, had had no difficulty in securing for him an opening, which, could he but have followed it up, would almost certainly have ensured him both money and fame. But the boy was not strong; the father, himself a man of iron constitution, not even yet broken by more than fifty years of unlimited work and almost equally unlimited absinthe, was quite unable to comprehend the possibility of not having bequeathed that constitution to his son altogether unimpaired; and the result for young Dorien at eighteen years of age was a brain fever, which, though not permanently affecting his intellect, at all events visibly, left the brain quite unable to bear any serious strain, and put a final period to his brilliant prospects on the staff of the Portefeuille. Very shortly after his father's iron constitution snapped suddenly, as iron things will under too severe a strain, and Pierre Dorien was left

at nineteen to do the best he could with the twelve thousand francs that were left behind. And, on the whole, his death seemed at first less unfortunate for Pierre than might have been imagined; for a peppery old Provençal uncle, largely engaged in the manufacture of sweet things at Grasse, and at loggerheads with his late brother-in-law for some thirty years, wrote on hearing of it to the effect that, if his nephew was a lad of any gumption, he had better come by the first train to Grasse, where there would be kept open for him, for exactly thirty-six hours, a situation in which, with ordinary diligence, his fortune was safe to be made. Poor Pierre was overjoyed, packed his portmanteau at top speed, arrived at the Mazas station fully fifty-five minutes before the time; travelled triumphantly as far as Arles; got out for a moment in search of a glass of lemonade, slipped up upon a grape-skin, and for the next week was laid up at the Auberge du Chemin de Fer with a broken arm. When he at length drove up through the great peach orchard to his uncle's big house at Grasse, the door was promptly shut in his face.

"I won't take up your time with any further details; but the rest of the story was very like the beginning. Every now and then some fresh chance would seem to turn up, but would always be closely followed by its counter-chance. It was not merely that any error or blunder on his part—and M. Dorien readily owned to plenty of both—invariably brought down the full measure of that retribution which a luckier man would probably have escaped altogether, but that, let him be as careful or as right as he might, something would always turn up at the last moment to set everything wrong. 'Did monsieur think,' he would ask, 'that he had acted wrongly or unwisely in such and such a case?' No; I could not honestly say that he had. 'Did monsieur think that he would have acted either wisely or rightly in adopting such or such another course?' Certainly not. There could be no doubt of that. 'And yet, look you, as things turned out, had that alternative course been adopted, there would have been success. Whereas now——'

"And so poor M. Dorien had drifted on until at last he had settled down, a very sediment of humanity, into the position in which I had encountered him—a professor of the roulette at the very 'outside' little gambling-place of Zilberhölle.

"To make matters better he had, twelve months before, at the age of forty or thereabouts, taken to himself a wife. Or rather, I believe, it would be speaking more correctly to say that the brave little sempstress who worked so hard for her bit of black bread and flask of sour wine in the little one-roomed chalet upon the mountain-side, had, out of pure compassion, herself taken charge of the tall, hollow-eyed, cadaverous-looking man, whose one remaining shirt—kept carefully for Kursaal wear—stood in such desperate need of her services, and who thanked her with so pleasant a smile for the aid he frankly confessed he had no other means of repaying.

"For 'Dismal Jemmy' had a very pleasant smile, and one which I could not but fancy had, at one time, been frequent enough. There was a sort of suppressed buoyancy too about the man, as though an originally sanguine disposition had been pressed down and down by the cumulative weight of ever-recurring disappointment, till the load had become altogether too heavy to be moved, but which was still there in ever concentrated force; no longer, indeed, rising and falling with every momentary variation in the burthen which weighed it down, but ready, at any serious lightening, to spring up again with perhaps even dangerous vehemence.

"Just now, however, it had come to the pass that any serious lightening—or, in truth, any lightening at all—of the load which weighed down M. Dorien must come very speedily, or would most assuredly come too late. The brave little sempstress had done her best, and for several months the professor's head had, at all events, been kept above water, whilst the professor himself, roused by the comparative sunshine of his new happiness out of the half torpid acquiescence in a condition of chronic ill-fortune which had of late years rendered even the mischances of the gaming-table almost a matter of indifference, had begun once more to wonder if luck were indeed about to change at last, and to feel the old sharp pang gripping at his heart as piece after piece passed steadily away to swell the stores of the insatiable bank.

"For, so far as concerned the roulette, M. Dorien's luck showed very little change. He would win sometimes, of course, and then his deep-set eyes would begin to sparkle, and he would withdraw two or three francs from his increasing

stake, and thrust them into his pocket with the evident determination of carrying them home to his brave little Marie. But then the luck would change again, and the growing stake would suddenly disappear, and M. Dorien would clench his hands and grind his teeth, and the big drops would start out upon his forehead as he turned away from the fatal table—only to turn to it again the next moment with the two or three rescued francs clasped nervously between his trembling fingers. I doubt much if a single sou that had once come into that dry, shaking, skeleton hand ever found its way to the little chalet on the mountain-side.

"And by-and-by the time came when the brave little helper at home was herself hors de combat—at least, for the time. How poor Marie got through the weeks which followed her confinement, probably only two or three peasant workers—poor almost as herself—whose hovels neighboured her own, could even guess. And the husband's condition was more hopeless than ever. Even the most sanguine visitors had given up the idea of entrusting any commission to so evident a pauper as M. Dorien had now become, and the two or three comparative habitués—myself among the number—who from time to time had 'lent' him a five-franc piece or two, or purchased the secret of one of those ingenious 'systems,' of which few, except perhaps poor M. Dorien himself, understood the true value better than we did—even we had grown weary of the unprofitable operation of eternally pouring money into the bottomless sieve of an unlucky gambler's pocket. It seemed as though a crisis of some sort must come, and that speedily.

"When one morning, as I entered the play-room, I saw a startling change on M. Dorien's face. The hollow cheek was flushed, the sunken eyes wide and blazing with excitement, the bony fingers now tightly clenched, now opening and shutting with a snapping sound as he leaned breathless over the board. As I approached I saw the eager face whiten for a moment, then flush up again more deeply than before as I heard the familiar cry, 'Dix-sept, noir, impair et manque,' and saw the employé thrust a little heap of notes and gold towards a similar heap which lay upon the table, and on which the gaunt glittering eyes were hungrily fixed.

"I could hear the heavy labouring of his chest, but he did not move. Again the

little ball sped round, and again the announcement, 'Treize, noir, impair et manque,' doubled the stake in which he was so deeply interested, and which must now have reached the full Zilberhölle maximum, five thousand francs. M. Dorien's breath came and went more quickly than ever, and the bony fingers stretched instinctively towards the prize. But he set his teeth hard, clenched his hands so firmly behind his back that it seemed as though the very bones must soon be forced through their thin covering of skin, and let the stake remain untouched.

"Again the ball sped on its course. I could see the big beads gather on his forehead and drop one by one upon the board over which he leant. I don't mind confessing that something very like a shudder ran through my veins as I thought of what might follow should he prove to have tempted fate too far, and heard the low muttering of the parched lips:

"'Non—pas encore—Marie!—Encore un coup, mon Dieu! encore un coup!'

"'Rien ne va plus!'

"The decisive moment has arrived. The cylinder is turning very slowly, so slowly that you can plainly read the numbers as it revolves. For a moment the almost spent ball hovers on the very edge of the zero, and M. Dorien's face whitens to the lips. The next it glides half an inch farther and falls.

"'Vingt-six—Noir, pair et passe!'

"With an inarticulate cry of triumph M. Dorien springs forward to seize his prize, when he is stopped by a heavy hand upon his shoulder.

"'Arrêtez, monsieur,' commands the stern voice of M. Carré, the presiding chef-de-parti. 'That stake is not yours.'

"I cannot pretend to describe the scene that followed. The unhappy man protested, argued, raved, called Heaven to witness that the stake was rightfully his; appealed to the galerie, who shook their heads, had not noticed who placed the original stake on the table, but could not in any wise associate the idea of M. Dorien with such a pile of notes and gold as that before them.

"Then poor M. Dorien recognised me, and turned to me with renewed hope. It was my louis—the good God reward me for it—which had won all this stake; my louis that I had given him this morning for—

"'For your sick wife, M. Dorien,' I could not help saying reproachfully.

“Mais, mon Dieu, oui!” he burst out. ‘And was it not for her? See there, ten thousand francs—a fortune! And all for her, God bless her—all for her. He would take them to her now—this moment, and never, never, never enter a *salle-de-jeu* again. He would go—’

“But the strong hand of the *chef-de-parti* still held him back, and the official’s eyes passed from one to another of the spectators as though in search of something. The next moment it seemed as though they had found what they sought, and a brother professor, less shabby in exterior than M. Dorien, but certainly of no more reputable character, seemed to exchange glances for an instant with the official, and then spoke quietly but decisively.

“C’est une erreur, Monsieur le Chef. The original stake was left behind, no doubt by accident, by the Russian count who left the room some ten minutes since.’

“You lie!” shrieked poor M. Dorien, springing wildly towards the speaker. But the servants of the *Kursaal*, headed by the commissary, had now gathered round and held him forcibly back. In vain the unfortunate man resisted, raved, wept, implored, fought like a madman to release himself and seize upon the wealth which but a moment since he had fondly fancied was his own.

“Assez!” cried the *chef-de-parti*, and signed to the employés to proceed. The players settled down to their places, the cylinder moved round once more, and as the last sounds of the struggling professor’s forcible ejection died away, the announcement of, ‘*Trente-quatre, rouge, pair et passe,*’ swept back half of poor M. Dorien’s ten thousand francs into the bank, where they were speedily joined by the other half.

“Were those ten thousand francs M. Dorien’s, or was it really an attempted *escroquerie* like that which succeeded so well in the more skilful hands of M. Minimum? I have already told you that I cannot say, and probably now shall never know for certain. But the catastrophe that followed I know well I am not likely ever to forget.

“At least a couple of hours had passed by, and the incident of the morning seemed quite forgotten, when, happening accidentally to look up, I again saw M. Dorien standing just before me. He must have slipped in through the open window, and

had remained so far unobserved. His face was deadly white, his eyes glittering, his hands clasped behind his back under his coat. The *chef-de-parti* saw him almost at the same instant as myself, and moved angrily towards him.

“Allons, monsieur—” he began.

“But he got no farther. In a moment M. Dorien’s right hand had come from beneath his coat, grasping a large double-barrelled pistol, with which he fired full into the official’s face. The man fell—not killed, as we at first imagined, for the bullet missed its mark, and shattered the great mirror at the opposite end of the room, but startled by the suddenness of the attack. The next moment a second report was heard, and the lifeless body of M. Dorien fell heavily across the very table at which his newly-raised hopes had been so rudely scattered two hours before.

“As we raised him, we saw that the hand which held the pistol was already stained to the wrist with blood, and then we knew that there was more to learn. Scarcely waiting even to communicate to each other our too self-evident fears, several of us—myself among the number—set off for the little *châlet* on the mountain-side. At the commissary’s suggestion, a wood-cutter, who passed by with his axe on his shoulder, was summoned to accompany, in case the cottage should be closed. But there was no need for his services. The little *châlet* was at the most not eight feet square, and its mouldering door, even had it been fastened from within, might have been pushed from its hinges with a single hand. But it stood wide open. The girl’s body lay just within, the long black hair streaming across the very threshold. The blood came dripping down the worn stone step to meet us as we approached.

“They hushed it up, of course. Such stories are not good to tell of places that live by the roulette. The three victims—father, mother, and child—were buried as speedily as possible out of sight, the shattered mirror renewed, the soiled cloth of the fatal table replaced, and every trace of the ‘unfortunate affair’ removed before the next morning brought the time of opening round once more. Some of the casual visitors, indeed, left the place, but there were never very many of these, and just at that time fewer than ever. But they don’t care to talk about the ‘incident Dorien’ at *Zilberhölle* even now.”

ALL IN HALF A CENTURY!

I AM sixty years of age; a fact which I state, not because it is of importance to anybody but myself, but because it is necessary for all to know who shall read the reminiscences which follow, with a proper understanding of the shortness of the time in which so many social changes in manners, customs, and the odds and ends of our busy civilisation have taken place. I confine my reminiscences to London—meaning by London the great city and its circumjacent towns, boroughs, and municipalities which now form the metropolis of the British Empire. That great metropolis, at the time when my eyes first opened to the light, contained rather less than a million of inhabitants, and now contains nearly four millions, who have spread themselves over an area of streets and houses as large as some counties, and larger than many. When I first began to notice with youthful intelligence the life around me, there were no omnibuses and cabs in the streets, and no policemen. Instead of omnibuses and cabs, there were cumbersome and lumbering hackney-coaches, of antique build, drawn by two horses, and driven for the most part by superannuated old men, who were called in the slang of the day "Jarvies," clad in great-coats with multitudinous capes. The coaches were of no particular pattern, shape, or colour, inasmuch as they were not made to order for the particular service in which they were employed, but were simply the cast-off vehicles of the rich, grown too shabby and rickety for the taste of their original owners; though they continued, in the second and final stage of their existence, to be adorned with the gorgeous emblazements of the royalty to which they once belonged, or of the ducal or other aristocratic families, who had given them away, as they did their old clothes and boots, as perquisites to their servants; or, perhaps, if they were very frugal, which they had consigned in part payment of new vehicles to their coachbuilders. There were few of them in the streets, and their services were not often in requisition; for their charges were high, and people in those days were not in such a desperate hurry as we are now, or much inclined to use a more rapid or more expensive form of locomotion than such as their legs provided. As for policemen, London somehow or other managed to do without more of

their aid than Bow Street officers afforded by day, and as was provided at night in the shape of watchmen—poor wheezy old fellows, for the most part—who were called "Charleys" in the vulgar parlance of the time. They had a kind of sentry-box built for their use, in which they took shelter during bad weather. Their business was not only to keep the peace—if they could—but to call out the hours from sunset to sunrise, and to notify the state of the weather to the half-slumbering denizens of the streets through which they patrolled. It was the fashionable fun of the time, among the roystering young men of the upper classes—or perhaps it would be better to say, richer classes—who were known as "bucks," "bloods," or "dandies," to make assaults upon these helpless and inoffensive old men; and, if they could catch them asleep in their boxes, to carry them off, box and all, to the nearest gutter—or it might be pond—and there deposit them. This kind of "life in London," as it was called, was depicted in a vulgar farce entitled *Tom and Jerry*—by Moncreiffe, who died scarcely twenty years ago—which had a long lease of popularity in the days of the last of the Georges.

Locomotion on the Thames, before the newly-discovered power of steam was utilised for the purpose, was infrequent and costly. The Margate hoys, as they were called, took weekly trips to that then remote town, and similar vessels traded and conveyed passengers between Wapping and Gravesend, having a full view as they passed between Greenwich and Woolwich of the last criminals that were ever exposed to rot on the gibbet by the laws of England—to show all intelligent foreigners, as William Cobbett (or someone else) said, that they had arrived in a civilised country. The watermen, with their coats and badges, still plied their trade on the river, and very jealously guarded the privileges of the close corporation or company to which they belonged. When it was hinted to these sturdy conservatives that steam was likely at some future time to take possession of the river, they either smiled with contemptuous incredulity, or shook their wise heads with anger at the wild revolutionary notion.

But steam is an old established means of easy locomotion compared with the "tram," which is a modern innovation. There were no tramways in London or in any other city of Europe eighteen years ago, although they were well known in

America. It is scarcely ten years since they were laid down in London, Edinburgh, Paris, and other large cities. But it is not so easy for men in the prime of life, in the present year of 1879, to remember the time when there were neither railways nor steamboats in Europe, and when the late Dr. Lardner declared that it was madness to attempt to cross the Atlantic by steam. Yet such is the fact. Sixty years ago a friend of mine, as he often repeated, took ship at Leith to proceed to London, and after tossing about in contrary winds for ten days, took refuge on the eleventh in the quiet harbour of Berwick-upon-Tweed.

It may be difficult for the young and middle-aged in our day to realise to their minds this fact, that in the youth and early manhood of their fathers there were no lucifer-matches, and that the only means of procuring a light was the old-fashioned method of the flint, steel, and tinder-box. I remember my delight, when, a boy of nine or ten, I became possessor of a small bottle—such as the ladies now use for their smelling-salts—containing a chemical preparation, into which it was only necessary to dip a match to produce a light. This primitive improvement upon flint and steel continued but a short time, when, novelty as it was, it was superseded and cast back into the limbo of used-up antiquity by the lucifer-match, originally called a “congreve,” and the production of light by friction.

In those days there were no envelopes for letters, and postage was calculated by distance: twopence in the metropolitan district, tenpence to York, one shilling and twopence to Edinburgh, two shillings to John o’ Groat’s House, and something almost prohibitive to the continent of Europe. “Franks” were in great request; and members of both Houses of Parliament were daily if not hourly besieged by letter-writers, to obtain the privilege of their names on the corners of epistles, which would not have been sent through the post at all unless they could have been sent gratis. When Sir Rowland Hill proposed his scheme of a uniform rate of postage, he was considered a daring revolutionist destined to ruin the country, even when he fixed the rate temporarily at fourpence. When after a quiet interval, to accustom the panic-stricken public to the great change originally contemplated, the rate was reduced to a penny, elderly people held up their hands in dismay, and predicted the collapse, not only of the post-office, but of the empire of Great Britain.

When I was a youth women wore pattens. Are such articles ever seen in our day? At that time it was considered vulgar for a gentleman to wear a cotton shirt or a silk hat. The shirt of fine linen and the hat of beaver were de rigueur. Watches had double cases, between the outer and inner of which it was the custom to insert what were called watch-papers, on which were printed or written texts from Scripture, moral maxims, passages from the poets, or tender love effusions purporting to be original. Still more recently, and when in my prime, I remember that it was considered contra bonos mores and all the proprieties for a lady to ride in a hansom-cab, or for a gentleman to smoke in a lady’s presence; and worse still, if possible, for a lady to be seen in the streets with a gentleman who had a pipe or a cigar in his mouth.

I remember—and it is scarcely a memory of older date than thirty years—when a gentleman in full dress was not compelled by fashion to attire himself like a clergyman or a tavern waiter; when the fashionable evening dress was a blue coat and gilt buttons, and a coloured or embroidered vest; and when bright colours in the waist-coat were not considered the exclusive right of the footman or the costermonger. I remember, too, when ladies were not ashamed to be economical in their attire, and did not allow their silks or satins to trail on the ground, but wore their “gowns,” as they were called, of a length that just reached the ankle, and allowed the dainty little feet and a portion of the leg to be seen. This fashion pleased the gentlemen and did no harm to the ladies, conducted greatly to comfort in walking, besides saving a considerable sum in the dress-maker’s account.

I remember when the street, now called the Haymarket, in which stand two theatres, was really the market for hay; through which it was difficult to pass, at early morning, among the hay-carts that blocked up the whole thoroughfare. I remember the King’s Mews, where now stands the poor mean building called the National Gallery, when Trafalgar Square and the Nelson Column were non-existent; when Old London Bridge still spanned the stream between Fish Street Hill and St. Olave’s in Southwark; when there were no club-houses, no Reform, no Carlton, no Athenæum, no United Service, in that street of palaces—Pall Mall; when the Marble Arch stood in Piccadilly; when Tyburnia was occupied by market-gardeners and

nurserymen; when Westbournia was un-built, and when Blackfriars and Westminster Bridges were backed like dromedaries; when the Thames Tunnel was considered the wonder of the world; when the dingy old Houses of Parliament, consumed by fire in 1834, were still an architectural disgrace to the imperial city of Westminster.

I remember when the Times was a small sheet of four pages, price sevenpence, of which the government extorted fourpence in stamp duty, besides levying an excise upon the paper on which it was printed, and a duty of three shillings and sixpence on every advertisement which it contained; and when it was held a wonderful thing when that journal, and its rival, the Morning Chronicle, had attained a daily circulation of five thousand. Of course there was no Daily Telegraph and no Daily News in those days. The man who should have been rash enough to predict that a penny morning journal, unstamped and untaxed, should be able to print and sell an edition of two hundred and fifty thousand copies every morning, would in all probability have been made the subject of a writ de lunatico inquirendo.

I remember the old semaphore at work on the top of the Admiralty, communicating with its old-fashioned brother at Greenwich, and that again with similar structures standing at regular intervals all the way between London and Dover; and when the first faint rumour of the coming triumphs of electricity was received with incredulous laughter.

Of course I remember the first construction of railways, and the obstinate and vehement opposition they encountered, not only from the landed proprietors, but from the municipalities of the whole kingdom, as well as from both Houses of Parliament. The metropolis, which is now honeycombed by them under ground, and gridironed by them above ground, would not suffer a railway to approach its sacred limits nearer than Nine Elms on the southern side of the river, and Euston Square, contiguous to the squalid regions of Somers Town, on the north. Great dukes and earls, alarmed for what they called the amenity of their parks and pleasure-grounds, used all their influence, in and out of the legislature, to prevent the passing of the Acts of Parliament that were necessary for their construction. They and their friends appealed to every kind of prejudice to defeat the inevitable improvement that was approaching. There was, they said, to be no longer any privacy

in the country. The detested steam-engines were to scatter their flame-producing sparks on every side, and set fire to the farm buildings, and even to the ripe corn that grew upon the land through which they passed; and, worse than all, the sacred recreation of fox-hunting was thenceforward to become impossible, and the breed of horses was to deteriorate. The town of St. Albans, through which all the traffic and travel between London and the north had to pass, rendering the place both lively and prosperous, had sufficient influence to prevent the London and Birmingham Railway, as the London and North-Western was first called, from approaching within several miles of its hallowed precincts. The inhabitants of St. Albans did not discover until long afterwards, when it was too late to undo the mischief, that they had well-nigh ruined their town by their ignorant opposition to a public benefit. To this day St. Albans has not recovered from the blow which it inflicted upon itself by its dense incapacity to make friends with the inevitable. The poet Wordsworth was furious in his wrath against the projected railway that was to bring the multitude through the cherished solitudes of Windermere and all the Lake Country; and appealed to earth and heaven to prevent the outrage.

In the early days of my housekeeping, servants were not above their business, and a good cook expected no more than twelve pounds a year wages, and a good housemaid ten; then best mutton was not considered cheap at sevenpence a pound, nor the best beef at ninepence; but, per contra, good tea cost from six to eight shillings per pound, and the best loaf-sugar tenpence. In those times scarcely anybody except a millionaire thought of drinking claret; and fiery sherry, and still more fiery port, were the only wines to be seen at ordinary dinner-tables.

I remember the time, scarcely twenty years ago, when the Victoria and Euston Hotels, that stand facing each other at the Euston Station of the London and North-Western Railway, were considered marvels of size and enterprise; far surpassing in extent and grandeur anything that had been previously seen in England in the way of hotel accommodation; and when Warren's famous blacking warehouse, Number Thirty, Strand, stood on the site now occupied by the magnificent Charing Cross Hotel; and when a mean squalid market for the poorest of the poor, called the Brill, in Somers Town,

encumbered the spot where the lordly structure of the Midland Railway Terminus and Hotel now rears its palatial head.

I remember when the place now occupied by Exeter Hall was filled by a bazaar and menagerie, called Exeter Change, and where I often paid my juvenile and scanty cash to have a look at the lions, elephants, and other beasts that were there exhibited, before the Zoological Garden was opened to receive them. I also remember to have seen the lions in the Tower of London; and, at a period a quarter of a century after the lions had been removed, to have been a party to a hoax which was perpetrated upon an able French artist, who was sent for an illustrated paper to make a sketch of what was represented to him as the grand, historical, and antiquarian ceremony, annually performed, of washing those animals by the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs.

I remember when I thought every man was good, and every woman beautiful; with that confession I think I have remembered my own folly, and conclude, lest I should make it more conspicuous.

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOBY,

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRITZNER'S DOUBLE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXII. ON THE STONE TERRACE.

A GOOD deal of animation prevailed at Bevis after the arrival of Captain and Mrs. Dunstan, and the fine spring weather facilitated the visiting that was to be expected under the circumstances. Mrs. Drummond had lived in such retirement that many of Janet's neighbours had never made acquaintance with her in the old times, but saw her first as the lady of Bevis. She made a favourable impression upon all these persons; they pronounced her to be handsome and attractive—a little absent in manner, perhaps, and singularly quiet, which was not to be wondered at in the case of a girl who had lived entirely with old people, and had not yet had time to get over the effect of that association, and to feel her own freedom and importance. Captain Dunstan was already popular, as, indeed, he deserved to be, for his tastes were sportsmanlike, his manners were good, his prejudices were few, and his political opinions were rather neutral-tinted; so that he might be said to possess almost every requisite for the winning of general favour, and to be free

or are knocked against by others, in the case of the best intentioned individuals.

On two points there was absolute uniformity of opinion. The first was Janet's dress. This was the subject of general commendation. Mrs. Dunstan displayed perfect taste in her attire, which was at once rich, simple, and becoming; and several ladies had contrived speedily to ascertain that she was not indebted for that result to the hateful services of a man milliner. The second point was the demeanour of the young couple. This was pronounced to be perfect; no nonsense about it, though theirs was well known to have been a love match, but the pleasantest attention to everybody, and just what there ought to be to each other.

That Bevis was not to be forsaken for London by its owners until late in the season, when they were to go to town for a few weeks, was also taken well by the neighbourhood. Janet had been over tired in Paris, and, as Amabel had discerned, rather bewildered than pleased. It would, however, be more correct to say that she was at first pleased, and then bewildered; for the latter condition set in when the restless questions began to put themselves ceaselessly to her: What was it that had come between her husband and herself; what was it that had changed the glory of her noonday into twilight? Whence came this intangible, indescribable alteration which she felt in every nerve, with every heartbeat, from which she could no more turn her thoughts, than she could keep her eye from seeing the objects before, or her ears from hearing the sounds around them? Thenceforth she had been beset by the kind of confusion that comes of trying to listen to two sounds at once, or rather of trying to hear the one, and to shut out the other, which will not be excluded. Then the splendours of art and the associations of history, the beauty of the fair city, the novelty of society and movement, all lost their attraction for her, and there stole over her and took possession of her great dread and weariness. She strove against them, she especially strove to conceal any of their symptoms from Dunstan, following out the programme of each day as he arranged it with unquestioning acquiescence, but losing day by day all interest in the scene around her, and gradually coming to have a great longing to be back again at Bevis, and a great shrinking from the idea of London. When they should be at Bevis, among all the familiar objects,

surely come to understand him better, and learn how to please him; she would be undisturbed there in that study. As if she ever ceased from it! So that, when Dunstan told her he did not care for going up to London until near the end of the season, she was perfectly well pleased, and would have given much to tell him that she should never wish for anything other—better there could not be—than to remain always at Bevis with him. She did not tell him so, however; she had never gotten into the way of saying out what there was of this kind in her heart to him; and that which had been strange and difficult before, the inexplicable something that inspired her questions soon rendered impossible.

There was coming to Janet, through the strange and secret source of her inexplicable suffering, a fault from which she had hitherto been singularly free—the fault of self-consciousness. A blight, not to be seen or felt save by herself alone, had fallen upon her, and she sought in herself for its origin, until she became occupied with herself to a degree which would have been impossible to the Janet of the past, the Janet whose heart, though irrevocably given away in the sense of a woman's abiding love, was free from self, and full of service, and her spirit chainless and lofty. A change was passing upon these qualities of her fine nature; the shadow of the eclipse of her faith and hope. She was constantly thinking about her own looks, her own dress, her own manners, the effect she produced, and the attitude of her husband's mind towards her. Janet, who had been accustomed to the knowledge that her face was fair, just as she had been accustomed to the knowledge that twenty-four hours made the day and night, but to concern herself no more about the one abstract fact than the other, took to thinking about her looks. She would often gaze wistfully into the glass, comparing the face that looked back at her to-day with that which she had seen yesterday, and dreading lest the answer to the haunting question might be found in the reflection there. She was altogether wrong in that surmise; her husband still admired her quite as much as when her beauty had first taken him by surprise; more, indeed, perhaps, now that it was fittingly adorned with rich attire. Only he did not think about her fair face when he was looking at it.

Janet, who had never given a thought to her personal adornment, beyond the intuitive regard to neatness and appropriateness that is inseparable from the habits of a

gentlewoman, took to thinking about clothes. She studied the dress of other women, she observed the vagaries of fashion, she wondered whether it could be that she offended her husband's fastidious taste by making unconscious blunders in an art of which she was so ignorant. She was again altogether wrong in that surmise; she had good taste in dress, and Dunstan recognised it. Only he did not think about her dress when he saw it, and when she again wore a gown or a jewel because he once had noticed it, he did not see that she was wearing the gown or the jewel.

Janet, to whom a serene unembarrassed bearing, as free from affectation as it was free from boldness, was as natural as breathing, began to think about her manners! Had something awkward in her, something unlike the ways and the tone of the "world" in which he had always lived, a *gaucherie* betraying her want of skill and custom, which had not been apparent in the quiet life from which he had taken her, annoyed her husband, chilled and humiliated him, against his will, perhaps hardly with his knowledge. Janet had read of such things, such dreadful things, in novels, limited as her acquaintance with fiction was; and in her secret soul she regarded herself, in comparison with Dunstan, as "the beggar maid" in comparison with the king who married her; for on the side on which Janet was humble, her humility was thorough. There was a side on which she was proud, with a thoroughness of pride in which there might be terrible power for evil; but she knew nothing of that in herself when she took to studying herself, and, among other baseless fancies, pondered that one, whether her manners were not unconsciously provincial and distressing to Dunstan. And, again, in that surmise she was altogether wrong. Her frankness, her gentleness, and her quick intelligence were all blended and expressed in Janet's "ways," and her husband had never found a fault with her, although she was undeniably a distinct personage; although

The fashion of her gracefulness was not a followed rule.

It would have ceased to be gracefulness had she been able to make up her mind which was the "style" most likely to be admired by Dunstan among the varieties of "style" which her sojourn in Paris enabled her to observe, and set about imitating it. He might have noticed such an imitation, but, also, he might not, for he did not notice her "ways;" he had not

observed that she had gained in aplomb by her intercourse with the world, without losing in sweetness and simplicity; he marked no change in her. He did not love her; she did not strongly interest him. He knew she was handsome and good; he would always behave well to her, and take care she should have everything she wanted; she was all he could wish for as a wife except the only woman he did wish for; that, however, was not her fault, nor his, but the fault of Fate; and sometimes he did not mind it very much, while at others he wished he was dead.

To the outer world not the smallest indication of the state of feeling of either the one or the other was given; the surface of these two lives was perfectly smooth and sunny. And as for the question that haunted Janet, what was it but "a sentimental grievance" after all; and we know that a sentimental grievance, though it may divide nation against nation for successive centuries, and condemn races to comparative poverty and obscurity, is not worthy of consideration by hard headed and practical people.

To the two persons who really knew her well, and whose interest in her went far beyond that of the people who saw everything at Bevis in the rosiest of rosc-colour—to Mrs. Cathcart and Amabel Ainslie—there was something not quite satisfactory about Janet's looks and ways. The vicar's impression was confirmed by the observation of his wife; the expression of Janet's countenance was changed; and she looked, now absent and again anxious, as she had never looked in the old time. Very likely it was the responsibility of her new position, Mrs. Cathcart thought, knowing that Janet was not one to take anything of the kind lightly, and feeling that she herself should genuinely hate a big place and a large establishment; but, whatever might be the cause of it, the alteration was there, unmistakable by anybody who knew Janet so well as she did. But that Janet's relations with her husband were anything but perfect, never occurred to Mrs. Cathcart. It could not, indeed, have occurred to anyone, for Captain Dunstan's demeanour to his wife was just the same as it had been during their brief engagement, and who was to guess that they had so little to say when they were left to themselves? Mrs. Cathcart was quite vexed with Janet's calm and indifferent way of answering her questions about Paris; she hoped it could not be possible that Janet was getting a little

spoilt, and inclined to what she might suppose to be the fine-ladyism of indifference to scenes and objects which must have been surprising and delightful to her inexperience. But even her apathy in regard to the wonders and delights of Paris did not strike Mrs. Cathcart so unpleasantly as her absent-mindedness when things of nearer interest and import were in question; she actually seemed like a person trying to listen to two speakers at once when the vicar was telling her about the new arrangements for the choir practising, and the vicar's wife had the properest sense of the laches involved in any inattention to the vicar.

Amabel Ainslie had seen the change in Janet as quickly as Mrs. Cathcart saw it, but she viewed it differently, and thought over it with a strange feeling of apprehension. Janet had not said one word to her of anything but content, and Amabel felt certain that she never would; but she had been vague with her also, and Amabel unhesitatingly assured herself that Janet was not happy.

"It is his fault," she said to herself; "it is his fault. I cannot guess, and I shall never know from her, but there is something wrong. No one but he could make her unhappy, now that she is his wife; her worship of him has that in it that no one else in the world can do her real good or harm. It is he! But what can it be? I cannot but guess and wonder. He seems, he is, so nice—a little too perfectly polite for my fancy, but then that is a matter of fancy, and very few people would agree with me—but he does not know much about her tastes and ideas, that is pretty plain. He looked so strange when I asked him what he thought of her songs—I don't believe he knew she ever composed one! Ah! Janet, Janet, I hope you have not married the wrong man; but I fear that is what it all means."

On the joyful occasion of the visit of the old ladies from Bury House to Bevis, where they arrived in the smartest carriage that Mr. Jones of the Bell Inn could turn out, Janet felt more nearly happy than she had been able to persuade herself that she was for some time. For it had come to that, she had to persuade herself; she had to silence the haunting voice by a strong effort of her will. What had become of the golden radiance that had shone all around her; where was the dream-world of bliss? The radiance had faded, the dreamworld had vanished, quite noise-

lessly, with no shock, no threat, but only the lightless void remained after the one, the chill of awakening after the other. On that day, however, it was almost as if the former glow, the old vision, were there again, for Janet could not but see that her husband was thoroughly pleased, and that he exerted himself to please. How kind, courteous, and attentive he was to the Misses Sandilands; how ready to echo all their delighted comments on Janet's good looks; how quick to prevent her being embarrassed by their eager and unsuspecting enquiries respecting Sir Wilfrid Eadaile; how ready to assist her in showing them the house and gardens; how kindly interested in all they had to tell of their nephew and his prospects. After all, this could only be for her, only a proof of his love for her, leading him to be careful for those who had befriended her. She would try to remember this, to hold it in her mind when the spectre rose and the voice haunted; to remember, above all, that he had chosen her, without a single advantage of any kind to tempt him to any motive except love. No, she must be mistaken; some dreadful temptation was at work within her. Thus Janet pleaded her own cause with her own self, while the old ladies were walking, in wondering admiration, through the long line of succession-houses, or surveying the beautiful prospect from the terrace, or giving Mrs. Manners infinite credit for the preservation in which the venerable furniture was kept, or admiring the fitting-up of Janet's rooms. The piano and the books that were Mrs. Drummond's gift had been sent back to Bevis from Bury House, and now occupied their former places. Wider experience and more fastidious taste than those of the old ladies might have pronounced Janet's home beautiful, and all that could be desired.

"You will let Julia come to us soon, will you not?" Janet asked Miss Susan, when the visit was drawing to a close. "You know she disappointed me before, and she must make it up to me now."

"As soon as you like, my dear Janet," was Miss Susan's reply. "We shall be so glad that she should have so great a pleasure; and, indeed, she must want some pleasant society, some happy faces to raise her spirits, after the painful scenes she has gone through."

"True. I have not heard particulars, but it must have been very trying for Julia."

"Of course you have not heard particulars, my dear; I should have been

much surprised had Julia distressed you by telling you all that sad story, at a time when, if there ever can be such a time in the life of human beings liable to death and sorrow, the remembrance of them ought to be put away. And I am not going to talk to you about it now, or to let you think about it."

"She was very young, and very happy," said Janet, not heeding Miss Susan's protest, "and it all came to an end in a moment. How dreadful!"

"Not all, my dear. We must not say all. It is a terrible bereavement, but poor Mrs. Thornton has many blessings left."

"Blessings! and her husband gone! What can be blessings to her without him?"

"Parents and friends," said Miss Susan seriously; "health, youth, fortune; and then, you know, or perhaps you may not have heard, she has her child to look forward to—a great consolation, and a tie to life, however great her trouble."

"Do you think so?" said Janet, but absently, almost as if she were talking to herself. "I cannot imagine there being any consolation for such a loss; I cannot believe that there could be any tie to life when that one is broken which must be all or nothing."

With a look of great tenderness in her sweet old face, Miss Susan laid her shrivelled palm on Janet's soft white hand, as she said in a low voice:

"It is just like you to feel like that; but you are only a wife as yet, my dear."

Captain Dunstan had been talking to the elder sister while these sentences were exchanged between Janet and Miss Susan, but Janet, raising her eyes as the last was spoken, saw in his face a look of strange distress and disturbance which set her heart beating fast and heavily, with the vague dread that she had displeased him. The look passed in a moment, but it had stayed long enough to overcast all the calm and gladness that she had been feeling. Presently the old ladies drove away in state, perfectly happy, and much delighted with their visit; and Janet and her husband, who had accompanied them to the carriage, returned into the house. She was making up her mind to ask him how she had offended him, whether it was the sentiment she had expressed, or the fact of her uttering it—a fault, it might be, in the world's code of manners—which had disturbed him, when he took up his hat,

and said to her with the utmost ease, as if nothing whatever had occurred to trouble him :

"I have to speak to the vicar on some business, and I shall just catch him if I go now."

The spectre rose more plainly than ever before Janet, the haunting voice pressed its question with more intolerable iteration. What was it in her that was parting them, and was he resolved that she should not ask him? But Janet had not offended Dunstan; he had paid no heed to what she said; the disturbance in his face had been caused by no words of hers; and now, as he walked in the direction of the Vicarage, but not with any purpose of seeing the vicar, he was not thinking of her at all. He had spoken with even unusual gentleness just because he was not, just because she did not matter to him; just because, when he too was beset with a spectre, and when a haunting voice most pertinaciously whispered, "Too late!" he made a scrupulous point, in the futile honourableness of his uninstructed conscience, of repeating to himself: "It is no fault of hers."

On the day after Julia Carmichael's arrival at Bevis on her promised visit, she and Janet went to the Vicarage; but Janet only remained with Mrs. Cathcart, Julia returning to the house to write her letters. That day Janet was indisputably not looking well, and she did not deny that she had been feeling ill. "At least, not exactly ill, but strange," she explained; "what Edward calls 'moped' and therefore I am especially glad Julia has come; she is so pleasant and amusing." Mrs. Cathcart had an afternoon engagement which made it impossible for her to walk home with Janet, and she took leave of her at the little gate in the park wall, of which each possessed a key. Mrs. Cathcart lingered for a few minutes on her own side of the gate, watching the tall slender figure moving onward under the branches of the great elms, and noting, as she had often noted before, its grace and steadiness. When she had reached a point in the avenue which they called the "dip," Janet turned, waved her handkerchief in farewell, and vanished. Then Mrs. Cathcart returned to the house, thinking that she wished Janet were quite well, and not

"moped," that she hoped that nice Julia would do her good, and that it would be a great pity if delicate health should come to mar the perfection of the arrangement for which Mrs. Drummond had so dexterously schemed by securing the residence of her heir at his estate for those three important months. And then she dropped that thread of thought, never to resume it in all her life again.

Janet walked on under the branches of the great elms, more and more slowly as she neared the upper end of the stately avenue where the shrubberies commenced, by passing through a portion of which she could gain a small flight of steps leading to the stone terrace. This was the shortest way to the house, and she was glad it was not longer, for there was a strange distressing sense of exhaustion over her, and her sight was dim. Once or twice her steps grew uncertain, and she felt as she so well remembered to have felt that day, in the grounds at The Chantry, when Sir Wilfrid Esdaile told her the story it so much grieved her to hear. She got through the shrubbery, hardly conscious of her movements, ascended the little flight of steps, and found herself on the terrace, within a few yards of the windows of the library, which were open. A garden bench was set against the wall of the house close beside the window nearest to her; in front of it paced Argus, the peacock, "high and disposedly." She saw a flash of colour as the beautiful tame bird's tail swept her dress, then saw no more, put her hand out, caught hold of the bench, and sank down upon it, quite senseless.

When Janet recovered consciousness, and the first utter vagueness after a swoon passed off, to be succeeded by the absolute weakness that holds the whole body fettered, she remained, half sitting, half lying, but perfectly motionless. She could not speak, she could not lift her head or raise her eyelids. One arm hung over the rail of the bench and so kept her balanced; she tried to move the other, but she could not. Presently the sound of voices came to her ears, voices distinct, and close to her. Two persons, who must have been within two or three feet of her, and just inside the window-sill, were talking in earnest tones. They were Julia and Dunstan; and Janet, motionless, speechless, spellbound, heard every word they said.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXV. THE OWNER OF BULLFINCH.

CAPTAIN WINSTANLEY had been master of the Abbey House three months, and there had been no open quarrel between him and Violet Tempest. Vixen had been cold as marble, but she had been civil. For her mother's sake she had held her peace. She remembered what Roderick Vawdrey had said about her duty, and had tried to do it, difficult as that duty was to the girl's undisciplined nature. She had even taken the loss of Titmouse very quietly—her father's first gift, the pony that had carried her when she was a seven-year-old huntress with tawny hair flowing loose under her little velvet toque. She gave no expression to her indignation at the sale of this old favourite, as she had done in the case of Bullfinch. If she wept for him, her tears were shed in secret. She took the sale of her pet almost as a matter of course.

"The captain thinks we have too many horses and ponies, dear, and you know dear papa was a little extravagant about his stables," said her mother apologetically, when she announced the fate of Titmouse; "but of course Arion will always be kept for you."

"I am glad of that, mamma," Vixen answered gravely. "I should be sorry to part with the last horse papa gave me as well as with the first."

To the captain himself Vixen said no word about her pony, and he made no apology for or explanation of his conduct. He acted as if heaven had made him lord

of the Abbey House and all its belongings in his cradle, and as if his wife and her daughter were accidental and subordinate figures in the scene of his life.

Despite the era of retrenchment which the new master had inaugurated, things at the Abbey House had never been done with so much dignity and good style. There had been a slipshod ease, an old-fashioned liberality in the housekeeping during the squire's reign, which had in some measure approximated to the popular idea of an Irish household. Now all was done by line and rule, and according to the latest standard of perfection. There was no new fashion in Belgravia—from a brand of champagne to the shape of a menu holder—which Captain Winstanley had not at his fingers' ends. The old-style, expensive, heavy dinners at the Abbey House: the menster salmon under whose weight the serving-man staggered; the sprawling gigantic turbot, arabesqued with sliced lemon and barberries; the prize turkey, too big for anything but a poultry show; these leviathans and megatheria of the market were seen no more. In their stead came the subdued grace of the diner à la Russe, a well-chosen menu, before composing which Captain Winstanley studied Gouffé's artistic cookery-book as carefully as a pious Israelite studies the Talmud. The new style was as much more economical than the old as it was more elegant. The table, with the squire's old silver, and fine dark blue and gold Worcester china, and the captain's picturesque grouping of hothouse flowers and ferns, was a study worthy of a painter of still life. People exclaimed at the beauty of the picture. The grave old dining-room was transformed from its heavy

splendour to a modern grace that delighted everybody. Mrs. Winstanley's bosom thrilled with a gentle pride as she sat opposite her husband—he and she facing each other across the centre of the oval table—at their first dinner-party.

"My love, I am delighted that you are pleased," he said afterwards, when she praised his arrangements. "I think I shall be able to show you that economy does not always mean shabbiness. Our dinners shall not be too frequent, but they shall be perfect after their kind."

The captain made another innovation in his wife's mode of existence. Instead of a daily dropping-in of her acquaintance for tea and gossip, she was to have her afternoon, like Lady Ellangowan. A neat copper-plate inscription on her visiting-card told her friends that she was at home on Tuesdays from three to six, and implied that she was not at home on any other day. Mrs. Winstanley felt her dignity enhanced by this arrangement, and the captain hoped thereby to put a stop to a good deal of twaddling talk, and to lessen the weekly consumption of five-shilling tea, pound cake, and cream.

The duke and duchess returned to Ashbourne with Lady Mabel a short time before Christmas, and the duchess and her daughter came to one of Mrs. Winstanley's Tuesday afternoons, attended by Roderick Vawdrey. They came with an evident intention of being friendly, and the duchess was charmed with the old oak hall, the wide hearth and Christmas fire of beech logs, the light flashing upon the armour, and reflected here and there on the beeswaxed panels as on dark water. In this wintry dusk the hall looked its best, dim gleams of colour from the old painted glass mixing with the changeful glow of the fire.

"It reminds me a little of our place in Scotland," said the duchess, "only this is prettier. It has a warmer, homelier air. All things in Scotland have an all-pervading stoniness. It is a country overgrown with granite."

Mrs. Winstanley was delighted to be told that her house resembled one of the ducal abodes.

"I daresay your Scotch castle is much older than this," she said deprecatingly. "We only date from Henry the Eighth. There was an abbey, built in the time of Henry the First; but I am afraid there is nothing left of that but the archway leading into the stables."

"Oh, we are dreadfully ancient at Dumdromond; almost as old as the mountains, I should think," answered the duchess. "Our walls are ten feet thick, and we have an avenue of yew trees said to be a thousand years old. But all that does not prevent the duke getting bronchitis every time he goes there."

Vixen was in attendance upon her mother, dressed in dark green cloth. Very much the same kind of gown she had on that day at the kennels, Rorie thought, remembering how she looked as she stood, with quickened breath and tumbled hair, encircled by those eager boisterous hounds.

"If Landseer could have lived to paint her, I would have given a small fortune for the picture," he thought regretfully.

Lady Mabel was particularly gracious to Violet. She talked about dogs and horses even, in her desire to let herself down to Miss Tempest's lower level; about the Forest; made a tentative remark about point lace; asked Violet if she was fond of Chopin.

"I'm afraid I'm not enlightened enough to care so much for him as I ought," Vixen answered frankly.

"Really! Who is your favourite composer?"

Violet felt as if she were seated before one of those awful books which some young ladies keep instead of albums, in which the sorely tormented contributor is catechised as to his or her particular tastes, distastes, and failings.

"I think I like Mozart best."

"Do you really?" enquired Lady Mabel, looking as if Violet had sunk fathoms lower in her estimation by this avowal. "Don't you think that he is dreadfully tuney?"

"I like tunes," retorted Vixen, determined not to be put down. "I'd rather have written *Voi ch e sapete*, and *Batti, batti*, than all Chopin's nocturnes and mazourkas."

"I think you would hardly say that if you knew Chopin better," said Lady Mabel gravely, as if she had been gently reproving someone for the utterance of infidel opinions. "When are you coming to see our orchids?" she asked graciously. "Mamma is at home on Thursdays. I hope you and Mrs. Winstanley will drive over and look at my new orchid-house. Papa had it built for me with all the latest improvements. I'm sure you must be fond of orchids, even if you don't appreciate Chopin."

Violet blushed. Rorie was looking on with a malicious grin. He was sitting a little way off in a low Glastonbury chair, with his knees up to his chin, making himself an image of awkwardness.

"I don't believe Violet cares twopence for the best orchid you could show her," he said. "I don't believe your *odontoglossum vexillarium* would have any more effect upon her than it has upon me."

"Oh, but I do admire them; or, at least, I should admire them immensely," remonstrated Vixen, "if I could see them in their native country. But I don't know that I have ever thoroughly appreciated them in a hothouse, hanging from the roof, and tumbling on to one's nose, or shooting off their long sprays at a tangent into awkward corners. I'm afraid I like the bluebells and foxgloves in our enclosures ever so much better. I have seen the banks in New Park one sheet of vivid blue with hyacinths, one blaze of crimson with foxgloves; and then there are the long green swamps, where millions of marsh marigolds shine like pools of liquid gold. If I could see orchids blooming like that I should be charmed with them."

"You paint, of course," said Lady Mabel. "Wild flowers make delightful studies, do they not?"

Vixen blushed violently.

"I can't paint a little bit," she said. "I am a dreadfully unaccomplished person."

"That's not true," remonstrated Rorie. "She sketches capitally in pen and ink—dogs, horses, trees, everything, dashed off with no end of spirit."

Here the duchess, who had been describing the most conspicuous costumes at the German baths, to the delight of Mrs. Winstanley, rose to go, and Lady Mabel, with her graceful, well-drilled air, rose immediately.

"We shall be so glad to see you at Ashbourne," she murmured sweetly, giving Violet her slim little hand in its pearl-grey glove.

She was dressed from head to foot in artistically blended shades of grey—a most unpretending toilet.

Vixen acknowledged her graciousness politely, but without any warmth; and it would hardly have done for Lady Mabel to have known what Miss Tempest said to herself when the Dovedale barouche had driven round the curve of the shrubbery, with Roderick smiling at her from his place as it vanished.

"I am afraid I have a wicked tendency

to detest people," said Vixen inwardly. "I feel almost as bad about Lady Mabel as I do about Captain Winstanley."

"Are they not nice?" asked Mrs. Winstanley gushingly.

"Trimmer's drop cakes?" said Vixen, who was standing by the tea-table munching a dainty little biscuit. "Yes, they are always capital."

"Nonsense, Violet; I mean the duchess and her daughter."

Vixen yawned audibly.

"I'm glad you did not find the duchess insupportably dreary," she said. "Lady Mabel weighed me down like a nightmare."

"Oh, Violet! when she behaved so sweetly—quite caressingly, I thought. You really ought to cultivate her friendship. It would be so nice for you to visit at Ashbourne. You would have such opportunities——"

"Of doing what, mamma? Hearing polonaises and mazourkas in seven double flats; or seeing orchids with names as long as a German compound adjective."

"Opportunities of being seen and admired by young men of position, Violet. Sooner or later the time must come for you to think of marrying."

"That time will never come, mamma. I shall stay at home with you till you are tired of me, and when you turn me out I will have a cottage in the heart of the forest—upon some wild ridge topped with firs—and good old McCroke to take care of me; and I will spend my days botanising and fern-hunting, riding and walking, and perhaps learn to paint my favourite trees, and live as happily and as remote from mankind as the herons in their nests at the top of the tall beeches on Vinny Ridge."

"I am very glad there is no one present to hear you talk like that, Violet," Mrs. Winstanley said gravely.

"Why, mamma?"

"Because anybody hearing you might suppose you were not quite right in your mind."

The duchess's visit put Mrs. Winstanley in good humour with all the world, but especially with Roderick Vawdrey. She sent him an invitation to her next dinner, and when her husband seemed inclined to strike his name out of her list, she defended her right of selection with a courage that was almost heroic.

"I can't understand your motive for asking this fellow," the captain said, with

a blacker look than his wife had ever before seen on his countenance.

"Why should I not ask him, Conrad? I have known him ever since he was at Eton, and the dear squire was very fond of him."

"If you are going to choose your acquaintance in accordance with the taste of your first husband, it will be rather a bad look out for your second," said the captain.

"What objection can you have to Roderick?"

"I can have, and I have, a very strong objection to him. But I am not going to talk about it yet awhile."

"But, Conrad, if there is anything I ought to know——" began Mrs. Winstanley alarmed.

"When I think you ought to know it you will be told it, my dear Pamela. In the meantime, allow me to have my own opinion about Mr. Vawdrey."

"But, Conrad, in dear Edward's time he used to come to this house whenever he liked, as if he had been a near relation. And he is the duchess's nephew, remember; and when he marries Lady Mabel, and the duke dies, he will be one of the largest landowners in South Hampshire."

"Very well, let him come to your dinner. It can make very little difference."

"Now you are offended, Conrad," said Mrs. Winstanley, with a deprecating air.

"No, I am not offended; but I have my own opinion as to your wisdom in giving any encouragement to Mr. Vawdrey."

This sounded mysterious, and made Mrs. Winstanley uncomfortable. But she was determined not to offend the duchess, who had been so particularly gracious, and who had sent Captain and Mrs. Winstanley a card for a dinner to be given early in January.

So Roderick got his invitation, and accepted it with friendly promptitude. He was master of the hounds now, and a good many of his days were given up to the pleasures of the hunting-field. He was an important person in his way, full of business; but he generally found time to drop in for half an hour on Mrs. Winstanley's Tuesday afternoons, to lounge with his back against the massive oaken chimney-breast and talk to Violet, or pat Argus, while the lady visitors gossiped and tittered over their tea-cups.

This last dinner of Mrs. Winstanley's was to take place a few days before

Christmas, and was to be given in honour of a guest who was coming to spend the holidays at the Abbey House. The guest was Captain Winstanley's Irish friend, Lord Mallow, the owner of Bullfinch.

Vixen's heart gave an indignant bound when she heard that he was coming.

"Another person for me to hate," she said to herself, almost despairingly. "I am becoming a mass of envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness."

Lord Mallow had spent the early morning of life in the army, it appeared, a younger son, with no particular expectations. He and Captain Winstanley had been brother officers. But the fell sergeant, death, had promoted Patrick Hay to his elder brother's heritage, and he had surrendered a subaltern's place in a line regiment to become Viscount Mallow, and the owner of a fine stretch of fertile hill and valley in County Cork. He had set up at once as the model landlord, eager for his tenantry's welfare, full of advanced ideas, a violent politician, liberal to the verge of radicalism. If the Irish Church had not been disestablished before Lord Mallow went into Parliament, he would have gripped his destructive axe and had a chop or two at the root of that fine old tree. Protestant, and loyal to the Church of England in his own person—so far as such loyalty may be testified by regular attendance at divine service every Sunday morning, and a gentlemanlike reverence for bishops—it seemed to him not the less an injustice that his native land should be taxed with the maintenance of an alien clergy.

The late Lord Mallow had been a violent Tory, Orange to the marrow of his bones. The new Lord Mallow was violently progressive, enthusiastic in his belief in Hibernian virtues, and his indignation at Hibernian wrongs. He wanted to disestablish everything. He saw his country as she appears in the eyes of her poets and song-writers—a fair dishevelled female, oppressed by the cruel Sassenach, a lovely sufferer for whose rescue all true men and leal would fight to the death. He quoted the outrages of Elizabeth's reign, the cruelties of Cromwell's soldiery, the savagery of Ginkle, as if those wrongs had been inflicted yesterday, and the House of Commons of to-day were answerable for them. He made fiery speeches which were reported at length in the Irish newspapers. He was a fine speaker, after a florid pattern, and had a great command

of voice, and a certain rugged eloquence that carried his hearers along with him, even when he was harping upon so hackneyed a string as the wrongs of "Ould Ireland."

Lord Mallow was not thirty, and he looked younger than his years. He was tall and broad-shouldered, robust, and 'a trifle clumsy in figure, and rode fourteen stone. He had a good-looking Irish face, smiling blue eyes, black hair, white teeth, bushy whiskers, and a complexion inclining to rosiness.

"He is the perfection of a commonplace young man," Vixen said, when she talked him over with her mother on the day of his arrival at the Abbey House.

"Come, Violet, you must admit that he is very handsome," remonstrated Mrs. Winstanley, who was sitting before her dressing-room fire, with her feet on a fender-stool of her own crewel work, waiting for Pauline to commence the important ceremony of dressing for dinner. "I think I never saw a finer set of teeth, and of course at his age they must all be real."

"Unless he has had a few of the original ones knocked out in the hunting-field, mamma. They go over a good many stone walls in Ireland, you know, and he may have come to grief."

"If you would only leave off talking in that horrid way, Violet. He is a very agreeable young man. How he enjoyed a cup of tea after his journey, instead of wanting soda-water and brandy! Conrad tells me he has a lovely place near Mallow—on the slope of a hill, sheltered on the north with pine woods; and I believe it is one of the prettiest parts of Ireland—so green, and fertile, and sweet, and such a happy peasantry."

"I think I'd better leave you to dress for dinner, mamma. You like a clear hour, and it's nearly half-past six."

"True, love; you may ring for Pauline. I have been wavering between my black and maise and my amethyst velvet, but I think I shall decide upon the velvet. What are you going to wear?"

"I? Oh, anything. The dress I wore last night."

"My love, it is positively dowdy. Pray wear something better in honour of Lord Mallow. There is the dress you had for my wedding," suggested Mrs. Winstanley blushing. "You look lovely in that."

"Mamma, do you think I am going to make a secondhand bridesmaid of myself

to oblige Lord Mallow? No; that dress too painfully bears the stamp of what it was made for. I'm afraid it will have to rot in the wardrobe where it hangs. If it were woollen, the moths would inevitably have it; but, I suppose, as it is silk it will survive the changes of time, and some day it will be made into chair-covers, and future generations of Tempests will point to it as a relic of their great-aunt Violet."

"I never heard anything so absurd," cried Mrs. Winstanley fretfully. "It was Theodore's chef-d'œuvre, and no doubt I shall have to pay an awful price for it."

"Ah, mamma, we are continually doing things for which we have to pay an awful price," said Vixen, with one of her involuntary bursts of bitter sadness.

SHIPS' SHOPS, BY DOCK AND QUAY.

"HEIGH, my hearts! Cheerly! Yare, yare! Take in the top-sail! Tend to the master's whistle! I pray you, now, keep below. To cabin, or we will not hand a rope more; you mar our labour. Cheerily, good hearts! Down with the top-mast! Yare! Lower! Bring her to try with main course! Lay her a-hold! Set her two courses!"

It was the boson. He sung this in that Tempest known to everyone these three centuries. And then there came, three hours afterwards, or, in good Master Boson's own words, in three glasses, this much extra:

"we were dead of sleep
 all clapp'd under hatches,"

when, awaking,

"we, in all her trim, freshly beheld
 Our royal, good, and gallant ship,
 . . . tight, and yare, and bravely rigg'd, as when
 We first put out to sea."

This ship was an Italian ship, tossed on the Mediterranean. The sailors on board of her were Italian sailors. What they did and said would have been pretty much what the sailors of Columbus did and said, of Vasco di Gama, of Magellan; in which side-walk lies much enticing interest and speculation. To such of them as were Italian, in their own language the ship's yard-arms were the ship's antennæ; its ropes were funi; its masts alberti, with the main-mast the albero maestro; every fleet was an armata; every sea-coast a marina; all that was blue (their emblem) was turchino; it was quite their custom to clap themselves

under hatches when tempests ran high and they were in danger (to be in extremest need and to be under hatches having been synonymous in Italy); but let any one of them be boson, master, mariner, cook, carpenter, cabin-boy, he would have had to have laid in his store, or his outfit, for his voyage; neither could have seen his royal, good, and gallant ship made trim, and tight, and bravely rigged, without some sort of forethought, organisation, and expenditure; and in what manner of shops, or stalls, or stores were their purchases made? How were the curious wares collected? Under what sailor-like circumstances did the merchants barter or sell?

There can come no certain answer. It is for the most part bleared and blotted out. Hints can be collected from Ephesus of a merchant, and of oil, and balsamm, and aqua-vitæ; from Jacques, at Arden, of thy loving voyage but for two months victualled; from Illyria, of a captain in this town where lie my maiden weeds; from Venice, of peering in maps for ports, and piers, and roads; from other places of other appetising matter more; but the good metal that might have set all these little gem-cuttings into a jewel, that might have run and fused them together, is missing. How of similar matters to-day though? How, in this British metropolis, are seamen, and officers, and young apprentices provided and purveyed for at the present time? It is to be told easily. Begin at the vast Tower precincts. Go below bridge thoroughly; lower than fish-mart, and customs, and foreign landing-pier; past, too, the Tower postern, and sentries, and subway, and Beheading Place upon the Hill. Go as far round, indeed, as the north-moat and its waste-piece. As far round as the point where foggy streets diverging from south, south-west, south-south-west, west pure, from other points, launch themselves down out of unsalubrious and very commercial localities, radius-wise, as into a common and varied centre.

Good. Take up a position here; the mcat-side gives fit retirement and obscurity; stop in it, and look round you. On this side is that high close street, that muddy elbow-jostled passage-way, the very wall or kerbstone of the teeming river. Filled is it, overbrimmingly, with sacks of nuts from the Brazils and Barcelona; with grapes from Almeria; with oranges from Seville. Filled is it, at another spot, with

cod from Newfoundland; with haddocks and herring from nearer coasts; with whelks, in wet and clattering hillocks; with other hillocks of mussels, in their deep sea-blue. It is a street crowded always, crushed, lofty, bound in; tight with men from the splashy slushy water-steps, carrying head-burdens, carrying back-burdens, pushing along their heavy way, constrained and heated. It is a street, too, where giant and tight-swathed cubes of English hops and Indian jute are ever hanging perilously in the skyway, swinging and swaying as they are being lowered into carts.

Look the other way. The district is that of lanes, and rows, and gardens; Seething, they are, and Mincing, and Mark, and Coopery, and Savage—corruptions, mostly, from excellent meanings, like the Crutched Friars they hang round, or lead to, was once the Crociati Frati, the Brothers of the Crusade; each Crociato a Crusader. The district is far from having anything lane-like, or row-ish, or garden-ish about it, as it is seen to-day though. That has been crushed out of it and built over, long and long ago, by high piles of brick and solid masonry, that are marts, that are offices, that are exchanges, that hold, however, the foreign wares—or selected samples of them—that are the wares for which the sailors cross the seas, and that form the reason why there has been such complete and costly transmutation here.

Make a move round again, still closer to the river; look where narrowed pavements, and close kerbs, and the need to be on the alert for crossing vehicles, drive everything from the footpaths but what has absolute necessity to be there, but what remains only for the rightful moment for which it came, and is then sharp and active to be away. Stay. The centre-point of interest is reached in this. Here, in the most ready grouping, are the absolute items that gather round about sailors, that are exhibited to supply the wants of sailors; here, all is of sailors, sailorly; and there must be a crossing over, for positive entrance of the streets themselves.

It is well. Here is a shop where Boson could find all his requisites waiting for him, wholesale and retail, in bulk and untied, packed carefully for compressed storing, or piecemeal for extraction as required.

That some of the articles would seem, by their names, to be the absurdest

notions (in a British, not a Yankee sense), for the merest fancy purposes, is true. There are boat-sheets, there are chain-dogs, there are shroud-trucks, there are parrel-trucks, there are jack-screws, there are sister-hooks, there are serving-mallets, there are wood hanks, and kedges. They are items, certainly, of which admirable Dibdin and Captain Marryat never made the least use, which made no appearance on board the Black-eyed Susan, and which, apparently, might be consequently expunged from the service of the British navy without any loss or disadvantage anywhere. Then some items would make it appear that Master Boson must be a dancing-master. There are log-reels, and deep-sea-reels, and fish-jigs, and scrapers, with ship's-bells to play upon, and even that other available musical instrument (in an emergency), a harpoon. From another view, Boson might seem to be an eccentric and mixed-up sort of grazier or farmer. The ship's chandler's stores, at any rate, nestling under the tall masts of the ship, have got ready for him plenty of grains, of ash and hickory, of junk, and hog's-lard. Or is it that he is a milliner? with all these hobs prepared for him—can-hooks, tackle-hooks, these pins—of the belaying sort, these prickers, these hoops, these new blocks—to fit his goods on, these block-screws—to properly adjust them, these wood buoys to dress up with his specimens, and show them off at his door? More comprehensible articles in the stores are brooms, birch-brooms, coir-brooms, mops; are paint-brushes of all sizes, cabin-brushes of all sizes, shoe-brushes of all sizes; are coir-mats, are deck-buckets, and draw-buckets—see them hanging down from the ceiling of this shop, a marine decoration, just visible in the dingy space; are cork-fenders, and long and short matted fenders—all visible by sample, it may be observed, and being those handy hempen bags for squeezing between ship and ship, and ship and anything, to prevent some ugly splintering; are water-funnels, are coir deck-scrubs, are deck-clamps, are paint-clamps, are holystones, are top-sail sheet-shackles, are capstan-bars. If ropes are wanted on board a ship, too—ropes of four-inch coil, of three-inch, of two-inch; if rattlins are wanted, hawsers, warps, fishing-lines, signal-halyards, sewing-twine, roping-twine, Hamborough lines, leads of all sorts, screw-links, Boson is "piped" to bring them forward; and they are all to be seen by dock and quay here, handy for

Boson's ordering. Ballast-shovels are to be found here, also, for the same stores; and fire-shovels, and marling-spikes, and three sorts of varnish, and mineral tar, and tallow—for all these items being under Boson's care, it must be understood, it is he who is responsible for them, and for their condition; he serves them out; he must see they are not wasted or stolen; and, like a king over any other such set of miscellaneous and heterogeneous subjects, he must execute a great deal of hard work to see they are in order.

Ships' chandlery, deceptive term as it is, has not arrived at an end, either, with this one list of necessaries for one ship's officer; nor does it evince any symptom of being at an end, or of being anything near it. See these stout rolls or lumping packages of canvas; they are for the sail-maker; no other hand has any jurisdiction over them. Some of the packages are coker canvas, some long flax, some patent, some best boiled, some brown repairing, some tarpauling, some parsline, each for its purpose, each required. Here are plenty of balls of seaming-twine, also, for the sail-maker and his men to seam with; here are the needles they want, the palms, the rubbers, the sail-hooks; here is the roping-twine, with sitting-mallets, and sitting-fids, and fids without any sitting—a fid being a very innocent little pin, sometimes of iron, sometimes of wood, used to open the strands of ropes when two ends of them are going to be spliced. As for the ship's carpenters, there are so many things to be seen for them, as first one ship-shop is passed by and then another, it takes some time to get the matter into realisation. Here are barrels of tar, and pitch, and rosin; here are pitch-pots and pitch-ladles; here are caulking-irons, grind-stones, handsaws, planes, and chisels; here are nails in all their varieties: copper, countersunk, clout, brads, with the queer numbers to some of them—fourpenny, tenpenny, twentypenny, thirtypenny, and so on; here are tools of the ordinary sort, adzes, augers, pincers, gimlets; here are some whose names, to take that much of them only, sound very extraordinary, these being water-joints, thrums, forelocks, boat-roves, spoke-shears; here are some quite recognisable, such as signal-lanterns, deck-lights, deal, oak, and elm planks, spars, and crow-bars; here are others that, taken only by their names again, for example—dead-eyes, cold chisels, gouges, spikes, pen-mauls—sound piratical. Large measures

of oil lying near these—a kind of Morgiana business on a reduced scale—and large measures of paint and turpentine, are not to be stored up under the care of Mr. Carpenter; they are for yet another ship's officer—the painter. With them are ground tools, sash tools, pencil brushes, putty, mastic, litharge (vitrified lead); white, red, and black lead; and of course the colours—vermilion, chrome yellow, Indian green, and so on—that are to give the craft as much as is available for her of freshness and beauty. Other things of which there are indications—those azimuth compasses there; those hour-glasses, some to run four hours, some two hours, some half an hour; those ensigns, jacks, blue peters, pennants, Marryat's signals; that hunting of all colours—come under the general head of ship's stores, incapable of any further technical division. Look at all the lamps also. These are called globe, these are copper, these binnacle, these are for hanging. They all look everlasting, indestructible, impregnable; this sort, as may be seen, being miniature Polytechnic diving-bells, equally as certain to be as good the next century as they are this. This other lamp a little farther on is a cabin lamp; these are for the compass; these for the fore-castle; and here are lanterns—side-lanterns—for convenient dropping down at a rope's end, for any boarding or going ashoring, by help of gig or dingey, over the ship's side, or for any other ship purpose requiring a ready light. Here are speaking-trumpets, looking huge enough on close acquaintance; here are fog-horns, of momentous value when sudden mists sweep up; here are spy-glasses; here are charts—this one just spread out for example; it is the coast of Cape Colony, from Table Bay to Port Natal, on three sheets, see, with these plans of harbours and this book of directions, price ten shillings, as it is, or, mounted on cloth for captain's use, thirteen shillings and nine-pence; here is the whole long list of ship's stationery, all coming in broadly as ship's stores, and comprising such articles as log slates, log books, journal books, cargo books, and tin cases for careful keeping of ship's papers. Stewards' stores, inasmuch as they approach housekeeping, and contain many things that land-kitchens and land-scelleries contain, have not enough of marine flavour to cause any long detention, except that there is a general tendency of everything to be made of

tin, and to be made so that it can be hung up; and except, finally, that this other group of things, comprehensible quite for their uses, have the odd names given to them in their shipping connection of mess-kids, of dippers, of tormentors.

Stockholm tar can be seen announced in many windows as this saunter by dock and quay proceeds. Shopkeepers from Stockholm, too, and from other decidedly un-British towns and cities, seem to have come over with their commodities as the easiest way to sell them, and to have stopped here when come, not liking to go away. There are the oddest names over shop-door and shop-window, at any rate, giving probability to this supposition. Pacynska may be read, so may Siene, Kruger, Grobb, Kuhlberg, Dahlgren, Schwenck, Brentner. Baak may be read (musical Bach undoubtedly, only submitted to alien spelling), and Waldvogel prettily, and Mendoza and Grimm (with very welcome literary flavour), and Yadala, to carry nationality as far as possible away. And France is not without its representatives. Here is a quaint little establishment owned by a Bottier Français, as he calls himself; the said bottier saying of himself on the card-board ticket underneath his name, that he "fait proprement des raccomodages." German notices are put up, too, to attract German sailors; and there is a bright little brass plate over there, on a bright little door, notifying that it belongs to a Scandinaviskt Skepper Hus, and is kept by one Kroon; and in this reposeful square is a reposeful Danish church; and foreign money, if it can only get into these streets, is exchanged for English money at many a convenient corner; and foreign interpreters are ready to interpret in every conceivable language—French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Turkish, Russian, Greek; and foreign faces are about—black skin, brown skin, swarthy, yellow; and there are snatches heard of foreign talk; and snatches seen of foreign and marine customs—if only a peep of ships'-masts, bunched out with tree-boughs in honour of a saint, or peeps of rigging used as clothes-lines for washed guernseys, or as drying sheds for row upon row of insignificant split fish; on the whole of which account is it that it seems quite consistent to come upon Norway Wharf, upon Denmark Street, upon Jamaica Inn; quite consistent to see, too, opposite there,

straight facing, Friday's Mariner's House, with the necessary expectation it brings of being able to hail in it that mariner of mariners, Robinson Crusoe.

Here are business-places, too, called binnacle works, with no explanation of how a binnacle got itself adopted instead of a bittacle about a century ago—the same having been effected without any sponsorship from Johnson, who never mentions the modern word; here are ballast offices; here are ship carvers, to work away on those beautiful figure-heads, and paint them gamboge and tender pink; here are ships' artists, writing up, "Ships' Portraits Taken Here," figure-head, of course, and all; here are the great Mercantile Marine Offices, where seamen go to show they are ship-worthy, and to sign ship's articles; here are places for the manufacture and the sale of boat-lowering gear; here are shops showing helms and other steering apparatus, and shops offering marine soap and marine glue; here are public-houses laying especial claim to selection because Lloyd's Shipping List may be read inside of them; here are pawnbrokers, with sextants and such like matter on second-hand sale; here are—but no, it is a remarkable fact that requires deep scrutiny—there is not one marine-store dealer to be seen, though shop-keepers of that variety might surely be expected to be here in abundance. There is one class of ships' artificers at hand, though, quaint, simple, as picturesque as picturesque can be—the mast-makers. These are to be found on the very river-edge; where vast warehouses have worn themselves out; where buildings get low, and streets get narrow, and little odd bits of boat-yards, pushed in insidiously between bigger neighbours, are ornamented with veritable whale-jaws, by way of gate-post, as if in some tar-smear'd fishers' corner, in a remote sea-side. As these mast-makers work, they have the Thames broad open to them, as the end of their shops; they have a bend of the river, sea-way, to the left, opening with a glorious area of sky; they have a bend of the river town-way, to the right; they have the craft to pass; they have the barges, lighters, scullers, ferry-boats, high in the smooth mud underneath them; the children scrambling in and out to play, and scrambling back to land again by the half-imbedded timbers left there year by year. As these mast-makers work, too, they stand in their low-pitched shed, out

of turmoil, out of interruption; they have their one mast, or tree, lengthways—got into the shed from the water-end, to be got out of it by the water-end—and they bend over and plane, and plane, and plane still, with shavings underneath them as high up as their ankles; old iron hoops and old hemp ropes hanging from wall and ceiling; old benches here and there, with vices, screws, saws, and other tools about; and with the chance that a high tide may come and sweep in at the unshuttered river-front, sending shavings, tools, and all light matter well afloat.

Then there are shops full of sailors' literature—manuals, handy-books, and so forth. Some of the titles of these are The Law of Storms, The Anchor Watch, Masthead Angles, The Channel Pilot—in two parts, because the Channel has an immensity to be said about it—The List of Lights of the World, Deviation of the Compass, The Sun's True Azimuth, and other technical things belonging to astronomy and navigation. One especial piece of sailors' literature is the sailor's newspaper. In this may be read what A.B.s have been stopped by custom-house officers and fined for smuggling; what ships' stewards have purloined tins of soup and milk belonging to the ship they ought to have protected; what ships are loading and where; what is their tonnage, their destination, their captains' names, their owners; what ships are repairing; what are to be sold; whether these are desirable because they have been re-tree-nailed, poop-shortened, sheathed with yellow metal over brown felt, continued on the first letter for nine years; because they will shift without ballast, will carry a fair cargo on an easy draught, have flush decks with houses forward. Another piece of especial sailors' literature is the sailor's almanack. In this there are instructions for saving life in shipwreck by the mortar and rocket; there are diagrams of the signals for storms; there are the rates for sheltering in and going out of some of the British docks—twopence a ton, for instance, at one dock for entering only, if the vessel has come from any port in Great Britain; fourpence a ton, if from European ports north of Ushant; sixpence, from European ports south of it; eightpence, from North America; one shilling, from some parts of Africa, and so on. There are the terms for pilotage, computed on the ship's draught, and being at Shields, one shilling and three-

pence a foot in the summer months, and one shilling and sixpence in the winter; there are the fees payable to British consuls: two shillings for an oath, the same for attestation of a signature, ten shillings for a bill of health, a guinea a day for attendance at a shipwreck. There are such pieces of information as: "To enter the harbour . . . bring Kilvey old mill on with the white elbow of Swansea eastern pier;" as, "Lie to the shore, and you will have better ground and less tide;" as, "If your vessels touch upon any of the sands, particularly the Foulholme, Paul Sand, or Skitter, they will very probably be upset." There are lists of package duty, quayside tolls, dues for use of shed, ballast dues, town dues, pier dues, river moorings, lighthouse dues, refuge dues, wharfage, ramage, storage; there are the dimensions of some of the graving docks, the variations of the magnetic needle, a notice of the Fast of Ramadan, since it may be useful to cruisers in the Mohammedan states.

There are shops to be found, however, by this same dock and quay, that speak to the sailor as the man, leaving him for the moment as the seaman. In this new character Jack is to be seen carrying a big misshapen bundle, out of which there come peeps of opal-gleaming shells, of temple models veneered with cowries, of tail-ends and head-ends of rattle-snakes (safely dead), and Jack is at a disadvantage, indeed, capable only of sustaining the sort of attack that would be levelled at a child. Accordingly Jack is met, at far too perilous frequency, with large poster-boards announcing "Sailors Advance-notes Cashed, One Shilling in the Pound;" and he, poor fellow, feeling himself shabby, possibly, in his salt-stained ship-gear, in his slouching shoes, in his mere apology for a cap, goes in to the shops that seem to him so accommodating, and buys land-clothes at this rate of nineteen shillings for twenty, besides other profits, discounts, and disabilities unsuspected by him, and he dons them, and rolls along in them, quite happy. Or, supposing all advance-notes have been cashed, thus expensively, and further cashing is yet a desideratum, there are shops that bring to the difficulty yet another elucidation. These are shell-shops, parrot-shops, sailors' curio and memento shops; these are the shops where conch-shells show their hard warty backs and rosy-shaded, silky-smooth interior, where sea-

urchins lie about in prickles and pale purple; these are the shops where green parrots bite and snap at the wires of their cages, and white cockatoos, tufted with sulphur-colour, torture their little chained feet to wrest them from captivity and get away; these are the shops, too, where sailors' tiny Chinese pagodas are insinuatingly shown, with sailors' fairy inlaid cabinets, and cork cottages, and cedar bungalows, along with articulated shark-bones and preserved snakes; and it is at these that sailors can sell their transatlantic and transpacific treasures as another method of advance-noting. Sailors' lodgings run by the side of these shops also; two shillings and sixpence a week, it says, as an aristocratic price, with sixpence for a single night, to be paid, both sums, in advance (Jack's childishness, from its other and less lively side, being a fact of which dock and quay ahop-keepers are well aware); whilst two shillings a-week, or fourpence a-night, also in advance, is a lower figure; and ship's apprentices are offered to be boarded in most unsanitary and repellent-looking places on easy terms. It is all well, possibly, though there exists some doubt about it. At any rate it is all well, and thoroughly well, in the midst of all these ships' shops, to come upon an old graveyard, levelled, and grassed, and gravelled, flowers growing in it, and fountains sparkling in it, and trees giving shelter, and seats giving rest; to come upon it with space enough for the sky to be seen from it widely, for the sun to shine on it brightly, whilst children play there, and old men sit and chat and read there, and nasturtiums, and mignonette, and dahlias grow in the borders and high stone vases luxuriantly, and picturesque festoons of ivy are gradually veiling over the upright tombstones embedded in the walls. So, also, is it all well to come upon another sailors' haven that must be heaven too, and so much of heaven that poor Jack shall be left there happily with all hope and halo round him. It is a quiet homely house, with a simple homely chapel one of the apartments in it, where the pews are built high, and a strong smell of tar pervades everyone, preventing poor Jack feeling out of place, and overawed, and too much open to others' gaze; and where there are quiet rooms, all days and all evenings long, for reading, writing, thinking, with books and newspapers, and pen and ink and paper, as free as the air outside; and where the chaplain will meet

anyone, of any sect, with all the charity his wide experience has given him, and the resident librarian is ever at hand with sympathy in any trouble, with advice in any perplexity, with ready reference, and a kind smile. May this place never want the necessary support to keep it where it is! Bethel it is called, and it is in St. George Street (a good name, considering the dragon it has ever kept at bay), the number of it Two-hundred and Fifteen, and the spot opposite the London Docks.

DOWN SOUTH IN FEVER TIME.

It was at the Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, in the middle of the month of September, 1853. I had devoted a week or so to exploring the marvels of the underground world; generally in company with such visitors as lingered at the hotel towards the end of the season. We were none the less sociable on account of our paucity of numbers. Our place of entertainment had not then arrogated its present title of "City." It was a homely, old-fashioned caravanserai, like a second-rate planter's house exaggerated. A long two-storey building, with one wing, both constructed of wood, it comprised more crazy corridors, and rickety rambling piazzas, than I can describe or account for. Nowhere could you fancy yourself more completely out of the world; for the hotel stood all alone on an estate of seventeen hundred acres, and there was not a town or hamlet within a score of miles. All around stretched the Kentucky wilderness—an unbroken region of mountain, valley, and forest, now becoming beautiful exceedingly with the unspeakable glories of an American autumn. Hence a sense of seclusion intensified our good-fellowship, and we improved each shining and shady hour to the utmost. I am sorry to say this goodly hostelry is now a thing of the past; it was burnt down—or up—during the Civil War; and at present you reach the pretentious one which has replaced it by means of a railway, instead of over a hundred miles of the very worst roads which ever imperilled the life or limbs of the adventurous traveller.

In this comfortable abode, then, did I make the acquaintance of a young Louisianian, who, in personal appearance, disposition, and character, so strongly reminded me of Fielding's Tom Jones, that I shall designate him by that name

in this narrative. The grandson and presumptive heir of a very wealthy planter in the "Sugar State," he was sufficiently free-handed, self-indulgent, and irascible to justify the ordinary notions about his class. We explored, not only the intricacies of the Great Cave together, but also other less famous yet remarkable "sink-holes" in the vicinity, and drank Bourbon whisky, smoked cigars, and told stories of evenings. One night he spoke as follows:

"Oh, doc, what do you think I came here for?"

"Doc" was the abbreviation of doctor, a title facetiously bestowed upon me by my companion, in consequence of my having prescribed for the ankle of one of the guides, sprained in our service.

"To see the Cave, or to dodge the yellow fever," was my not unnatural answer.

Appearing in New Orleans, on the 1st of August, the disease had not only ascended the Mississippi and desolated the unfortunate towns on either bank, but also ravaged those of the interior of some of the Southern States—in short, anticipated its course in 1878, and with far more terrible effects. Of these, however, we were then comparatively ignorant, only knowing the general facts. I had been making the tour of the great northern lakes, and Tom Jones did not care to read newspapers.

"Well, partly so," he added. "When it got up to Lake Providence, I thought it about time to quit. But I reckon it's pretty much played out now. What I wanted to say is that I'm waiting for two cousins of mine, who are coming here with nine horses, which we are going to take down the river by land."

I enquired the meaning of his rather paradoxical expression.

"Oh, right across Tennessee, through a corner of Alabama, and half Mississippi, till we strike the river opposite Carroll Parish, where I'm tew hum, as the Yankees say." The great State of Louisiana is partitioned into parishes instead of counties—some of them being larger than English shires. "You see, it'll save money, toting the animals ourselves. And then they are liable to be knocked about on the steamboats, if they ain't blown up, as I was, last fall. Won't you come along with us?"

The invitation was tempting, involving as it did such an opportunity of seeing many out-of-the-way localities, commonly

unvisited by tourists, and proportionately interesting. I had never been farther south than Kentucky. Still, there was "Yellow Jack"—a rather formidable drawback to an entirely unacclimatised Englishman. As I have said, we knew, but indefinitely, that it had prevailed in part of the region through which the intended journey lay. However, as my companion had suggested, the worst of it was certainly over, and the long-desired advent of another mythical Jack, popularly surnamed Frost, would assuredly dispose of the remainder. So, on the arrival of Tom Jones's cousins, who cordially seconded his invitation, I agreed to go. How little did I then foresee what was included in that unwise decision!

We set off accordingly, my comrades leading the five supernumerary horses, and absolving me of all responsibility but that of managing my own. The elder, and virtually the leader of the party, was, like Tom Jones, prospective heir to a Louisianian cotton plantation; and the third cousin, poor fellow, a young Kentuckian, on his way to New Orleans, there to enter upon commercial life. For discriminative purposes we will call the first Richard, and the second Oliver.

It was an expedition which I should hardly fail to remember, independent of the grim experiences marking its close. We travelled but slowly, for a journey of over four hundred miles was before us, and neither the horses nor roads were in good condition. Incidental delays, too, were not infrequent; hence, twenty miles formed the average of a day's progress: sometimes, indeed, we did not accomplish half as much. Richard had obtained a sketch of the route from a friendly drover, by observing which we should probably have fared much better than we did, for it indicated "stands" where we might procure decent food and lodging; but missing our way, almost at the outset, we were fain to put up with chance accommodation, often of the roughest description. Our path might have been compared to that of vice in the old allegory; it began pleasantly enough, but became unutterably wretched as we advanced.

Two days' riding through the rolling country of southern Kentucky, amid such autumnal foliage as no pigments ever possessed by mortal painter, or words of poet, could do justice to, brought us into Tennessee, when the scenery became grander, with hills and wild hollows

covered with mighty trees of superlative beauty. Here we first saw some newspapers from farther south, with details in them which might have bid us pause, had we not been equally hopeful and heedless. The general, and I have no doubt correct opinion is that yellow fever originates in malaria, a miasmatic condition of the atmosphere caused by the decomposition of vast quantities of vegetable matter under a semi-tropical sun. As said, it always disappears with the first breath of winter, which probably destroys the poison-germs floating in the air. It was difficult to admire the exquisite colours of the foliage—the varieties of yellows, reds, scarlets, purples, and blacks, with all their kaleidoscopic intermediate tints—which made the region a kind of fairy-land, without attributing its fantastic loveliness to the beneficent agency of frost. The weather, however, was still oppressively sultry, the skies were blue and cloudless, and the lonely roads hoof-deep with dust. We were not going, knowingly, through any infected town, so exaggerating the hopeful signs, and making light of the disadvantageous ones, we kept on.

We had our adventures, of course. Not to mention such trifles as the repeated runnings-away of the led horses, whether singly or in greater numbers; and their chase and capture, after more or less expenditure of time and oaths; or their as frequent and often successful attempts to lie down, as we were fording rivers; one of them staked himself on a fence, and, poor brute, had to be shot. Then, twice, Jones left his purse behind at our overnight's lodgings, and was obliged to return and reclaim it. It spoke well for the honesty of the people, in at least one case, that he succeeded. Our hosts were commonly persons to whom, judging from appearances, money must have proved a temptation. Their houses were mere log-huts, consisting of two rooms, with the flat roof extending over an otherwise open space between them; in which locality the meals were invariably eaten, let the hour or weather be what it might. Imagine a supper of corn-cake, bacon, and perhaps "chicken-fixings," fried to the extreme of greasy indigestibility, thus partaken of; presided over by a bony woman in a handkerchief-turban, who silently pours out some abomination passing muster as coffee, while her husband, a hard-featured and repulsive man, stares furtively at you like a savage, rarely caring even to ask an

abrupt question. This funeral repast is lighted by a candle, stuck in a bottle, and flickering in the dank night-breeze, and watched by some gaunt long-legged swine, wallowing in the adjacent mire and grunting melodiously; beyond are shuddering trees and a swamp. The rooms, too, were seldom weatherproof; we could often see the stars, or feel the rain, through the crevices between the logs. In fact, I should say that Robinson Crusoe had a luxurious time of it, compared with that of a "scallawag," or "poor white," in Alabama or Mississippi.

Other indications of the half-civilised character of the population were as peculiar. Repeatedly we were asked "whether we were not going to take them horses to New Orleans to gamble with?"—I presume by means of racing. Once we overtook a pedestrian, who, being accommodated with a ride, presently startled us with the information that he had recently "broke jail," and by displaying an extraordinary testimonial to his character, intimating that he was not the real murderer of the person for whose death he had been imprisoned, but that the writer was responsible for that little matter! A town in Alabama we found in no little state of excitement; for a house of bad character had just been torn down, six duels fought—with pistols, knives, and fists—and a gambler ducked in the river, after an abortive attempt at tarring and feathering him. This unhappy wretch, too, secreted himself under my bed at the hotel, whence he was hunted by the enraged Tuscumbians. We saw a row of poor negroes—some twenty or so, men, women, and children—dressed in their best clothes, and mournfully sitting in front of a court-house, or town-hall, for inspection, before sale. Of course, the spectacle of slaves working in the cotton-fields, and looking scarcely human, was common enough. But this scanty itinerary would assume impossible dimensions were I to chronicle all such details. I will therefore add but one more illustration of Southern life, taken from our own party. A difference of opinion occurring between Tom Jones and Richard, on the question of fording a wide and deep river instead of paying the toll over a bridge, the former not only swam his horse to a little island in the stream (by way of demonstrating the feasibility of his proposition), but on returning, and renewing the altercation, actually wanted his more prudent cousin to dismount

and settle the matter in the road—with revolvers!

The hot weather was varied with storms of almost tropical fury as we progressed, and occasionally we rode for days through persistent, pelting rain. Always the nights were chill, and sometimes a deathly-cold "norther" blew, penetrating us to the very marrow; insomuch that, except in the sultry noon, or close to a blazing log-fire, I never felt warm for the remainder of the journey. Still no frost had yet occurred. Our health began to suffer from the exposure; I and young Oliver being the worst affected of the party. We felt sick, in the English as well as the American application of the word, and our limbs ached; but attributing these disorders to the diet and inclemencies of the weather, to which, indeed, they might be fairly imputed, and not permitting ourselves to be discouraged, we held on. It was upon entering Mississippi, on the fourteenth day of our journey, that we first came upon the unsuspected vicinity of the yellow fever. We had ridden an exceptionally long distance—above thirty miles—for an hour or more in darkness, mud and water, through a dismal swamp, sometimes over perilous bridges formed of loose planks or fallen trees. In the very heart of this dreary region was a hut, where we drew rein to make the customary enquiry about lodging. A voice, faint and hollow, as though scarcely of this world, bade us "Pass on," adding, "All down with the fever." And thenceforth we rode through a plague-stricken country.

The disease was abating, but had prevailed through all the western part of the State, capriciously, after its fashion, passing over certain localities to wreak its virulence in others. We heard dismal stories as we advanced; many of them exaggerated, of course, but originating in a pitiful reality, as was but too evident. Some of the towns presented a most doleful appearance; the houses and stores being closed, their windows broken, and placarded with intimations whither the late occupants had fled, or where medicines might be bought. Grass grew on the sidewalks and in the deserted streets; and the few gaunt and miserably-looking inhabitants, whom the sound of our horses' hoofs attracted to the doors, gazed wonderingly at the supposed daring "drovers," whose greed induced them to defy the pestilence. Communication with other places had mostly ceased; even the post-

offices were closed, the postmasters having died or departed—often to be overtaken by fate elsewhere. Telegraph-clerks had “wired” a farewell message to the next operator, and succumbed to the destroyer. Newspapers had stopped; editors, composers, pressmen, all were dead. Whole families had been swept off in a few hours; none being left to procure the rites of burial; the dread odours of decomposition sometimes first proclaiming what had happened. People who had lost all their relatives lived in “shanties” by the roadside, awaiting the passionately prayed-for frost and the disappearance of the dreadful epidemic. Everybody talked low, as if in a house of mourning, or overshadowed by calamity. The very forests had an air of funereal gloom, swathed as they were by that long grey parasitical moss which imparts such a peculiarly mournful aspect to Southern trees, or with its gigantic cobwebs hanging from their branches. The pestilence, like a nightmare, seemed to oppress creation.

It had rained intermittently for two days, yet still we rode on, for there was no turning back, and we hoped, on crossing the Mississippi, to leave the yellow fever behind. I was very ill, though Oliver had apparently rallied; and when, by the middle of the third day, we reached a house of the better sort, we determined to halt—of course, if the occupants would entertain us. In a comfortable room we found the family at dinner—what a contrast the scene presented to drenched and way-worn travellers may be imagined. My appearance attracted observation, and when, in answer to our host's enquiry, I acknowledged that I felt sick, the man asked, in natural trepidation: “You haven't got the yellow fever?” at the same time hastily ordering one of the children who had approached me to come away. I respected the father's feelings, and reassuring him, was presently allowed to go upstairs, where I lay on a blanket on the floor, and partook of such remedies as were available for what was not, thank Heaven, the yellow fever, but a bad bilious attack, with the accompaniments of exhaustion, exposure, and unwholesome food. In two days I was enabled to continue our journey.

The demon of the plague had passed me by, but only to take another victim. The very next morning frost appeared—sharp, hard, and clear—a hoary rime whitening all the vegetation. Everybody was pro-

portionately exhilarated—everybody but the poor lad Oliver. He seemed unusually depressed in spirits and torpid, and when questioned, complained of cold and a slight headache, and then of fever, and, after awhile, of pains in the back. He wouldn't lay by for them, he said; it was nothing—he should soon be better. But presently his eyes were suffused, dull, and heavy, his sight was dim, and sometimes double. He betrayed confusion of mind, and a kind of drowsy restlessness. The tokens were upon him. The blessed change in the weather had come too late, and he was stricken with the yellow fever.

Justly alarmed at his condition, his consins—who could not have been kinder, either to him or me—insisted on stopping and obtaining medical aid. Accordingly we spurred onwards to Benton, a little town in Yazoo County, not far from the Mississippi. I shall never forget our entrance. In spite of the frosty morning the day had proved sultry, and the evening was close and oppressive; there was, too, a glare of strange unnatural colours in the western sky, orange and green predominating. In that direction, only ten miles off, lay Yazoo City, where we were told half the population had died; it was always a sickly place, our informant added; the name meant that in Indian, and he reckoned Yellow Jack would use it up entirely this time. Hastily we got poor Oliver to bed, and procured a physician, who gave us but little hope. Our friend had reached the crisis of the disease, he said, before he was aware of it; the chances were thus badly against him.

He prescribed a mustard bath and cathartics, but the fever increased rapidly, and soon the poison pervaded the entire system. Oliver tossed and raved in agony. Thus he continued for thirty-six hours. Then the disease seemed to abate, and gradually to pass off—joy and hope began to dawn upon us. “He is better, doctor; he will live?” we anxiously enquired. But the physician answered evasively. How did he know? Could he see into the patient's stomach, and perceive the dark brown liquid, there collecting, which marked the process of dissolution? Suddenly the fever returned, but now the paroxysm was more brief. Again Oliver was quiet, but not so hopeful as before. He was weak, prostrate, and deathly pale, but he had no fever; his pulse was regular, and his skin moist. “He will get well,” we insisted. The doctor shook his head

ominously. Presently drops of blood appeared on the sufferer's lips; they had oozed from the gums; a bad, but not necessarily a desperate sign. Then he had a hiccough, followed by the dreadful fatal vomit. In a few hours all was over.

We buried the poor lad temporarily and crossed the Mississippi, subsequently sending for the body. It was but a dismal sojourn that I had on the cotton plantations near Lake Providence, though my hosts were friendly enough. Others of their kin had died of the fever. From nine to ten thousand persons fell victims to it throughout the South that year; it was the worst visitation ever known in the United States of America.

A PARIS FÊTE IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

No fête of the Second Empire was ever half so grand as what was perhaps the finest of all the fine things which were to be seen at various times during last year's Exposition. Several English magazines have described it, and all agree in naming as its distinguishing feature the part taken in it by the Parisians themselves; it was the people's fête, not merely or chiefly an official affair. In this it resembled the old fêtes at the coronation or marriage of kings, in the days when the monarchy was a thoroughly popular institution. Besides being popular, in the sense of having the people to take an active part in them, those mediæval fêtes were fully as splendid as ours, save in the matter of lighting up. In the daytime nothing could be grander than the cavalcades, the streets hung with tapestries, the tournaments, the processions; but after dark, though the chroniclers tell us that candles in every window turned night into day, it must have been but a foggy kind of day.

A grand fête was that which gossiping old Nicholas de Bray so lovingly describes at the coronation of Louis the Eighth. He was popular for his father's sake; for had not Philip Augustus beaten John and Otho—England and Germany—at Bouvines? and had he not begun his reign by bringing the Duke of Burgundy to order—inaugurating thereby the long struggle in which the French kings, for their own ends, sided with the people against the great

nobles? As for his ill-treatment of his second wife, Ingelberga of Denmark, whom he repudiated for the Tyrolese Agnes of Méran, his people might well forgive him that; for, after letting them suffer an eight months' interdict, he gave way, and reinstated Ingelberga. Louis the Eighth, moreover, was descended through his brother from the house of Charlemagne, so that people began to talk of the restoration of the old line with its glorious memories. Nicholas tells how everyone came out dressed in his best; how the burgesses curtained the whole city with rich cloth of divers colours; how troops of young people of both sexes danced in every open space, while singers and viol-players swarmed in till there were more of them in Paris than one would have thought all France contained. Wonder of wonders, too, the rich did not keep the poor at a distance, "everyone kept open house, and high and low ate and drank side by side." When the citizens brought their presents—mostly wonderful pieces of embroidery—to the king, he showed his thanks by emancipating his serfs, and by including in an amnesty all who had conspired against his father. A minstrel then came and played and sang before Louis, and in his song exhorted him to remember justice and mercy; and he replied that "he would deal out to this people, to him by God entrusted, the maintenance of the laws in what to them was due." John, too, though he came to the throne in evil days, after the misfortune of Cressy, and was destined to lead the way to the greater misfortune of Poitiers, was immensely popular when he succeeded his unlucky father. Why he was surnamed "the good" it is hard to tell; or why, after crushing down the states-general, and bloodthirstily stamping out the jacquerie, he should have been welcomed from his English prison "with universal transports of joy and gratitude." When he came to the throne, however, Paris was naturally en fête. The streets were tapestried; the guilds of workmen marched, some guilds on foot, some on horseback, dressed in their several costumes; the city kept holiday for a whole week, and the king made a vast number of knights, to each one of whom he gave a set of robes, rare furs lined with silk and cloth of gold. "It was a grand sight to see him in Notre Dame, sitting on a throne high and lifted up, in robes of cloth of gold, as

rich as could be made, and all the young newly-made knights seated below at his feet on seats covered with cloth of gold. So sat the king in his royal state, with a crown very rich, and beyond measure precious, on his head."

But the fête of fêtes was that which Charles the Sixth gave when he knighted his young cousins, the King of Sicily and the Duke of Maine. Froissart, Monstrelet, Olivier de la Marche, outdo one another in their fulness of detail. Everything was done according to strict rules of chivalry; for Charles, "the well-beloved," unlike several of his predecessors, had gone in thoroughly for fencible against progress; and the great victory of Roosbeke over Philip van Artevelde and the Flemings, in which twenty-five thousand Flemings were killed in half an hour, ruined the popular cause in France as well as in the Netherlands. Charles exacted nearly a million livres from Paris alone as the price of pardon for having dared to wish for municipal liberties; but this vast sum can have gone only a little way in paying for his fêtes. On the first day of the fête that I speak of was held a grand tournament, the king bearing on his device a golden sun, and, with the princes of the blood, keeping the field against all comers. Every knight was led to the entry of the lists by a lady richly dight, who, mounted on a palfrey, guided his horse by a golden ribbon. When they had come inside the lists the lady dismounted, gave her knight a courtly kiss, and exhorted him to comport himself valiantly; she then took her place on the seats, which were hung with rich tapestries. After three days of jousting came a masquerade, of which amusement Charles was very fond. We remember how a fright at one of his later masquerades cost him his reason. The next day, at St. Denis, was a grand funeral service in honour of Messire Duguesclin, constable of France. These violent contrasts were not thought inconsistent in those days; and the ceremony was so grand as to be a sort of fête in itself. De Clisson, Duguesclin's comrade, the conqueror at Roosbeke, headed the procession, then came the two marshals of France, the dead man's brother, and the officiating bishop. Then a crowd of dukes—Burgundy, Bourbon, Lorraine, Bar, &c., many of whom afterwards fell at Agincourt; and some of whom, like Burgundy and

Orleans, helped our Henry by their quarrels more even than did his own generalship and the imbecility of his opponents. Four war-horses these noble dukes led up to the high altar. Then came six lords carrying shields blazoned with the dead man's arms, and then the princes of the blood bearing his two-handed sword, while other nobles followed with helmets and banners.

So near to this as to form almost a portion of the fête came the entry into Paris of the young queen, Isabella of Bavaria. She was, perhaps, the worst queen whom France ever had; and her cruel neglect of her poor insane husband, while she joined in one or other of the intrigues which were tearing France to pieces, makes her memory hateful. But she had not then shown her true nature; and Charles was as much in love with her as when he had married her, a girl of fourteen, five days after he had first seen her at Amiens. The marriage was a trick of the Duke of Burgundy, who had married his son to a Bavarian princess, and wished his king to be allied to the same family; and of the Duchess of Brabant, who took Isabella on a pilgrimage to St. John of Amiens, and instructed her how to behave so as to make a favourable impression on the young king. They met at Arras; and Isabella went down on her knees, and played her part so well, that Charles could not take his eyes off her. Five days after she was taken to Amiens cathedral in a carriage (one of the earliest on record) covered with cloth of silver. And now, in 1382, after having been kept out of Paris for four years, Charles brought in his bride, a girl still, amid the tumultuous joy of the very people who had made such desperate efforts for municipal self-government (the Commune, in other words) at the beginning of his reign.

The queen was in a litter—she had perhaps found the springless carriage uncomfortable, despite the cloth of silver—as were most of the royal duchesses; the Duchess of Touraine rode a splendid palfrey. Each litter was escorted by dukes and noble knights. No sooner had the procession left St. Denis than it was met by the élite of the Paris burgesses, on horseback; dressed in red and green. When they reached the first gates of St. Denis, they found heaven itself ready to receive them, for there was set up one of the tableaux vivants of which people in those days were so fond. It represented

a heaven full of clouds, on which sat little children representing angels, among them was Our Lady with the infant Jesus in her arms, and a toy windmill to keep the child in good humour. The children were singing as hard as their little throats would let them, and overhead shone a golden sun emblazoned with the arms of France and Bavaria. Of course the fountains flowed with wine, but the fountain in the street of St. Denis surpassed the rest. It was surmounted by a sky-blue canopy spotted with golden lilies, the pillars supporting which bore the escutcheons of all the great nobles of France. A bevy of fair girls, splendidly dressed, with dainty caps of cloth of gold, stood round, singing and offering to all passers-by hypocras and other rare wines in goblets of silver gilt. A little farther on was another tableau. On a huge platform was built a castle, in which were Saladin and his Saracens. To attack them came King Richard the Lion-hearted and his knights, each with his shield correctly blazoned. But before making the attack, Richard presented himself before the King of France, who was seated on a magnificent throne with twelve peers of the realm around him, and respectfully asked leave to go and fight the worshippers of Mahound. When the question of doing homage, which in reality cost so much bloodshed, was thus settled to the satisfaction of all the onlookers, the sham fight began. But the choicest tableau of all was at the second gate of St. Denis, afterwards pulled down by Francis the First. Here was depicted the very heaven of heavens, with Father, Son, and Spirit, each amid appropriate surroundings, combining to do honour to the young king and queen. Here the angels were older than those of the first heaven, and were represented by young girls chosen for their beauty, who sang :

Noble dame des fleurs de lys,
Soyez royne du paradis
De France, ce beau pays.

The whole street of St. Denis (and those who have been to Paris know how long it is) was hung with silk, or camlet, or tapestry. One of the tapestries—these old chroniclers go into such details—was something quite different from the common ruck of scripture pieces and allegorical figures, and scenes from the Tale of Troy or the story of the Round Table. It showed a countryman thoughtfully watching a spider web which hung between two trees.

A fool with cap and bells comes up and says to him :

Bonhomme, dis moy, si tu daignes,
Que regardes-tu en ce bois ?

Gaffer, tell me, an you please,
What are you staring at among those trees ?

The other replies :

Je pense aux toiles des araignes
Qui sont semblables à nos droits ;
Grosses mouches en tous endroits
Passent ; les petites sont prises.

These webs that hang from tree to tree
So like our laws they seem to me ;
Big flies break through whene'er they please,
The small flies get a deadly squeeze.

The fool answers him :

Les petits sont subjects aux loiz ;
Et les grands en font à leurs guises.

Small folks must mind the law's behest ;
Great folks make laws as suit them best.

One could wish that that particular bit of tapestry had come down to us ; and one wonders whether the freedom of speech which it exhibited escaped punishment from a king who had helped to crush down the Flemings.

The next "pleasant invention" was at the Châtelet. There was displayed a park planted with trees ; hares and rabbits were playing in the grass, birds singing on the boughs, and in the centre of the park was a castle with its towers, every battlement being guarded by a man-at-arms. On the castle-terrace was the king's "bed of justice," that device by which despotic French kings made parliaments of none effect. Originally, when the king was sick, a committee of parliament was summoned to his bedside, and his majesty signed the ordonnances, which then became law. As no questions were likely to be asked at such a time, the royal councillors could pass what they pleased ; and the plan was found to work so well that, by-and-by, when he was in perfect health, the king would go in state to the House, and announce, through the chancellor, that he wished such and such an ordinance entered, then and there, on the parliamentary records without discussion. And here comes out the essential difference between our parliament, with its great charter and its centuries of comparative independence, and those ghosts of parliament—mere shadowy affairs—which in France hardly deserved the name. When Queen Elizabeth attempted to get her own way with the Commons, she—Gloriana though she was, her people's pride—was met with such a firm, though courteous denial, that she soon gave up trying.

And when Charles the First, less clear-sighted, tried to force his will on the House, we all know how he was baffled. In a French parliament, however, the presence of the king was supposed to override all law and all freedom. When his majesty appeared, justice ceased to preside, in fact, was put to bed, and from that lit de justice dared not open her mouth. No discussion was allowed, no more than if the king had been so ill that he could not bear talking, and, whatever the edict might be, it was registered and signed in due form: "Faict en parlement, le roy y séant en son lit de justice." Well, on this bed of justice by the Châtelet sat, not the king, but St. Anne, the guardian of the realm; "And then," says the chronicler, "out of the park came forth a big white stag with gold collar, which shook its head and moved its eyes." This was to represent the king's crest; for in those days each king chose his own. Our own Richard the Third, we remember, chose the wild boar. "An eagle and a lion set upon this stag to destroy it; but it took up, to defend itself, the sword of justice which lay on the bed, and twelve young girls, sword in hand, came also to protect it, figuring the twelve great peers who would stand by the French king." The bridge of Notre Dame was even more richly tapestried than St. Denis's Street; and here was seen a wonder of another kind: "just as her majesty passed, a Genoese of marvellous adroitness came from the top of the cathedral tower, down on a sudden, dancing on a tight-rope, and holding in each hand a lighted torch." When this mediæval Blondin had safely landed, the procession moved on through the narrow streets of the city, the veritable old cité of which Baron Haussmann has left scarcely a trace, and at last reached the doors of Notre Dame. Here the royal dukes helped the queen to get out of her litter, and she was met by the clergy in their richest vestments. The archbishop placed the crown on her head, she made her offerings—rich and costly they were—at the altar, and then she was escorted to the palace by the light of more than five hundred torches.

Where was the king all this time? He was so fond of masquerades, that he dressed up as a common man, and mixed with the crowd in order to see the fun. The chronicler says he got more than one shrewd blow from the javelin-men for wanting to press too close to the royal cavalcade.

That was enough for one day; but it

was soon followed up by other fêtes as splendid. The Duke of Orleans, the king's brother, he who was afterwards brutally murdered by the Burgundians, married Valentina, the young daughter of the Duke of Milan. At their wedding Milan as well as Paris held festival. And then Charles began a royal progress, which turned each town for the time being into a scene of revelry. His majesty and suite required for dinner and the next day's breakfast six oxen, eighty sheep, thirty calves, seven hundred pullets, two hundred pigeons, to say nothing of game and fish and small birds. The cost of entertaining the royal party for a day was reckoned at two hundred and thirty livres. Besides this, all the larger towns gave handsome presents of plate and jewels. Lyons must have found loyalty an expensive virtue, for Charles and his uncles stayed there two months. Poor Charles! never was there, amongst the many wretched reigns from which France has suffered—and it is the comparative folly of her kings which mainly set France at a disadvantage with England in the Middle Ages—one so wretched, so altogether unredeemed by anything of which the nation could be proud, as that of Charles the Sixth. The king mad, for he never recovered the burning he had at a masked ball; suspicious in his lucid intervals of all around him, except of the gentle unselfish Valentina, whom the Burgundians managed to banish from court on a charge of sorcery; the Queen Isabella living the most scandalous life that any French queen had lived since Merovingian days; the rival factions of Orleans and Burgundy tearing the country to pieces, and every now and then getting up a massacre in Paris; and our Henry the Fifth winning Agincourt, taking Caen and Rouen, and at last getting crowned in the capital! Such a reign, so pitiable in all respects, has rarely been seen in the world's annals; and yet there was more money spent in fêtes by Charles the Sixth than perhaps by any king till Louis the Fourteenth's time. France was spending against Burgundy; rivals in other things, they were rivals also in magnificence. In personal splendour the Duke of Burgundy far outshone the king. As far as jewels went, he must have been the Prince Esterhazy of his day. His saddle and bridle were set with diamonds, his dress was embroidered with them, and the purse which hung at his belt was covered with them. He had the whim of wearing a

fresh set every day, so no wonder the value of his jewels was estimated at what would now be more than a million sterling. The archers of his suite were dressed as grandly as the proudest nobles of France. But the wonder of all was the sideboard, which was set up, wherever he halted, under a tent of velvet lined with silk embroidered all over with leaves and spangles of gold, and blazoned with the arms of all his different lordships. This sideboard was covered with gold and silver plate, so massive and so curiously wrought as perhaps the world never saw before or since.

One of the grandest features of all these fêtes must have been the multitude of horses in the processions. Even when the penurious Louis the Eleventh made his entry into Paris, the horses, all gaily caparisoned, numbered more than twelve thousand; on some occasions there were more than thrice as many.

England had its fêtes too. Witness the coronation of Edward the First in 1274. The whole of Palace Yard, Westminster, was turned into a grand banqueting-hall, and the tables were kept spread a whole fortnight. All comers alike were feasted. Of open-air kitchens there was, we read, a number too great to be counted. Beast as well as man was well entertained; the churchyard of St. Margaret's being filled with stabling. On the coronation day alone were drunk one hundred and sixteen casks of wine. The cost of buildings and wine alone amounted to two thousand five hundred and sixty-five livres, one sol, one denier (how exact those old budget-makers were); a sum which, looking to the purchasing power of money in those days, has been calculated to be equivalent to more than forty thousand pounds of our money.

Charles the Sixth's fêtes made so large a hole in the revenue that his ministers were at their wits' end. "Cast the royal treasure in big ingots," was the advice of Lord-treasurer Noviant, "and then his majesty won't be so easily able to spend them." So it was agreed to make out of all the silver in the treasury a big stag, the king's device. There was only silver enough to make his head, and the head soon got melted down to make money. Paying, the Parisians found, is far less pleasant than sight-seeing, yet it was its inevitable consequence. Nowadays, everyone pays for admission to Exhibition, fêtes, and suchlike; so the cost, though still great, falls less heavily than it did of old on those who provide the show. Let us hope the modern

Parisians will not be overburdened by the cost of all the splendour with which this past year they have dazzled the world.

I spoke of lighting—what a pity the electric light was perfected a few months too late. How grand an item it will make in our future fêtes, if only the weather is dry enough for it to work well. Fire-works, by-the-way, were known in the Middle Ages; perhaps they came overland from China. The Italians improved them greatly in the sixteenth century; but they don't seem to have been used in France till Henry the Fourth's reign, when Sully took the country by surprise with a magnificent display on the plain of Fontainebleau.

Fêtes, we know, went on in France under every change of government. Perhaps what makes those of Charles the Sixth so specially famous is, first of all, the contrast between all that magnificence and the wretched state of the country; and next, that they are described at unusual length by several chroniclers. Paris was always great at fêtes. It did not go in for monsters like Gayant and his family; the huge figures which are carried round Douai at the Ducasse, as it is called; or like Graonille at Metz, and Gargouille at Rouen, or the horse of St. Victor at Marseilles. But it had its own midsummer feast, when all the guilds and all the royal and municipal authorities paraded the city with garlands over their shoulders; and it also heartily entered into the fêtes of its kings. Le roi s'amuse might be said pretty often of those old French kings; and, whenever he took his pleasure, the people amused themselves along with him. They amuse themselves still, and invite the rest of the world to come and help them make merry; and though the contrast between the fêtes of to-day and those of five hundred years ago is strong enough, the people are still the same—light-hearted, easily drawn away from thinking of sorrows or troubles, and with a natural genius for making tasteful displays.

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOBY,
AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRIFFIN'S DOUBLS,"
&c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXIII. A STATEMENT BY JULIA
CARMICHAEL.

IN compliance with the wish of Captain Dunstan, who is desirous of having an exact account of the circumstances that occurred during my stay at Bevis, I purpose

to set them down here in the order in which they took place. It is a relief to my own mind also to recapitulate them thus carefully, as in doing so I shall be able to reduce my responsibility, in the matter that is of such pressing and painful importance to me and to others, to its true proportions, instead of being, as I sometimes am, oppressed by a terrible misgiving that it was all my fault.

I arrived at Bury House at the beginning of the second week in May, and a week later I went, at the invitation of Mrs. Dunstan, to Bevis. I looked forward with great pleasure to this visit; and previous circumstances had invested the occasion with an interest which led me to regard Janet with close observation. She received me with the utmost kindness, and during the short time that we were together on the first day, I did not notice any symptoms of ill-health or unhappiness about her. It was late in the afternoon when I arrived at Bevis, some people dined there that day, and it was not until the following morning at breakfast that I was struck with a change in her appearance and manner. She was looking very handsome, I thought, but far from well; and there was something dispirited and restrained about her which struck me painfully. I learned from what was said at breakfast that Captain Dunstan was going out to dinner on that day, and it was arranged that Janet and I should walk down to the Vicarage. After Captain Dunstan left us, I asked her whether she was feeling well; and she said not quite, but a walk would do her good. She then proposed to show me the house and gardens, and I agreed to this. I ought to record in this place that there was not, either in her demeanour, or in that of Captain Dunstan, the slightest trace of any disagreement or disunion between them. She was gentle and sweet, as she always was, but there was a decided change in her, and I could not help wondering whether he was aware of it. I dwell on my perception of this change, because I was led by it into saying what I did afterwards say to him. The house interested me very much, and Janet told me all about the former disposition of it, in Mrs. Drummond's time. She was cheerful, but not elated and talkative as I should have expected her to be, and she said very little respecting herself or her own feelings. She left me to attend to some matters connected with her intended call at the

Vicarage, and after luncheon, at which Captain Dunstan was present, Janet and I set out together for the Vicarage. Before leaving the dining-room, I had chanced to say that I must write some letters before post-hour; and Captain Dunstan invited me to use the library for that purpose, adding that I need not mind about post-hour, as he was going to dine in the town, and would take my letters.

We took the private way through the park along the avenue of elms, and Janet talked a good deal, but not of herself, or her position, chiefly of my prospects, and a little of my cousin, Mrs. Thornton. Laura had been a frequent subject of conversation between us formerly, but I would not have spoken of her now, had not Janet done so, because I concluded that Captain Dunstan had told his wife of the circumstances in the past connected with himself and Laura, and that it was just possible she might feel some reluctance or awkwardness about the mention of her. However, she did introduce the subject, and after a little I perceived, to my great embarrassment and regret, that she was not aware that her husband and Mrs. Thornton were even acquainted. This seemed to me quite unaccountable, but an instant's reflection showed me that whatever his reason might be, it was not my business to reveal to his wife what Captain Dunstan had concealed from her, and therefore I said nothing on the point. Janet questioned me closely about Laura, and spoke with her usual feeling and sympathy of Mr. Thornton's death. Mrs. Cathcart was expecting us; nothing particular happened while I remained, but that was for a short time only. I left Janet with Mrs. Cathcart, and returned alone to the house, by the same way. I went at once to the library, and began to write my letters. The weather was very fine, and the French windows, giving upon the terrace like doors, were open. A table was set ready for my use close to one of these windows, and I had been writing for more than an hour when Captain Dunstan crossed the terrace from the garden side, and asked me whether he might come in for a few minutes' talk with me? I was a little surprised, but I said Yes, and that my letters were ready for him. I could not now tell how it was that he began to speak of Laura; though I had almost made up my mind, if the opportunity offered, to say something to him about the awkwardness to myself of Mrs. Dunstan's not knowing

that they were acquainted; still, when he introduced the subject abruptly, I was completely taken aback. I impute to my being confused, and to his perceiving it, the unfortunate conversation that ensued, for I have no doubt his first intention was merely to question me about the sad event that had taken place at Nice, and that he was not aware that I had any reason to believe him to be, or rather to have been, especially interested in Laura. He looked so strangely at me that I had to attempt to explain the confusion into which a very natural-seeming question had thrown me, and I said something to the effect that it would have been better if this subject had been openly talked of before Mrs. Dunstan. I have no apology to offer, either on his part or my own, for the revelation that followed;—my business is only to narrate, not to excuse it.

What I learned from Captain Dunstan was, then, that he had never ceased to love my cousin Laura. Plainly stated, there is the truth; but it is indispensable that I should record here that he acknowledged it with vehement emotion, the result of the revulsion against self-restraint, of the yielding to the strong temptation of my presence. I had but lately left her, he said, and it was so long since he had heard of her. I had never seen Captain Dunstan under the influence of any strong feeling before, and I was excessively surprised and shocked. He found that I was aware that he had seen Laura since her marriage, and he protested that he had tried hard to forgive her treachery to him, and even to forget herself since then. He recapitulated all the circumstances of their brief love story, telling me much that I had not previously known, and dwelling emphatically upon the hardness of his destiny in having the fatal decision of Admiral Drummond against him reversed too late. He then referred to my meeting with him in Paris on my way to Nice, and spoke of his feelings in a manner which distressed me very much; dwelling upon the pursuing destiny that divided him from Laura. Here it becomes necessary that I should repeat the words that were said as exactly as I can.

"You little knew what you told me then; that I had again lost her, or, at least, had lost the chance I might have had. It was hard, was it not? The first time she would not wait for me; the second time I had not waited for her!"

"Hush! hush! For Heaven's sake,

think of what you are saying! Why do you say such things to me, to yourself?"

"I don't know; I can't tell; there's something stronger than myself that makes me do it. You say she has never once spoken of me all this time; never mentioned me. Does she think I do not care for her sorrow?"

"Indeed, Captain Dunstan, she does not, believe me; but she remembers nobody, thinks of nothing except the dreadful loss she has sustained."

"I suppose so; no doubt you are right. And so it ought to be. Living and dead, Thornton is the winner."

"What a dreadful state of mind you have let yourself fall into!" And then I added, by an irresistible miserable impulse: "What, in Heaven's name, induced you to marry poor Janet?"

"Ah, what!" Captain Dunstan moved from the place he had been standing at, and, leaning against the window-jamb, spoke very distinctly: "You think I was wrong to marry her?"

"I think you were cruel and false to her, and foolish. You did not love her; you knew she loved you. Did you marry her for the sake of pity?"

"No, Miss Carmichael; I married her for the sake of gratitude."

"Gratitude!"

"Yes. What has driven me to speak thus to you, I don't know; but as I have done so, I will be thorough; I will tell you all about it. There's nothing to come of telling you; there's nothing to hope for from that, or from anything; but I will tell you all the same. You are right; I did know that Janet loved me; I had it from the very best authority; and I owed to her all I had in the world. It was no fault of hers that all the good was taken out of it; and the fact enabled me to make her the only possible return. If Laura had only waited for me I should have never known that I had incurred a debt of gratitude to Janet, which I could not, indeed, when I did become aware of it, pay in love, but which shall be faithfully discharged, so help me God! It was she who, by refusing the inheritance herself, made me master of Bevis; and though I had no heart to give her, I could restore her to her home, secure her position in the world, and make her happy. That Mrs. Drummond wished me to marry Janet, I knew from Mrs. Drummond herself, and—it has turned out very well. Janet, who deserves to be happy, for she is very good,

is quite happy as my wife, and I am—well, we need not mind about that. I must say again that I have not the remotest idea of what it was that made me say all this to you. I have been wishing to hear the particulars which you have told me, of course, and intending to ask you for them, but I never contemplated the possibility of betraying myself in this way, and I suppose it will not be easy for you to forgive me for having done so.”

“That is nothing. What it is not easy to forgive is what you have done to her. Oh, Captain Dunstan, how could you be so cruel or so stupid? What is the estate you owe to her, as you tell me, in comparison with the heart she has given you to be broken?”

“Broken? And why? You don’t take me, I hope, for the sort of person who could visit his own disappointment on a woman, who is not only blameless, but everything that is excellent—too faultless, indeed? I daresay you hate me, Miss Carmichael, but you need not despise me unnecessarily. Janet is quite safe with me, I assure you; your own observation might tell you that. I do not think she has an ungratified wish, an unconsulted taste; if she has, it is her own fault, certainly not mine.”

“You are trying to justify what cannot be justified. You have taken the pure gold of a perfect love and trust from her, and given her false coin in exchange.”

“You are talking—I suppose I must not say nonsense, for politeness’ sake, but, at all events, like a romantic girl yourself. Janet will never be unhappy, I hope; she never shall be, if I can prevent it; and, I daresay, if Thornton had not died, I should never have regretted my marriage for my own sake; but I never thought of such a thing happening as that, and it completely upset me; and what I now have to do is my very best, so that I shall never have to regret it for hers.”

I need not repeat what I answered to this; it did not affect events; I need only set down that I said all that was in my heart, in very strong and earnest words; urging upon him that the only hope, the only chance of safety for Janet’s peace and their joint future was, not the successful concealment of the passion which he guiltily cherished in his heart, but its eradication. I don’t know what I said, where the words came from to me; I was all the time a prey to bewildering distress and pity, and to a dim vague

fear. Captain Dunstan listened to me very patiently, becoming calm and like himself again while I was speaking; and when I paused, he said in his usual tone:

“If I make no answer to all you say, it is not because I disregard it; it is because I am a man, and you are a woman, and you don’t understand. We must never speak of this again; it must be like a dream to both of us; let me only say that I count upon your friendship for Janet; and that, however mad and foolish my conduct of to-day may lead you to believe me, you need have no fear for her.”

He took up my letters, and left the room, by the door that opened into the entrance hall; leaving me overwhelmed with distress and perplexity. I sat there, I do not know how long, hardly able to bring my thoughts into any sort of arrangement, and chiefly conscious of the wish to get away from Bevis as soon as possible. With what pleasure I had come thither, as a complete breaking-away from and contrast to the scenes through which I had recently passed; how strange a connection had established itself between them! It would be impossible for me to remain; I could not hold so anomalous a position; besides, when the strange mood that had prompted Captain Dunstan’s unsought and unwelcome confidence should have passed away, I, of all persons in the world, would be the least pleasing in his sight; it was impossible that he should ever feel at ease with me again. I must devise some excuse for going away, which should excite no suspicion in Janet’s mind; though, indeed, how should any come there? Time passed, the evening drew on; I heard the sound of carriage wheels, and concluded that Captain Dunstan had gone. Still Janet had not come to look for me in the library, and I remained there, glad of every minute’s delay before I must see her sweet unconscious face again; remained after the room had been lighted, and until it was time to dress for dinner, and still Janet had not come to look for me. At length I went upstairs, and, passing by the end of the Admiral’s Corridor on my way to my own room, I observed Janet’s maid stooping down and apparently listening at the door of her mistress’s room. She perceived me, and said:

“The door is locked, and Mrs. Dunstan does not answer. I have knocked several times. I am afraid she is ill.”

"Mrs. Dunstan has not come in," I answered; "I left her at the Vicarage."

Janet had certainly come in, however; the door was locked on the inside, and also that of the dressing-room which communicated with Janet's own sitting-room, and in the latter we found the hat, gloves, and shawl she had worn that afternoon. We rattled the handle of the door, and called to her several times without effect; but, just as I was becoming seriously alarmed, the key turned and Janet opened the door, supporting herself by it, and showing us a face so ghastly that her maid uttered an exclamation of fear. She was wrapped in a white dressing-gown, and her hair was loose; her eyes were dim and contracted, her face was ashy pale, except for a red spot that burned on each cheek-bone; her lips were livid, and she was shivering. I shall never forget the white figure in the doorway, against the dimness behind her, facing the lights of the bright pretty sitting-room.

"Janet, what is the matter? Are you ill?"

"I am afraid I am. I have been lying down." She spoke each word faintly, with a pause between it and the next, and in a voice quite unlike her own. And those were the last coherent words she addressed to anyone for many days to come. Dr. Andrews was in the house when Captain Dunstan came home late that night, and she was then quiet, but it was the first of many nights of watching and anxiety; during which her mind and her speech were not occupied with actual things, or with us who were about her at all. Dr. Andrews was of opinion that the illness had not come so suddenly as it seemed to come; and Mrs. Cathcart told us that she had not thought Janet looking well when she was at the Vicarage in the afternoon. In answer to the doctor's minute enquiries no one could tell him anything of the interval between Janet's leaving Mrs. Cathcart—which I found she had done very much earlier than I supposed—and the moment at which I and her maid ascertained the fact of her illness; no one had seen her come into the house; and Captain Dunstan, concluding that she was with me in the library, and being rather late for his dinner engagement, had not looked for her before he went out.

On the dreary days which followed I need not dwell. They had this effect on me personally, that they had removed every shade of embarrassment from between my-

self and Captain Dunstan. There were times when I hardly recalled what had passed; so intently was my mind set upon the hand to hand, foot to foot, inch by inch fight in which she and we were engaged with the insidious and terrible foe that had stricken her. I pass on to the time when she began to recover. Then, her mind being clear, though weak and passive as it seemed to me, I especially observed two things: the first, that she was sensibly distressed by Captain Dunstan's presence; the second, that she was better, more restful, and more refreshed when Amabel Ainslie was with her. She would close her eyes when her husband entered the room, and answer his enquiries gently, but she never asked him a question, and she never enquired for him in his absence. To me she was always gentle, and painfully grateful; but she would lie, or sit, for hours, holding Amabel's hand with her own eggshell-like fingers, speaking little, but listening to her friend's pleasant talk. Amabel read aloud to her occasionally, but I do not think Janet listened; she would keep her eyes closed all the time. She was at her best when Amabel could be with her. The first wish of any kind that she expressed was that Captain Dunstan should go to London as he had proposed to do; and this she conveyed through Amabel. He went up to town, it being then late in June, and Janet regaining strength rapidly. I could not but observe that she was exceedingly nervous when he was going away, and that, either by accident, or by her own contrivance, they were not alone for a moment. No allusion had been made by Captain Dunstan or myself to the events of the day on which Janet's illness commenced; and I now bade him farewell for an indefinite time, as I was to return to Hunsford the following week.

From the hour of her husband's departure I observed a singular alteration in Janet. Her nervousness subsided, her absent manner changed, she improved in strength daily, but a settled sadness took possession of her.

On the day before that on which I was to leave Bevis, two letters arrived; one was for me, the other was for Janet. The first announced, in Laura's own hand, the birth of Laura's son. A joyful and a sorrowful mother was my cousin; and the few lines, in which I read both joy and sorrow, touched me very nearly. The second announced, in a hand which Janet

did not know, the death of her sister-in-law, Mrs. Monroe, at Nice. I was afraid of the effect that the intelligence might have upon Janet, but she took it very quietly. Amabel was with her for part of that day, and I heard Janet say to her:

"There is not, now, anyone of kin to me in the whole world."

She talked to me more than usual on the day before I was to leave her, of my future, and of John; never of herself, and she made no mention of her husband. The oppressive consciousness in my own mind, that had revived when the pressure of anxiety about her life and health was removed, prevented me from naming him. I saw Janet last, standing at the top of the great avenue, in her deep mourning dress. She waved her hand to me, while I leaned from the carriage window for a parting look.

The remainder of what I have to set down here is but hearsay, therefore shall be brief.

Two days after I left Bevis, Janet drove into the town of Bury, and drew out of the bank the whole of the money standing in her name there. On the third, she told her maid that she was going to London, and would not require her to go with her; but would send her instructions afterwards. She then left Bevis, taking only a travelling-bag, and was driven to the post-office, where she put a letter into the box with her own hand; and thence to the railway-station, where she arrived only just in time to take her place in the train.

No instructions reached Janet's maid; no communication of any kind was made by Mrs. Dunstan to her household; and when, after several days had elapsed, Mrs. Manners wrote to Captain Dunstan, expressing the surprise and uneasiness which the silence of Mrs. Dunstan was occasioning at Bevis, her respectful remonstrance received a startling reply.

As soon as it was possible for him to reach Bevis after the receipt of the house-keeper's letter, Captain Dunstan arrived there, and it very shortly became known to the household that Mrs. Dunstan had not joined her husband in London. Nothing more became known to them,

except, indeed, that their mistress had incurred no blame of the kind that involves disgrace by what she had done. "Something between them that nobody knows anything about," was the general supposition; "but he respects her as much as ever, and if she never comes back it will be her fault, and not his."

In the centre compartment of the old bureau in Janet's dressing-room, where she habitually kept her keys, and which was found to be unlocked, there was a small parcel addressed to Captain Dunstan. It contained a bracelet of gold set with cats'-eyes, and a letter. Of the contents of that letter only a few lines were ever made known to anyone except Captain Dunstan himself, and with them only I am concerned here. The writer said that she was aware, if search were made for her, there was little hope that she could elude it, being so unequally matched against the resources of such search; but she earnestly entreated that none should be made; entreated this as the one only compensation that could be made to her. When freedom should have been restored to Captain Dunstan by her death he should be apprised of it; she would take order for that. In the interval and for the rest she implored peace.

Captain Dunstan, whose distress and remorse were extreme, left no means untried to discover Janet, despite her prayer; but she had had too much the start of enquiry, and all was unavailing. From no quarter could he obtain intelligence of her; the only friends she had, the old ladies at Bury House, were horror-stricken, and absolutely ignorant; her only relative had died among strangers in a strange land.

These are the facts that I have had to record; of the feelings they have given rise to it would be equally vain and impossible for me to say anything.

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VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXVI. SOMETHING LIKE A RIDE.

It was impossible to go on hating Lord Mallow for ever. He was a man whose overflowing good-nature would have conciliated the bitterest foe, could that enemy have been exposed long enough to its softening influence. He came upon the dull daily life of the Abbey House like a burst of sudden sunshine on a gloomy plain. The long winter evenings, when there was no company, had been sorely oppressive to Vixen. Out of respect to her mother she had kept her place in the drawing-room, reading, or working at some uninteresting strip of point-lace, which she had no hope of ever finishing, though it had been promised to Mr. Scobel for his church. Captain Winstanley read newspapers or the quarterlies, or paced the room thoughtfully at intervals. He talked to his wife just enough to escape the charge of neglect, but rarely spoke to or noticed Violet. Sometimes Mrs. Winstanley asked for a little music; whereupon Violet went to the piano, and played her scanty recollections of Mozart or Beethoven—all "tune-y" bits, remembered out of the sonatas or concertos Miss McCroke had taught her—or, if asked to sing, the girl sang a ballad or two, to order, in her full round mezzo-soprano, which had a thrilling expression at times, when feeling got the better of her proud reserve, and all the pent-up sorrow of her heart broke loose into her song. But Captain Winstanley took no notice of these efforts, and even her mother's praises were not enthusiastic. "Very sweet, very nice," was the most

Vixen ever heard from those maternal lips as she closed the piano.

But here was Lord Mallow, passionately fond of music and singing, and the beauties of nature, and all things that appeal to the sensitive Hibernian character. It seemed a new thing to Violet to have someone standing by the piano, turning over the leaves, applauding rapturously, and entreating for another and yet another Irish melody. When she sang *The Minstrel Boy*, he joined in with a rich baritone that harmonised finely with her full ripe notes. The old room vibrated with the strong melody, and even Captain Winstanley was impelled to praise.

"How well your voices harmonise," he said. "You ought to try some duets. I remember that fine baritone of yours in days of old, Mallow."

Hereupon Lord Mallow asked Miss Tempest if she had any duets, and Vixen produced her small stock of vocal music. They tried one or two of Mendelssohn's, I would that my Love, and Greeting, and discovered that they got on wonderfully well together. Vixen fell asleep that night wondering at her own amiability.

"To think that I should sing sentimental duets with him," she said to herself. "The man who has Bullfinch."

Lord Mallow's presence at the Abbey House had a marked effect upon Captain Winstanley's treatment of his step-daughter. Hitherto there had been a veiled bitterness in all his speeches, a constrained civility in his manners. Now he was all kindness, all expansion. Even his wife, who admired him always, and thought him the soul of wisdom in all he did, could not be blind to the change, and a new sense of peacefulness stole into her

feeble mind. It was so pleasant to see dear Conrad so sweetly kind to Violet.

"What are we going to do with Lord Mallow this morning, Violet?" asked the captain at breakfast. "We must try to amuse him somehow."

"I don't think I have much to do with it," Vixen answered coldly. "You will find plenty of amusement, I daresay, in the billiard-room, in the stables, or in showing Lord Mallow your improvements."

"That would do very well for a wet morning, but it would be a profligate waste of fine weather. No; I propose that you should show Mallow some of the prettiest bits in the Forest. I am not half so accomplished a guide as you, but we'll all go. I'll order the horses at once if you like my plan, Mallow," said Captain Winstanley, turning to his friend, and taking Violet's consent for granted.

"I shall be quite too delighted, if Miss Tempest will honour us with her company," replied the Irishman, with a pleasant look at Vixen's fresh morning face, rosy-red with vexation.

It was the first time her step-father had ever asked her to ride with him, and she hated doing it. It was the first time she had ever been asked to ride with anyone but her father or Roderick Vawdrey. Yet to refuse would have been impossible without absolute discourtesy to her mother's husband and her mother's guest. So she sat in her place and said nothing, and Lord Mallow mistook the angry carnation for the warm red of happy girlhood, which blushes it knows not wherefore.

Captain Winstanley ordered the horses to be at the door in half an hour, and then he took Lord Mallow off to look at the stables while Violet went upstairs to put on her habit. Why was the captain so unusually amiable? she speculated. Was his little soul so mean that he put on better manners to do honour to an Irish peer?

She came tripping down the wide old staircase at the end of the half-hour, in habit and hat of Lincoln green, with a cock's feather in the neat little hat, and a formidable hooked hunting-crop for opening gates, little feet daintily shod in patent leather, but no spur. She loved her horse too well to run a needle into his sleek side at the slightest provocation.

There were the three horses, held by Bates and Lord Mallow's groom. Bullfinch, looking as if he had just taken a prize at Islington and was inclined to be bumptious about it. Arion, tossing his

delicately modelled Greek head, and looking for bogies in the adjacent shrubbery. Captain Winstanley's well-seasoned hunter, Mosstrooper, nodding his long bony head, and swaying his fine-drawn neck up and down in a half savage half scornful manner, as if he were at war with society in general, like the Miller of Dee.

Vixen, who had looked the picture of vexation at the breakfast-table, was now all gaiety. Her hazel eyes sparkled with mischief. Lord Mallow stood in the porch, watching her as she came down the shining oak staircase, glorious in the winter sunlight. He thought her the perfection of a woman—nay, more than a woman, a goddess. Diana, the divine huntress, must have looked so, he fancied. He ran forward to mount her on the fidgety Arion; but honest old Bates was too quick for him, and she was looking down at Lord Mallow graciously from her perch on the well-worn doeskin saddle before he had time to offer his services.

She leant over to pat Bullfinch's massive crest.

"Dear old horse," she murmured tenderly, remembering those winter mornings of old when he had stood before the porch as he stood to-day, waiting for the noble rider who was never more to mount him.

"Yet life goes on somehow without our beloved dead," thought Violet.

Her changeful face saddened at the thought, and she rode along the shrubberied drive in silence.

"Where are you going to take us?" asked the captain, when they had emerged from the Abbey House grounds, crossed the coach-road, and made their plunge into the first cart-track that offered itself.

"Everywhere," answered Vixen, with a mischievous laugh. "You have chosen me for your guide, and all you have to do is to follow."

And she gave Arion a light touch with her hunting-crop, and cantered gaily down the gently sloping track to a green lawn, which looked, to Captain Winstanley's experienced eye, very much like a quaky bog.

"Steer towards your left," he cried, anxiously, to Lord Mallow.

If there was danger near Vixen managed to avoid it; she made a sweeping curve, skirted the treacherous-looking lawn, and disappeared in another cart-track, between silvery trunks of veteran beeches, self-sown in the dark ages, with here and there, a gnarled old oak, rugged and lichen-mantled.

That was a ride! Lord Mallow could remember nothing like it, and he was destined to carry this in his memory for a lifetime. The ghostly trees; the silver-shining bark of the beeches, varying with a hundred indescribable shades of green and purple and warmest-umber; the rugged grey of the grand old oaks; the lichens and mosses, and mysterious wintry growths of toadstool and weed and berry; that awful air of unearthliness which pervaded the thicker portions of the wood, as of some mystic underworld—half shadow and half dream. No; Lord Mallow could never forget it; nor yet the way that flying figure in Lincoln green led them by bog and swamp; over clay and gravel, through as many varieties of soil as if she had been trying to give them a practical lesson in geology; across snaky ditches and pebbly fords; through furze-bushes and thickets of holly; through everything likely to prove aggravating to the temper of a well-bred horse; and finally, before giving them breathing-time, she led them up the clayey side of a hill, as steep as a house, on the top of which she drew rein, and commanded them to admire the view.

"This is Acres Down, and there are the Needles," she said, pointing her whip at the dim blue horizon. "If it were a clear day, and your sight were long enough, I daresay you would see Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, and Sark. But, I think, to-day you must be content with the Needles. Can you see them?" she asked Lord Mallow.

"See them!" exclaimed the Irishman. "I can see well enough to thread one of them if I wanted."

"Now you've seen the Isle of Wight," said Vixen. "That's a point accomplished. The ardent desire of everyone in the Forest is to see the Isle of Wight. They are continually mounting hills, and gazing into space, in order to get a glimpse at that chalky little island. It seems the main object of everybody's existence."

"They might as well go and live there at once, if they're so fond of it," suggested Lord Mallow.

"Yes; and then they would be straining their eyes in the endeavour to see the Great Horse—that's a group of firs on the top of a hill, and one of our Forest sea-marks. That frantic desire to behold distant objects has always seemed to me to be one of the feeblest tendencies of the human mind. Now you have seen the Needles, we have accomplished a solemn duty, and I may show you our woods."

Vixen shook her rein and trotted recklessly down a slippery track, jumped a broad black puddle, and plunged into the recesses of the wood, Bullfinch and Mosstrooper following meekly.

They went a wonderful round, winding in and out of Bratley Wood, piercing deep into the wintry glories of Mark Ash; through mud and moss and soft pitfalls, avoiding bogs by a margin of a yard or so; up and down, under spreading branches, where the cattle line but just cleared the heads of the riders; across the blackened bracken; by shining hollies, whose silvery trunks stood up like obelisks out of a thicket of dwarf bushes; through groves, where the tall beech-trunks had a solemn look like the columns of some gigantic temple; then into wondrous plantations of Scotch firs, where the air was balmy as in summer, and no breath of the December wind penetrated the dense wall of foliage. Then to higher ground, where the wintry air blew keen again, and where there was a soft green lawn, studded with graceful conifers—cypress, deodora, Douglas fir—tall with a growth of thirty years; the elegant importations of an advanced civilisation. Anon by the grey-lichened walls of a deserted garden, which had a strangely-romantic look, and was as suggestive of a dreamy idyllic world as a poem by Tennyson; and so down into the green-and-grey depths of Mark Ash again, but never returning over the same ground, and then up the hill to Vinny Ridge and the Heronry, where Captain Winstanley cracked his whip to scare the herons, and had the satisfaction of scaring his own and the other two horses, while the herons laughed him to scorn from their cradles in the tree-tops, and would not stir a feather for his gratification. Then by a long plantation to a wild stretch of common, where Vixen told her companions that they were safe for a good mile, and set them an example by starting Arion across the short smooth turf at a gallop. They pulled up just in time to escape a small gulf of moss and general sponginess, waded a stream or two, and came to Queen's Bower; thence into the oak plantation of New Park; then across Gretnam Wood; and then at a smart trot along the road towards home.

"I hope I haven't kept you out too long?" said Vixen politely.

"We've only been five hours," answered the captain with grim civility; "but if Mallow is not tired, I shall not complain."

"I never enjoyed anything so much in my life, never," protested Lord Mallow.

"Well, to-morrow we can shoot the pheasants. It will be a rest after this."

"It will be dull work after the enchantments of to-day," said the Irishman.

Captain Winstanley rode homeward a few paces in the rear of the other two, smiling to himself grimly, and humming a little song of Heine's:

Es ist ein alte Geschichte,
Doch bleibt es immer neue.

CHAPTER XXVII. RORIE OBJECTS TO DUETS.

MRS. WINSTANLEY'S little dinner went off smoothly and pleasantly, as all such entertainments had done under the new régime. The captain knew how to select his guests, as well as he knew how to compose a menu. People felt pleased with themselves and with their neighbours at his table. There was nothing heavy in the dinner or in the conversation; there were no long sittings over old port or particular claret. The wines were of the first quality; but there was no fuss made about them. Colonel Carteret remembered how he and the squire had sat prozing over their port or Chateau Margaux, and felt as if he were living in a new world—a world in which full-blooded friendship and boisterous hospitality were out of fashion. People whose talk had hitherto been intensely local; confined, for the most part, to petty sessions, commoners' rights, hunting, and the parish church and schools; found themselves discussing the widest range of topics, from the prospect of a European war to the latest social scandal in the upper currents of London society. It was quite delightful to quiet country people, who went to London on an average once in three years, to find themselves talking so easily about the last famous picture, the latest action for libel in artistic circles, or the promised adaptation of Sardou's last comedy at a West End theatre, just as glibly as if they knew all about art, and had read every play of Sardou's.

Roderick Vawdrey enjoyed himself wonderfully at this particular dinner-party, so long as the dinner lasted, for Captain Winstanley, by an oversight which made him inwardly savage all dinner-time, had placed Mr. Vawdrey and Miss Tempest side by side. There had been some confusion in his mind as he finished his plan of the table, his attention had been called away at the last moment, or this thing

could not have happened; for nothing was farther from Captain Winstanley's intention than that Violet and her old play-fellow should be happy in each other's society. And there they sat, smiling and sparkling at each other in the exuberance of youth and high spirits, interchanging little confidential remarks that were doubtless to the disparagement of some person or persons in the assembly. If dark electric glances shot from the covert of bent brows could have slain those two happy triflers, assuredly neither of them would have lived to the end of that dinner.

"How do you like him?" asked Rorie, stooping to sniff at the big Marshal Neil bud in the specimen glass by his plate.

"Whom?"

"The man who has Bullfinch."

Lord Mallow was in the place of honour next his hostess. Involuntarily Violet glanced in that direction, and was startled to find the Irishman's good-humoured gaze meeting hers, just as if he had been watching her for the last half-hour.

"How do I like him? Well, he seems very good-natured."

"Seems good-natured. You ought to be able to give me a more definite answer by this time. You have lived in the same house with him—let me see, is it three or four days since he came?"

"He has been here nearly a week."

"A week! Why then you must know him as well as if he were your brother. There is no man living who could keep himself dark for a week. No; I don't believe the most inscrutable of men, born and bred in diplomatic circles, could keep the secret of a solitary failing from the eyes of those who live under the same roof with him for seven days. It would leak out somehow—if not at breakfast, at dinner. Man is a communicative animal, and so loves talking of himself that, if he has committed murder, he must tell somebody about it sooner or later. And as to that man," continued Rorie, with a contemptuous glance at the single-minded Lord Mallow, "he is a creature whom the merest beginner in the study of humanity would know by heart in half an hour."

"What do you know about him?" asked Vixen laughing. "You have had more than half an hour for the study of his character."

"I know ever so much more than I want to know."

"Answered like a Greek oracle."

"What, have you taken to reading Greek?"

"No; but I know the oracles were a provoking set of creatures who answered every enquiry with an enigma. But I won't have you abuse Lord Mallow. He has been very kind to Bullfinch, and has promised me that he will never part with him. The dear old horse is to have a comfortable stable and kindly treatment to his dying day—not to be sent out to grass in his old age, to shiver in a dreary solitude, or to be scorched by the sun and tormented by the flies."

"He has promised all that, has he? He would promise a good deal more, I dare say," muttered Rorie, stooping over his rosebud. "Do you think him handsome? Do women admire a fresh complexion and black whiskers, and that unmistakable air of a hairdresser's wax model endowed with animation?"

"I see you consider him an idiot," said Vixen laughing. "But I assure you he is rather clever. He talks wonderfully about Ireland, and the reforms he is going to bring about for her."

"Of course. Burke, and Curran, and Castlereagh, and O'Connell, and fifty more have failed to steer that lumbering old vessel off the mudbank on which she stranded at some time in the dark ages; in fact, nobody except Oliver Cromwell ever did understand how to make Ireland prosperous and respectable, and he began by depopulating her; and here is a fresh-coloured young man, with whiskers à la cotelette de mouton, who thinks he was born to be her pilot, and to navigate her into a peaceful haven. He is the sort of man who will begin by being the idol of a happy tenantry, and end by being shot from behind one of his own hedges."

"I hope not," said Vixen, "for I am sure he means well. And I should like him to outlive Bullfinch."

Roderick had been very happy all dinner-time. From the soups to the ice-puddings the moments had flown for him. It seemed the briefest dinner he had ever been at, and yet when the ladies rose to depart the silvery chime of the clock struck the-half-hour after nine. But Lord Mallow's hour came later, in the drawing-room, where he contrived to hover over Violet, and fence her round from all other admirers for the rest of the evening. They sang their favourite duets together, to the delight of everyone except Rorie, who felt curiously

savage at I would that my Love, and icily disapproving at Greeting; but vindictive to the verge of homicidal mania at Oh, wert Thou in the cauld blast!

Later Violet and Lord Mallow sang a little duet by Masini, *O, que la mer est belle!* the daintiest, most bewitching music—such a melody as the Lorley might have sung when the Rhine flowed peacefully onward below mountain peaks shining in the evening light, luring foolish fishermen to their doom. Everybody was delighted. It was just the kind of music to please the unlearned in the art. Mrs. Carteret came to the piano to compliment Violet.

"I had no idea you could sing so sweetly," she said. "Why have you never sung to us before?"

"Nobody ever asked me," Vixen answered frankly. "But, indeed, I am no singer."

"You have one of the freshest, brightest voices I ever had the happiness of hearing," Lord Mallow exclaimed enthusiastically.

He would have liked to go on singing duets for an indefinite period. He felt lifted into some strange and delightful region—a sphere of love and harmony—while he was mingling his voice with Violet's. There was quite a little crowd round the piano, shutting in Violet and Lord Mallow, and Roderick Vawdrey was not in it. He felt himself excluded, and held himself gloomily apart, talking hunting-talk with a man for whom he did not care twopence. Directly his carriage was announced—sotto voce by the considerate Forbes, so as not to wound anybody's feelings by the suggestion that the festivity was on its last legs—Mr. Vawdrey went up to Mrs. Winstanley and took leave. He would not wait to say good-night to Violet. He only cast one glance in the direction of the piano, where the noble breadth of Mrs. Carteret's amber brocaded back obscured every remoter object, and then went away moodily, denouncing duet singing as an abomination.

When Lady Mabel asked him next day what kind of an evening he had had at the Abbey House, in a tone which implied that any entertainment there must be on a distinctly lower level as compared with the hospitalities of Ashbourne, he told her that it had been uncommonly slow.

"How was that? You had some stupid person to take into dinner, perhaps?"

"No; I went in with Violet."

"And you and she are such old friends. You ought to get on very well together."

Rorie reddened furiously.

Happily he was standing with his back to the light in one of the orchid-houses, enjoying the drowsy warmth of the atmosphere, and Mabel was engrossed with the contemplation of a fine zygopetalum, which was just making up its mind to bloom.

"Oh, yes; that was well enough; but the evening was disgustingly slow. There was too much music."

"Classical?"

"Lord knows. It was mostly French and German. I consider it an insult to people to ask them to your house, and then stick them down in their chairs and say H—sh—h! every time they open their mouths. If people want to give amateur concerts, let them say so when they send out their invitations, and then one would know what one had to expect."

"I am afraid the music must have been very bad to make you so cross," said Lady Mabel, rather pleased that the evening at the Abbey House should have been a failure. "Who were the performers?"

"Violet and an Irish friend of Captain Winstanley's—a man with a rosy complexion and black whiskers—Lord Mallow."

"Lord Mallow! I think I danced with him once or twice last season. He is rather distinguished as a politician, I believe, among the young Ireland party. Dreadfully radical."

"He looks it," answered Rorie. "He has a loud voice and a loud laugh, and they seem to be making a great deal of him at the Abbey House."

"Tommy loves a lord," said Lady Mabel brightly. Rorie hadn't the faintest idea whence the quotation came. "I daresay the Winstanleys are rather glad to have Lord Mallow staying with them."

"The squire would have kicked him out of doors," muttered Rorie savagely.

"But why? Is he so very objectionable? He waltzes beautifully, if I remember right, and I thought him rather a well-meaning young man."

"Oh, there's nothing serious against him that I know of; only I don't think Squire Tempest would have liked a singing man any more than he would have liked a singing mouse."

"I didn't know Miss Tempest sang," said Lady Mabel. "I thought she could do nothing but ride."

"Oh, she has a very pretty voice, but one may have too much of a good thing, you know. One doesn't go out to dinner to hear people sing dusts."

"I'm afraid they must have given you a very bad dinner, or you would hardly be so cross. I know that is the way with papa. If the dinner is bad he abuses everything, and declares the ladies were all ugly."

"Oh, the dinner was excellent, I believe, I'm not a connoisseur, like my uncle. People might give me the most wonderful dinner in the world, and I should hardly be the wiser; or they might give me a wretched one, and I should not feel particularly angry with them."

The next day was Tuesday, and, as the duchess and her daughter happened to be driving within a mile or so of the Abbey House, Lady Mabel suggested that they should call upon Mrs. Winstanley.

"I am rather anxious to see the wild Irishman they have captured lately—Lord Mallow. We met him at Lady Dumdrum's, if you remember, mamma. I danced with him twice."

"My dear Mabel, do you think I can remember all your partners?"

"But Lord Mallow is rather celebrated. He makes very good speeches. Papa read one of them to us the other day when there was a great debate going on upon the Irish land question."

The duchess remembered being read to one evening after dinner, but the debates, as delivered by the duke, had generally a somnolent effect upon his wife. She had a faint idea of the beginning, and struggled heroically to discover what the speakers were talking about; then came a soft confusion of sound, like the falling of waters, and the middle and end of the debate was dreamland. Lady Mabel was of a more energetic temper, and was interested in everything that could enlarge her sphere of knowledge, from a parliamentary debate to a Greek play.

The duchess had never in her life refused compliance with any wish of her daughter's, so the horses' heads were turned towards the Abbey House, along a smooth hard road through a pine wood, then through a lodge gate into a forest of rhododendrons.

"This is really a nicer place than Ashbourne, mamma," remarked Lady Mabel disapprovingly.

It appeared to her quite a mistake in the arrangement of the universe that

Violet Tempest should be heiress to a more picturesque estate than that which she, the Duke of Dovedale's only daughter, was to inherit.

"My dear, Ashbourne is perfect. Everyone says so. The stables, the offices, the way the house is lighted and heated, the ventilation."

"Yes, mamma; but those are details which nobody thinks about except an architect or a house-agent. Ashbourne is so revoltingly modern. It smells of stucco. It will take a century to tone it down. Now this fine old place is like a dream of the past; it is a poem in wood and stone. Ashbourne would be very well for a hunting-box for anyone who had three or four other places, as papa has; but when my time comes, and I have only Ashbourne, I'm afraid I shall hate it."

"But you will have a choice of places by-and-by," said the duchess consolingly. "You will have Briarwood."

"Briarwood is a degree uglier than Ashbourne," sighed Lady Mabel, leaning back in the carriage, wrapped to the chin in Russian sable, the image of discontent.

There are moments in every life, as in Solomon's, when all seems vanity. Lady Mabel Ashbourne's life had been cloudless—a continual summer, an unchangeable Italian sky; and yet there were times when she was weary of it, when some voice within her murmured, "This is not enough." She was pretty, she was graceful, accomplished, gifted with a self-confidence that generally passed for wit; all the blood in her veins was the bluest of the blue, everybody bowed down to her, more or less, and paid her homage; the man she liked best in the world, and had so preferred from her childhood, was to be her husband; nobody had ever contradicted her, or hinted that she was less than perfect; and yet that mysterious and rebellious voice sometimes repeated, "It is not enough." She was like the woman in the German fairy-tale, who beginning as the wife of a half-starved fisherman, came, by fairy power, to be king, and then emperor, and then pope; and still was not contented, but languished for something more, aye, even to have the ordering of the sun and moon.

The rebellious voice expostulated loudly this winter afternoon, as Lady Mabel's languid eyes scanned the dark shining rhododendron bushes, rising bank above bank, a veritable jungle, backed by tall

beeches and tower-like Douglas firs. A blackbird was whistling joyously amongst the greenery, and a robin was singing on the other side of the drive. The sunlight was soft and pearly. It was one of those mild winters in which Christmas steals unawares upon the footprints of a lovely autumn. The legendary oak was doubtless in full bud at Cadenham, like its miraculous brother, the Glastonbury thorn.

"I don't think any of papa's places can compare with this," Lady Mabel said irritably.

She would not have minded the beauty of the grounds so much had they been the heritage of any other heiress than Violet Tempest.

The old hall was full of people and voices when the duchess and her daughter were announced. There was a momentary hush at their entrance, as at the advent of someone of importance, and Mrs. Winstanley came smiling out of the fire-light to welcome them, in Theodore's last invention, which was a kind of skirt that necessitated a peculiar gliding motion in the wearer, and was built upon the lines of a mermaid's tail.

"How good of you!" exclaimed Mrs. Winstanley.

"We were coming through Lyndhurst, and could not resist the temptation of coming in to see you," said the duchess graciously. "How do you do, Miss Tempest? Were you out with the hounds this morning? We met some people riding home."

"I have never hunted since my father's death," Violet answered gravely; and the duchess was charmed with the answer and the seriously tender look that accompanied it.

Lord Mallow was standing before the hearth, looking remarkably handsome in full hunting costume. He had enjoyed his first day with the Forest hounds, had escaped the bogs, and had avoided making an Absalom of himself among the spreading beechen boughs. Bullfinch had behaved superbly over his old ground.

Mr. and Mrs. Scobel were among those dusky figures grouped around the wide fire-lit hearth. Mr. Scobel was talking about the last advance movement of the Ritualists, and expatiating learnedly upon the Ornaments Rubric of 1559, and its bearing upon the Advertisements of 1566, with a great deal more about King Edward's first prayer-book and the Act of Uniformity,

to Colonel Carteret, who, from an antique conservative standpoint, regarded Ritualists, Spirit-rappers, and Shakers in about the same category; while Mrs. Scobel twittered cheerily about the parish and the schools to the colonel's bulky wife, who was a liberal patroness of all philanthropic institutions in her neighbourhood.

Lord Mallow came eagerly forward to recall himself to the memories of Lady Mabel and her mother.

"I hope your grace has not forgotten me," he said; and the duchess, who had not the faintest recollection of his face or figure, knew that this must be Lord Mallow. "I had the honour of being introduced to you at Lady Dumdrum's delightful ball."

The duchess said something gracious, and left Lord Mallow free to talk to Lady Mabel. He reminded her of that never to be, by him, forgotten waltz, and talked, in his low-pitched Irish voice, as if he had lived upon nothing but the recollection of it ever since.

It was idiosyncratic of Lord Mallow that he could not talk to any young woman without seeming to adore her. At this very moment he thought Violet Tempest the one loveable and soul-entrancing woman the world held for him; yet at sight of Lady Mabel he behaved as if she and no other were his one particular star.

"It was a nice dance, wasn't it; but there were too many people for the rooms," said Lady Mabel easily; "and I don't think the flowers were so prettily arranged as the year before. Do you?"

"I was not there the year before."

"No? I must confess to having been at three balls at Lady Dumdrum's. That makes me seem very old, does it not? Some young ladies in London make-believe to be always in their first season. They put on a hoydenish freshness, and pretend to be delighted with everything, as if they were just out of the nursery."

"That's a very good idea up to thirty," said Lord Mallow. "I should think it would hardly answer after."

"Oh, after thirty they begin to be fond of horses and take to betting. I believe young ladies after thirty are the most desperate—what is that dreadful slang word—plungers in society. How do you like our hunting?"

"I like riding about the Forest amazingly; but I should hardly call it hunting after Leicestershire. Of course that de-

pends in a measure upon what you mean by hunting. If you only mean hounds pottering about after a fox, this might pass muster; but if your idea of hunting includes hard riding and five-barred gates, I should call the kind of thing you do here by another name."

"Was my cousin, Mr. Vawdrey, out to-day?"

"The M. F. H.? In the first flight. May I get you some tea?"

"If you please. Mrs. Winstanley's tea is always so good."

Mrs. Winstanley was supremely happy in officiating at her gipsy-table, where the silver tea-kettle of Queen Anne's time was going through its usual sputtering performances. To sit in a fashionable gown—however difficult the gown might be to sit in—and dispense tea to a local duchess, was Mrs. Winstanley's loftiest idea of earthly happiness.

Lady Mabel and Lord Mallow had a longish chat in the deep-set window where Vixen watched for Rorie on his twenty-first birthday. The conversation came round to Irish politics somehow, and Lord Mallow was enraptured at discovering that Lady Mabel had read his speeches, or had heard them read. He had met many young ladies who professed to be interested in his Irish politics; but never before had he encountered one who seemed to know what she was talking about. Lord Mallow was enchanted. He had found his host's step-daughter stonily indifferent to the Hibernian cause. She had said "Poor things" once or twice, when he dilated on the wrongs of an oppressed people; but her ideas upon all Hibernian subjects were narrow. She seemed to imagine Ireland a vast sheet of bog chiefly inhabited by pigs.

"There are mountains, are there not?" she remarked once; "and tourists go there? But nobody lives there, do they?"

"My dear Miss Tempest, there are charming country seats; if you were to see the outskirts of Waterford, or the hills above Cork, you would find almost as many fine mansions as in England."

"Really?" exclaimed Vixen, with most bewitching incredulity; "but people don't live in them? Now I'm sure you cannot tell me honestly that anyone lives in Ireland. You, for instance, you talk most enthusiastically about your beautiful country, but you don't live in it."

"I go there every year for the fishing."

"Yes; but gentlemen will go to the most uncomfortable places for fishing—

Norway, for example. You go to Ireland just as you go to Norway."

"I admit that the fishing in Connemara is rather remote from civilisation——"

"Of course. It is at the other end of everything. And then you go into the House of Commons, and rave about Ireland just as if you loved her as I love the Forest, where I hope to live and die. I think all this wild enthusiasm about Ireland is the silliest thing in the world, when it comes from the lips of landowners who won't pay their beloved country the compliment of six months' residence out of the twelve."

After this Lord Mallow gave up all hope of sympathy from Miss Tempest. What could be expected from a young lady who could not understand patriotism in the abstract, but wanted to pin a man down for life to the spot of ground for which his soul burned with the ardour of an orator and a poet. Imagine Tom Moore compelled to live in a humble cot in the Vale of Avoca. He infinitely preferred his humdrum cottage in Wiltshire. Indeed, I believe it has been proved against him that he had never seen the meeting of the waters, and wrote about that famous scene from hearsay. Ireland has never had a poet as Irish as Burns and Scott were Scottish. Her whole-hearted, single-minded national bard has yet to be born.

It was a relief, therefore, to Lord Mallow's active mind to find himself in conversation with a young lady who really cared for his subject and understood him. He could have talked to Lady Mabel for ever. The limits of five o'clock tea were far too narrow. He was delighted when the duchess paused, as she was going away, and said:

"I hope you will come and see us at Ashbourne, Lord Mallow; the duke will be very pleased to know you."

Lord Mallow murmured something expressive of a mild ecstasy, and the duchess swept onward, like a three-decker with all sail set, Lady Mabel gliding, like a neat little pinnace, in her wake. Lord Mallow was glad when the next day's post brought him a card of invitation to the ducal dinner on December the 31st. He fancied that he was indebted to Lady Mabel for this civility.

"You are going, of course," he said to Violet, twisting the card between his fingers meditatively.

"I believe I am asked."

"She is," answered Mrs. Winstanley, from her seat behind the ura; "and I

consider, under the circumstances, it is extremely kind of the duchess to invite her."

"Why?" asked Lord Mallow, intensely mystified.

"Why, the truth is, my dear Lord Mallow, that Violet is in an anomalous position. She has been to Lady Southminster's ball, and a great many parties about here. She is out and yet not out, if you understand."

Lord Mallow looked as if he was very far from understanding.

"She has never been presented," explained Mrs. Winstanley. "It is too dreadful to think of. People would call me the most neglectful of mothers. But the season before last seemed too soon after dear Edward's death, and last season, well"—blushing and hesitating a little—"my mind was so much occupied, and Violet herself was so indifferent about it, that somehow or other the time slipped by and the thing was not done. I feel myself awfully to blame. But early next season—at the very first drawing-room, if possible—she must be presented, and then I shall feel a great deal more comfortable in my mind."

"I don't think it matters one bit," said Lord Mallow, with appalling recklessness.

"It would matter immensely if we were travelling; Violet could not be presented at any foreign court, or invited to any court ball. She would be an outcast. I shall have to be presented myself, on my marriage with Captain Winstanley. We shall go to London early in the spring. Conrad will take a small house in Mayfair."

"If I can get one," said the captain doubtfully. "Small houses in Mayfair are as hard to get nowadays as black pearls, and as dear."

"I am charmed to think you will be in town," exclaimed Lord Mallow; "and, perhaps, some night, when there is an Irish question on, you and Miss Tempest might be induced to come to the Ladies' Gallery. Someladies rather enjoy a debate."

"I should like it amazingly," cried Violet. "You are awfully rude to one another, are you not? And you imitate cocks and hens; and do all manner of dreadful things. It must be capital fun."

This was not at all the kind of appreciation Lord Mallow desired.

"Oh, yes; we are excruciatingly funny sometimes, I daresay, without knowing it," he said, with a mortified air.

He was getting on the friendliest terms

with Violet. He was almost as much at home with her as Rorie was, except that she never called him by his Christian name, nor flashed at him those lovely, mirth-provoking glances which he surprised sometimes on their way to Mr. Vawdrey. Those two had a hundred small jokes and secrets that dated back to Vixen's childhood. How could a newcomer hope to be on such delightful terms with her? Lord Mallow felt this, and hated Roderick Vawdrey as intensely as it was possible for a nature radically good and generous to hate even a favoured rival. That Roderick was his rival, and was favoured, were two ideas of which Lord Mallow could not dispossess himself, notwithstanding the established fact of Mr. Vawdrey's engagement to his cousin.

"A good many men begin life by being engaged to their cousins," reflected Lord Mallow. "A man's relations take it into their heads to keep an estate in the family, and he is forthwith set at his cousin like an unwilling terrier at a rat. I don't at all feel as if this young man were permanently disposed of, in spite of all their talk; and I'm very sure Miss Tempest likes him better than I should approve of were I the cousin."

While he loitered over his second cup of coffee, with the ducal card of invitation in his hand, it seemed to him a good opportunity for talking about Lady Mabel.

"A very elegant girl, Lady Mabel," he said; "and remarkably clever. I never talked to a young woman, or an old one either, who knew so much about Ireland. She's engaged to that gawky cousin, isn't she?"

Vixen shot an indignant look at him, and pouted her rosy under lip.

"You mean young Vawdrey. Yes; it is quite an old engagement. They were affianced to each other in their cradles, I believe," answered Captain Winstanley.

"Just what I should have imagined," said Lord Mallow.

"Why?"

"Because they seem to care so little for each other now."

"Oh, but, dear Lord Mallow, remember; Lady Mabel Ashbourne is too well-bred to go about the world advertising her affection for her future husband," remonstrated Mrs. Winstanley. "You would not have a lady behave like a housemaid with her young man. I believe in that class of life they always sit with their arms round each other's waists at evening parties."

"I would have a lady show that she has a heart, and is not ashamed to acknowledge its master," said Lord Mallow, with his eyes on Vixen, who sat stolidly silent, pale with anger. "However, we will put down Lady Mabel's seeming coldness to good-breeding. But as to Mr. Vawdrey, all I can say about him is, that he may be in love with his cousin's estate, but he is certainly not in love with his cousin."

This was more than Vixen could brook.

"Mr. Vawdrey is a gentleman, with a fine estate of his own," she cried. "How dare you impute such meanness to him!"

"It may be mean, but it is the commonest thing in life."

"Yes, among adventurers who have no other road to fortune than by marrying for money; but do you suppose it can matter to Roderick whether he has a thousand acres less or more, or two houses instead of one. He is going to marry Lady Mabel because it was the dearest wish of his mother's heart, and because she is perfect, and proper, and accomplished, and wonderfully clever—you said as much yourself—and exactly the kind of wife that a young man would be proud of. There are reasons enough, I should hope," concluded Vixen indignantly.

She had spoken breathlessly, in gasps of a few words at a time, and her eyes flashed their angriest light upon the astounded Irishman.

"Not half a reason if he does not love her," he answered boldly. "But I believe young Englishmen of the present day marry for reason and not for love. Cupid has been cashiered in favour of Minerva. Foolish marriages are out of fashion. Nobody ever thinks of love in a cottage. First, there are no more cottages; and secondly, there is no more love."

Christmas was close at hand: a trying time for Vixen, who remembered the jolly old Christmas of days gone by, when the poor from all the surrounding villages came to receive the squire's lavish bounty, and not even the tramp or the cadger was sent empty-handed away. Under the new master all was done by line and rule. The distribution of coals and blankets took place down in Beechdale under Mr. and Mrs. Scobel's management. Vixen went about from cottage to cottage in the wintry dusk, giving her small offerings out of her scanty allowance of pocket-money, which Captain Winstanley had put at the lowest figure he decently could.

"What can Violet want with pocket-

money?" he asked, when he discussed the subject with his wife. "Your dressmaker supplies all her gowns and bonnets and hats. You give her gloves—everything. Nobody calls upon her for anything."

"Her papa always gave her a good deal of money," pleaded Mrs. Winstanley. "I think she gave it almost all away to the poor."

"Naturally. She went about pauperising honest people because she had more money than she knew what to do with. Let her have ten pounds a quarter to buy gloves and eau-de-cologne, writing-paper and postage-stamps, and trifles of that kind. She can't do much harm with that, and it is quite as much as you can afford, since we have both made up our minds to live within our incomes."

Mrs. Winstanley sighed and assented, as she was wont to do. It seemed hard that there should be this need of economy, but it was in a manner Violet's fault that they were all thus restricted, since she was to take so much, and to reduce her mother almost to penury by-and-by.

"I don't know what would become of me without Conrad's care," thought the dutiful wife.

Going among her poor this Christmas with almost empty hands, Violet Tempest discovered what it was to be really loved. Honest eyes brightened none the less at her coming, the little children flocked as fondly to her knee. The changes at the Abbey House were very well understood. They were all put down to Captain Winstanley's account, and many a simple heart burned with indignation at the idea that the squire's golden-haired daughter was being "put upon."

One bright afternoon in the Christmas holidays Vixen consented, half reluctantly at the last, to let Lord Mallow accompany her in her visits among the familiar faces, and that was a rare day for the squire's old pensioners. The Irishman's pockets were full of half-crowns and florins, and sixpences for the rosy-faced, bare-footed, dirty, happy children.

"It puts me in mind of the old country," he said, when he had made acquaintance with the interior of half-a-dozen cottages. "The people seem just as kind and friendly, and improvident, and idle, and happy-go-lucky as my friends at home. That old Sassenach forester, now, that we saw sitting in the winter sun, drinking his noon-day pint, on a bench outside a rustic beer-shop, looking the very image of lazy

enjoyment. What Irishman could take life more lightly or seem better pleased with himself? a freeborn child of the sun and wind, ready to earn his living anyhow except by the work of his hands. Yes, Miss Tempest, I feel a national affinity to your children of the Forest. I wish I were Mr. Vawdrey, and bound to spend my life here."

"Why, what would life be to you if you had not ould Ireland to fight for?" cried Vixen, smiling at him.

"Life would be simply perfect for me if I had——"

"What?" asked Vixen, as he came to a sudden stop.

"The dearest wish of my heart. But I dare not tell you what that is yet awhile."

Vixen felt very sorry she had asked the question. She looked wildly round for another cottage. They had just done the last habitation in a straggling village in the heart of the woods. There was nothing human in sight by which the conversation might be diverted from the uncomfortable turn it had just taken. Yes; yonder under the beechen boughs Vixen descried a small child with red legs, like a Jersey partridge, dragging a smaller child by the arm, ankle deep in the sodden leaves. To see them, and to dart across the wet grass towards them, were almost simultaneous.

"Tommy," cried Vixen, seizing the red-legged child, "why do you never come to the Abbey House?"

"Because Mrs. Trimmer says there's nothing for me," lisped the infant. "The new master sells the milk up in Lannun."

"Laudable economy," exclaimed Vixen to Lord Mallow, who had followed her into the damp woodland and heard the boy's answer. "The poor old Abbey House can hardly know itself under such admirable management."

"There is as big a house where you might do what you liked; yes, and give away the cows as well as the milk, if you pleased, and none should say you nay," said Lord Mallow in a low voice, full of unaffected tenderness.

"Oh, please don't!" cried Vixen; "don't speak too kindly. I feel sometimes as if one little kind word too much would make me cry like a child. It's the last straw, you know, that crushes the camel; and I hate myself for being so weak and foolish."

After this Vixen walked home as if she

had been winning a match, and Lord Mallow, for his life, dared not say another tender word.

This was their last tête-à-tête for some time. Christmas came with its festivities, all of a placid and eminently well-bred character, and then came the last day of the year and the dinner at Ashbourne.

THE TASK.

LIFE's school has many tasks we all must learn,
Lessons of faith and patience, hope and love;
Knowledge of bitter taste, and wisdom stern
Of fires, the temper of our steel to prove;
Much of forbearance gathering years must teach,
And charity, with her angelic face,
Gentling the judgment, softening the speech,
Gives time its surest aid, and grief its grace.

Hardest of all the masters we must hear.
Experience, with cold eyes and measured voice,
Bids us, who hold young lives supremely dear,
Beware, ere moulding them to suit our choice;
Warning: "The sky smiles blue, smooth shows the
path,

Promise no sunshine, guide no wavering foot;
The loveliest valley hides the seeds of death,
The poison lurks deep in the fairest fruit."

Leave the young hearts to Nature and to God.
Leave the young tendrils where they will to twine;
Where violets blossom, and white snowdrops nod,
Fall April dews, where April's sunlights shine;
Gather the ripened corn, if yet some ears
Are left for faltering hand and patient care;
But for the darlings of decaying years,
Leave them alone, in all save love and prayer.

WILD IRISH WEDDINGS.

SEVENTY-FIVE years had passed since the close of the siege which made the little city of Derry for ever memorable in history. As compared with past times Ireland might be called tranquil; the passions that took fire a quarter of a century later, in the Rebellion of 1798, had not been aroused; and with the cessation of civil warfare came an advance in social improvements.

Sorely were all such needed, and even more was a correct tone of opinion required; for in the want of this was most clearly seen the debased and lawless condition in which the country had lain.

In few things was this more evident than in the wild and lawless manner in which abduction and forced marriages were regarded and carried out.

In the south and west of Ireland, no girl known to be well portioned was safe. When once a girl was known to be possessed of money in her own right, there was sure to be some wild daring fellow ready to seize her and it together; and as he might depend upon assistance from

most of those around, the exploit was not so dangerous as an undertaking of the kind looks now.

In fact, in some parts of Ireland there existed clubs for the purpose, the members of which gambled for the girls they considered desirable, and the winner was aided by all the other members in carrying off the prize.

This association maintained a system of espionage so complete, that they knew the exact amount of every girl's fortune, the way in which it was placed, and all the circumstances that surrounded her, so as to be able to lay their plans with an acute vigilance seldom defeated.

The English government had tried at different times to put an end to this state of things. Several Acts of Parliament were passed to meet the evil: one in the beginning of the seventeenth century, for "punishing any who carried away maidens who were inheritors;" seventy years later another, more severe, rendering those who forcibly carried off heiresses who were under age liable to the penalty of death. This Act was not modified until so late a period as 1842; but about eighty years before that time it bore down heavily on one of the most remarkable cases of the kind that had occurred; remarkable, not only for the social position of the parties concerned, but also for its happening in the most civilised part of the country, near the city of Derry, and among a population so largely leavened with Scotch and English settlers, that the lawlessness and passion so generally attributed to Celtic blood would scarcely have been supposed to appear. Indeed, all the parties concerned in this melancholy business seem to have been of Scotch descent. The lady's family undoubtedly were, being said to claim an ancestry no less noble than that of the great reformer, Knox.

They bore his name, and had probably been among the earliest settlers in Ulster, for the ancient woods that surround the still existing family seat had been planted and kept with taste and care. Their dark shadow overhangs the Foyle, and harmonises well in its weight and gloom with the tragic history that few travellers have failed to hear when passing along the road from Derry to Strabane.

During the seventy-five years that had passed since the conclusion of the siege of Derry, the trade and commerce of the place had vastly increased, and its capabilities for becoming the flourishing busi-

ness town it now is were attracting capital and developing industry.

Among the wealthier merchants of the town was a Mr. McNaghten. He had a son named John, who seemed to possess a larger share of all the things that men call good than falls to the lot of many in life. In person a very model of masculine beauty, a tall and well-proportioned figure, and perfectly handsome face; a voice of singular sweetness; affable and insinuating manners; and all these gifts heightened and added to by an education on which his father had spared neither cost nor pains. He took a degree in the university of Dublin, and if he had been compelled to work for a living might perhaps have left a different history behind him; but not only did his father's wealth hinder any such necessity, but just at this time he came into possession of a considerable property, the bequest of a near relative, and he immediately commenced a course of wild and dissipated living, in which his disposition soon became sorely altered and lowered, and fierce passions, that had scarcely shown before, mastered him with uncontrolled fury.

Such was his extravagance, that early in life, soon after his marriage, which took place while he was very young, his resources were so exhausted that he was unable to ward off arrest; and his wife lost her life from the effect of the shock she sustained when the sheriff seized her husband.

Some time after, being again at liberty, and still a young and handsome man, with polished manners and considerable cleverness, McNaghten managed, through friends connected with the Irish Government, to obtain a valuable appointment in Derry. Circumstances connected with his duty led to an intimate acquaintance with Mr. Knox, whose residence was about two miles from Derry. He was a gentleman rather advanced in life, and of the highest respectability. Mrs. Knox was living, and they had a daughter, then about fifteen years of age, a singularly lovely girl, gentle and amiable as it was possible for any creature to be. This young lady was entitled to a very large fortune, independent of her father, and additional to what she might receive from him.

McNaghten took every possible opportunity to ingratiate himself with Miss Knox, who is described as having been of a guileless and most affectionate nature. Before her father or mother knew any-

thing of the matter, she had been induced by McNaghten to promise that, in two years from that time, she would marry him.

When this was made known to her parents their distress was extreme, and Mr. Knox indignantly expelled McNaghten from his house, and bade him come there no more, and had he held firmly to this prohibition all that followed might have been prevented. In a weak moment, however, he some time after yielded to representations made to him on behalf of McNaghten, and, in an evil hour again admitted the snake to his hearth.

In all the natural freedom that belongs to country life, Miss Knox was accustomed to walk about the shrubberies and woodland paths around her father's house. A little foot-boy or page often attended her, to carry a basket containing some delicacy for any of the sick poor near, or to bring home the wild flowers and mosses which gave her such delight, and in which the woods around were particularly rich.

One day McNaghten surprised her by suddenly appearing where, under a clump of beeches down near the river-side, she was gathering flowers. He induced her to let him sit down beside her, talked of undying love, and how her father's opposition might yet be overcome; then spoke of marriage and its ceremonial, and, producing a small prayer-book, asked her to look over the service along with him; there could be no harm in that, and perhaps she had never read it; and then forthwith he read the service to her, prevailing upon her to answer the responses.

Whether or no Miss Knox thought this reading of any importance cannot be said; but to the end of each response she added the clause, "if my father should consent." But on this ceremony, if such it could be called, McNaghten at once acted, and claimed the young lady as his wife, to the indignant surprise of her father, who now again forbade him the house, and at once instituted proceedings in an ecclesiastical court, which declared the marriage null and void, whilst McNaghten was all the time publishing it in every newspaper in Ireland.

Soon after this McNaghten had to make a hasty flight to England, as proceedings were ordered against him by the ecclesiastical court, the officers of which he had threatened to shoot for setting aside his so-called marriage.

But the disturbance he had created in

the formerly quiet and happy household of the Knoxes was not over, and information soon reached Mr. Knox that McNaghten had returned, and was concealed in Derry. He, however, took no notice of the matter, either thinking little of the quarter from which the information had come, or else despising McNaghten himself, and considering him powerless for further annoyance.

Some humble friends of the family, however, took all this more seriously to heart. Not far from Prehen, Mr. Knox's residence, lived the woman who had been his daughter's nurse, and she, and her husband, who was a blacksmith, were affectionately attached to the young lady.

These people had reason to think that a man who had been seen lurking about the woods was McNaghten in disguise; and as even in this, the most civilised county in Ireland, abduction was a common form of courtship, they considered his being there boded danger to their young lady, and so represented things to her parents, that the trusty blacksmith was substituted for the little page who had stood by while the mock marriage in the wood had taken place, and he followed Miss Knox whenever she left the house.

In the fall of the year the family were to go to Dublin, and remain there for a time, in the hope that society and change would be beneficial after going through so much annoyance.

McNaghten had full information of all their movements and intentions, and seems at once to have laid his plans. It was November. The party were to travel in their own great old family coach, getting relays of horses along the road, and spending several days in accomplishing what eight hours do now. Mr. Knox, his wife, daughter, and a maid were inside. Beside the coachman sat the smith, a footman at the back; all three well armed.

In a hut standing a short distance back from the road, about a mile from their own avenue gate, lay McNaghten and a party of desperadoes with him. They had horses with them, and a large supply of firearms.

A man disguised as a yarn-buyer was on the road, apparently seeking information at a cottage on the wayside as to where yarn could be had. This man, when he saw the carriage coming, ran through the fields to the hut where McNaghten and the others were concealed, and they reached the road-side in time to intercept the carriage as it came up.

McNaghten and another man both fired at the unfortunate smith, who, though dreadfully wounded, was not killed. McNaghten then rode up close to the window of the carriage, into which he could not see, the blinds being drawn, and discharged into it the heavily loaded blunderbuss he held.

One awful scream was heard, and opening the window, Mr. Knox fired his pistol at the assailant, and struck McNaghten, who was also fired at by the footman, and struck by him also. Another minute, and the men with him had carried him off, holding him on the horse. There were none to follow them, for inside the carriage, literally in a pool of blood, lay Miss Knox's lifeless form. Five balls from the blunderbuss were lodged in it; and that this was so, and none of the other three occupants of the carriage were struck, seemed to be accounted for by the fact, that when first they found the carriage stopped and so apprehended danger, she had thrown herself upon her father to protect him, thinking, as was probably the case, that he would be the object of the attack, and so, with her arms round his neck, had received the whole charge in her own body.

A large reward was offered for McNaghten's apprehension, for some time in vain. At last some of the military who were employed found him in a farmer's hay-loft, and though miserably wounded, he fought like a tiger before they could take him. Soon after, most of his accomplices were taken up, and one of them turned king's evidence. They were all taken to Lifford gaol, and the government issued a special commission for their trial.

McNaghten was brought into court wrapped in blankets, and laid down on a table in the dock; he could neither stand nor walk, and yet in this miserable state of weakness, and suffering extreme pain, he defended himself with an energy and cleverness that astonished all present, and strove hard to save from the fate that awaited himself a faithful servant, who had followed him through everything. In the attempt to do this he feigned not to know the man, and seemed to regard him as a stranger whom he had not seen before.

The poor fellow, not understanding the drift of this, burst into tears exclaiming: "Och, masthur dear, and is it going 'till disown mè ye are aftthur all?"

The execution took place on the spot

where the murder had been committed, McNaghten being nearly as helpless as when on his trial.

Among those who suffered with him, as sharers in the outrage, was the poor servant spoken of, who, without lamenting his own condition, poured out the most piteous sorrow for his master, crying and wringing his hands in unrestrained grief.

McNaghten appeared on this occasion clad in deep mourning, wearing jet ornaments and large buckles of the same in his shoes. He always avowed the most passionate regard for the young lady whom in the attempt to carry away he had so cruelly murdered.

A very remarkable case of abduction occurred in 1779.

In the spring of that year a company of strolling players reached a small town in the county of Kilkenny, and fitted up there a rough theatre at the end of a house with which it communicated. In those times, when people living in the country visited large towns less frequently than they do now, and so had but a small share of sight-seeing, anything of this kind brought together people of nearly all classes for many miles round.

Among the audience one night in April were two young girls named Kennedy, with their mother and aunt. Their father was dead. He had been a wealthy gentleman-farmer, and the part of his property which he had left to his daughters entitled each of them to two thousand pounds. Not a very large fortune certainly, but money was worth more then than now; and report, with its usual power, had magnified the possessions of this family until they were looked upon as something immense, and the daughters as heiresses to enormous wealth.

Often had all this been discussed in the abduction clubs, and when the girls had reached the ages of fourteen and fifteen years they were balloted for as usual, and fell to the lot of two young-men of the ordinary description of the "squireen" class. They were both well connected, and were also popular young men, being dashing careless fellows, spending their time in sport and dissipation.

One of them, Mr. Strang, belonged to Kilkenny. However affable he might have appeared when excited by amusement, he was, in private, cross, passionate, and exacting. The younger girl, Anne, had fallen to his share, and it was curious that

in temper and disposition there was a resemblance between them.

The name of the elder girl, Katherine, had been drawn by a Mr. Garret Byrne of Carlow.

The Kennedy family seem to have shared in all the convivialities of the country, and so were met by these men at races, public balls, and such places, where they had been observed to pay court to them, and offer them attentions.

They were both handsome girls, Anne unusually so; even at that early age showing both in face and figure much of that remarkable beauty and almost grandeur of appearance which afterwards greatly distinguished her.

Graigunanama was the name of the little town where the players had established themselves, and the representation on the night referred to was about half way through, when some people outside observed the approach of horsemen, coming in parties of two and three from different directions, and soon their errand began to be whispered about. There were no police in Ireland at that time, and unless when within reach of a military station, people had to keep the peace for themselves.

Some one conveyed to Mrs. Kennedy the intelligence that a party was being formed to carry off her daughters as they left the play that night.

In great alarm they withdrew from the theatre to a secluded room in the house at one end of which it had been established. There was a large four-post bedstead in this room, with heavy curtains round it, among the folds of which the two girls concealed themselves, while some male friends who had accompanied the party secured the door with such means as were at hand, and piled up against it the heavy furniture of the room.

There they remained without light, hoping anxiously as time passed on that their retreat from the theatre, which was very quietly effected, had not been observed. Thus an hour passed on without anything to create alarm, and then a confused noise was heard, and a number of men came rushing down the long passage that led to their retreat, and throwing themselves forcibly against the door, soon burst it open.

They were Strang and Byrne with some of their associates, all fully armed. At first they made a feint of having come to demand from Mrs. Kennedy her

daughters in marriage; but while the parley was going on, some of them sprang to the bed, and drew from the hangings the weeping terrified girls.

They were quickly borne off by their captors, whose assistants in the matter so far outnumbered the Kennedys' friends, that any resistance they could offer was less than useless.

And now commenced a history which it is hard to believe happened in our own country about a century ago, but the legal reports of the period fully confirm the accounts of it which have come down in other ways.

For above five weeks these unhappy girls were taken about the country, chiefly through the counties of Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny, and Waterford, without a change of clothes, riding generally by night, with such little rest as was obtained by day at miserable, often empty and deserted houses, and surrounded always by a greater or lesser number of the lawless cavalcade that had assisted their captors.

The first night they were taken to a place called Kilmacshane, where they were solicited to marry the men, and threatened that, if they did not, they would be put on board a vessel and taken to a foreign country, and their mother and friends would never know what had become of them. A man was introduced here who was called a priest, and the terror of the girls became extreme.

To quiet their hysterical grief, some women were now introduced, who were either sisters or cousins of Byrne and Strang. The poor young girls became quieter on seeing them, and clung to them for protection, and some food and drink was placed before them.

They soon found that the women too were in the league against them, and when they refused to take part in, or listen to, the service which the so-called priest was attempting to read, the women, finding other threats in vain, declared they would go away, and leave them to whatever treatment the men might offer to them. And then they told them that the reading of this service would free the men from any criminality in the matter, while it would not involve them in anything further; and if they would only yield so far as this, and then take some rest, next day they should be restored to their mother.

While they still hesitated, Strang and Byrne took a frightful oath before the priest, that if the girls did not let him go

through the service or ceremony he was waiting to perform, they would ride with them through the country day and night until they were nearly dead, and then put them down into coal-mines whence they would never escape. To this they joined an assurance that, if the girls yielded, they should be restored at once to their home.

It was the afternoon now of the day succeeding their capture. Worn out and subdued, the girls became quiet, and the priest began to read, and at some parts of what he read, an assent was drawn or forced from them. Directly he ceased, they demanded to be taken home, but, one pretext and another, they were put off until dark.

Next morning the party were all mounted as before, as the Miss Kennedys thought, to take them to their own home, which was at Rathmeadan, County Waterford; but instead of this, they set off in another direction, and, day and night, they were kept riding about, where, the girls knew not; and, after some days, another priest appeared on the scene, undertaking to "exorcise from them the spirit of rebellion and disobedience to their husbands." But they resisted his spiritual influence as determinedly as they did the more violent villainy of the men around them. And there seemed to have been considerable violence used towards them at this time, for the threat of the coal-mines was renewed, and Strang, in one of his passions, personally ill-used Anne, and threw a heavy pewter utensil in her face, inflicting a terrible blow.

Five weeks passed in this manner, and they had reached the neighbourhood of Dublin, where they seemed to intend carrying out their threat of taking the girls out of the country, for at Rush, a small fishing station not many miles from Dublin, a vessel was waiting for them, and on board this the whole party went. Their design in doing this was never fully known.

The first place they went to was the town of Wicklow, where some unfavourable attention was drawn to men who came in from the vessel, and a gentleman there named Power, a man of position and a magistrate, suspecting something, quickly collected an armed party and went on board with a search-warrant.

Byrne and Strang were on shore with some of the party, and the rest offered an ineffectual resistance; and thus the poor distressed girls were rescued, and restored to their friends and home.

The chief actors in this iniquity escaped for a time, but before the end of July were apprehended.

Not for a moment could they establish any claim upon the girls as their wives. They made their depositions in the clearest manner. No doubt could exist of the brutality they had been subject to, and at the spring assizes of 1780 the trial came on at Kilkenny.

Letters were put in evidence for their defence, purporting to be written by the young ladies before the elopement, expressing their sorrow at being unable to gain their mother's consent to their marriages, and begging their lovers to watch for a chance of carrying them off, but these letters were proved to be forgeries; whilst others were also shown, which the girls admitted they had written while under the terror of being buried in the coal-mine. They were addressed to the men as their husbands, were full of affectionate expressions, and were signed respectively, one, "Your loving and affectionate wife, Anne Strang;" and the other, "Katherine Byrne."

This girl, Katherine, was said really to have been attached to Byrne, who had done what he could to soften the rigour of those miserable weeks. Had he possessed good principles, he was a man most women could have loved, and had she stood alone in the matter, it is probable there would have been no prosecution; but her sister Anne had a hatred to Strang that nothing could lessen. Ask her not to prosecute? she would not hear of it; and so, mere child as she was, she bore down the opposition of her elder and feeble sister, and helped her to be firm in refusing every appeal made to them to condone the matter.

In this determination they were strongly upheld by a near relative, a gentleman famous in the annals of duelling; he was probably their nearest male friend, and by him all the preliminaries were urged forward.

Byrne and Strang were both found guilty, and sentenced to death; but that this would be carried out few really believed until it was done. Their rank in the country, the number and good standing of their connections, the fact that they had attempted to marry the girls, and that abduction was never looked upon as a crime in Ireland; all these things, people said, rendered it impossible that such a sentence could be carried out; it had been recorded merely to show what the legal penalty was.

The men had friends in high places, and the Government was beset with applications on their behalf; but no support could be obtained from the Attorney-General, who had conducted the prosecution. Had these men belonged to the lower class, there would have been few to ask that they should be reprieved; and why, because they were, or ought to have been gentlemen, should they be excused? If this abduction were lightly treated, no girl would be safe, no family free from intrusion and insult; liberty and personal safety must be ensured to all, and, most of all, to the young and weak. He called on the Government not to interfere with the sentence.

Nor did they, to the intense surprise and anger of the populace, among whom the excitement was so great that a large military force had to be sent into Kilkenny when the time came for putting the law in force.

The sympathy of the people for the criminals was extreme. In Kilkenny every shop was shut all that day, and in several neighbouring towns the same was done; whilst the unhappy girls, who had been the victims of these men's crimes, could not appear for years after, if indeed they ever could, without being mobbed and hooded.

They received government pensions for their courage and firmness in prosecuting, and they both grew up into women as remarkable for their stately beauty as they had been for their early unfortunate adventures.

Some years afterwards they were both respectably married, but neither of them very happily. Katherine's husband falling into ill-health, and being from this tormented by nervous fancies, thought himself haunted by Byrne's ghost, who, day and night, seemed to stand by him; whilst Anne's marriage, from other circumstances, was still more miserable.

That the social organisation of the country would render such doings perfectly impossible now is satisfactory to reflect upon; still more is it to know that public opinion is so far changed for the better that they would no longer be commended.

MUSICAL BATTLES.

MANY of our readers will doubtless recollect that famous "Battle of the Pianos," which was so spiritedly depicted by the late John Leech in the pages of Punch.

The drawing shows what an architect would call a sectional elevation of the adjacent drawing-rooms of two London houses. Back to back, and divided only by the flimsiest of party-walls, stand two pianos, and at each piano are seated two young ladies. We are left to conclude from the *mise-en-scène* that a loud and furious battle of harmony or discord, as the case may be, is in progress between the allied armies of fair combatants, and the whole forms a good-humoured satire on the musical proclivities of metropolitan young ladies, as well as on the unsubstantial nature of the barriers that separate the houses of London. The pianoforte battles, however, which at present engage our attention are those which pretended to be a musical record of the great battles of the past. They formed the delight of our grandmothers, whose imaginations may be supposed to have been livelier than those of their descendants at the present degenerate day; for it must be confessed, with a sigh from the defender of the good old times, that battle-pieces for the pianoforte are no longer in favour even with the most enthusiastic miss of jingo-like proclivities.

How many thousands of the readers of the novel without a hero have sympathised with poor George Osborne in that scene which preceded the explosion of his father's wrath. George is lolling on the sofa when—"The sisters began to play the Battle of Prague. 'Stop that d— thing,' George howled out in a fury from the sofa; 'it makes me mad. You play us something, Miss Swartz, do. Sing something, anything but the Battle of Prague.'" Thus was the prototype of pianoforte battle-pieces anathematised by one who was himself to fall in the Battle of Waterloo. Trafalgar, and Waterloo, and Austerlitz were afterwards celebrated and described in music; but at that time there was nothing to dispute the favour in which was held the great original Battle of Prague.

The piece opens with a slow march; during which, presumably, the troops take up their position. This done, the word of command is given with much decision, but with a vacuity of intention quite hopeless, were it not for the printed commentary that illustrates the music. On the other hand, the first signal cannon is quite unmistakable in meaning, consisting of a heavy bang of octave notes in the bass. Bugles and trumpets have now a short

innings, and the movement ends with more fortissimo passages, studiously, but a little unnecessarily, labelled, "cannon, caannon, cannon."

We wonder whether the Miss Osbornes were in the habit, when they performed this piece, of reading audibly the descriptive commentary. Unless they did so, many of the most ambitious efforts of the composer must have escaped the listener. The attack begins with an allegro. They made war, like the French in 1870, with light hearts. The Prussians occupy the treble, whilst the Imperialists advance on the lines of the bass. A fervid imagination might construe certain runs up and down the scale into military manœuvres en échelon or otherwise; or they may be held to denote the varying fortunes of the fight. Trumpets and kettledrums enliven the combat, and we can imagine the grating voice of the elder Miss Osborne hissing out the ominous words, "Flying bullets," as she strikes out the notes supposed to indicate their flight. The sound of horses galloping is easily imitated in music, and has even in verse presented not insuperable difficulties, as one example, at least, in the *Æneid* sufficiently shows. Less easy is the composer's task when he essays the musical equivalent of the attack with swords; for all that there is in this passage would be equally as appropriate to any other kind of attack. In the heavy cannonade which follows, and in the movement meant for cannons and drums in general, there does not appear to be much difference between the roar of artillery and the roll of drums. It would be well were cannons always as innocuous as they are here represented. Some distinction must exist, however, which it is the office of imagination to discern; an office which is by no means a sinecure throughout this piece; for on turning the leaf a grave subject passes through three bars, and is supposed to give the listener an idea of the cries of the wounded.

These unfortunates are soon forgotten and left to their fate. The trumpet of victory sounds; God save the Queen strikes up, apparently à propos de bottes; and is succeeded by a lively Turkish quickstep, after which comes the finale. This is the finest portion of the piece musically considered, though our chief admiration is due to the indomitable descriptive genius of the composer. It has ever been to our minds an unfathomable

mystery that the popular air, Go to bed, Tom, should close so grandiloquent a pianoforte composition as "that d— thing!" the Battle of Prague. But so it is, and we have merely to state the fact without attempting an explanation of it.

The imitations of a recognised success in art seldom obtain, and are still more seldom worthy of, a like amount of popular favour. It is therefore not at all surprising that the Battle of Waterloo should exaggerate the ridiculous pretentiousness of its prototype, whilst its musical qualities are of even less value. The same naïve expedient is put in force to give a quasi-warlike character to the piece by means of a printed commentary on the music; and the relation between the facts stated in the text, and the interpretation of them in the music, is just as vague and ill-defined. The arrival of the gallant Highlanders is denoted by an unmistakable Scotch march, but this is almost the sole instance of clear illustration of the subject. In an *andante espressivo* the allies declare their unity and friendship, great demands being evidently made on the expressional powers of the player. The abilities of the performer are still further tested in the succeeding half-a-dozen bars, during which, having ceased shaking hands and expressing their unity, the English forces take up their position. Since the time of Mr. Puff, and the extraordinary nod of Lord Burleigh, never was there so much to be expressed by means so scanty and inadequate. In the course of an ordinary march "the Duke of Wellington occupies Hougoumont and the farm of La Haye Sainte, where he afterwards meets Prince Blucher." It will be observed that a future event has to be suggested or hinted at in some mysterious manner in this passage, a task that will probably overpass the genius of most performers.

The piece is strongly patriotic. *Buonaparte* collects his troops on the opposite heights in an *allegretto*, consistently with the liveliness of the French soldiers, whilst on the next page the joy and resolution of the British are insisted on at great length. The engagement commences with runs up and down the scale, and with the already familiar cannonades. Then the French charge the allies in a *crescendo* from the bass, and are easily repulsed in the treble. This is repeated three times; on the third occasion the charge taking place, with like ill-success, however, in both treble and bass. Then comes our innings, in

which, of course, there is no hesitation of fortune. The British assail the enemy and drive them from the heights, and finally the English pursue the French right down into the depths of the bass—the Low Countries, presumably.

After this, of course, come the shouts of victory, *Rule Britannia*, and very sanctimonious thank-offerings to Providence on the part of the victors; nor would the battle be complete without the cries of the wounded, which appear in this piece under the name "complaints of the disabled and wounded." Alas, for poor George Osborne! he is to be counted amongst these victims. He will no longer curse the musical phantasy of the Battle of Prague, but the stern reality of Waterloo. This notable piece, embellished with a lithographed portrait of Wellington, surrounded by a trophy of guns, bayonets, and laurels, was issued from the Temple of Apollo, London; it would seem that Mars had effected an entrance into the sun-god's abode when this composition was undertaken there.

Some variety is attained in the pianoforte battle-piece which illustrates the Battle of Trafalgar, on account of this being a naval engagement. The music is of good quality as a rule, and the text is principally characterised by a wealth of misspellings. The sailing of the fleet, a gale of wind, Nelson's glorious signal, a general pursuit (*sic*) by the English, are all successively described, and the music descends to such refined details of description as to inform us of the precise instant when the fleets are within gunshot. Then come thoughts of home and silent prayers, the peculiarity of both being their melodramatic audibility. These continue until an *allegro con fuoco* plunges us rather unexpectedly into the midst of the engagement.

Perhaps the funniest thing in the whole course of these very funny examples of musical combat occurs immediately after Lord Nelson has finished cheering his men—a thing, of course, that no right-minded British admiral would fail to do. The fact which the musician has to describe is the breaking the enemy's line, and the beauty of his method of surmounting the difficulty lies in the exquisite mal-appropriateness of it. A rapid run up the scale, performed by sliding the finger rapidly over the notes, is supposed to indicate the piercing of the line of battle of France and Spain. This, indeed, is the very

burlesque of musical description, and it would be difficult in the whole range of art to find so absurd a specimen.

We have by no means exhausted the list of martial music, but the three specimens we have examined are fairly characteristic. The attempt to import into an essentially vague and indefinite art the minuteness and wealth of description only possible in such branches of art as poetry and painting, can only be attended with more or less ridiculous failure. Such attempts were the delight of a former generation, but for us they can afford little more than a passing amusement as we curiously turn over the leaves of some antiquated volume of music.

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HONY,

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRIFFITH'S DOUBLE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXIV. ALL, OR NOTHING.

WOUNDED, she had fled. The instinct of the stricken creature who would hide from the herd was strong in Janet, and fostered by all the associations of her past, fed by the qualities and the defects of her character. Many a woman, not nearly so good as she, not so lofty, not so single-minded, would have better borne such a blow; would have seen the fair structure of her faith, her hope, her trust, and her happiness levelled to the earth by one fell stroke, and have turned her, after the first shock of the devastation had passed away, to the building up out of the shattered fragments of some sort of shelter for her forlorn head. Many a woman not so good as she, not so lofty, not so single-minded, would have applied the test of duty to the position, and the standard of expediency likewise, and, with whatever suffering, made up her mind to her fate. With Janet, however, no such thing could be. It would be impossible for any words to convey what she suffered in the interval between the hushing for ever of the haunting question that had pursued her since a very little while after her marriage, in the dreadful certainty of Dunstan's words, and the merciful dropping of the veil of illness between her and external things. The agony of a score of deaths was in that uprooting of all the foundations of her life; in the fear and loneliness of a lost heart, cast out from the fire and food of love to cold which was not to abate its rigour, and

hunger that was not to cease to gnaw for evermore.

Her first coherent thought—when the numbness that had held her bound while the "lep'rous distilment" was poured into her ear gave way, and she could move—was that she must get away at once; and while she lay upon the floor of her room, her face downwards on her hands, and when she dragged herself to the door, with a horror of confronting Julia in which there was the beginning of frenzy, her brain seemed to be turned into an anvil on which a hammer was beating, and the echo of every stroke said, "How? how?" When she emerged from the stupor of illness, it was with a perfectly clear recollection of all that had occurred, and it was to resume, in undiminished weight, the load that had been lifted from off her for the interval during which life and death were contending for the possession of her. She experienced then the sense that at one time or another comes to most of us—that of a dual existence, in which there is no relation between the condition of the body and that of the mind; for there she lay, calm and quiet, a model patient for quiescent answering to "treatment," gaining a little in convalescence each day, while all the time there was ruin and desolation in her heart, and in her mind a fixed purpose, at utter variance with all that surrounded her. She used to feel glad in those days that she was so weak; she would have suffered more had she been stronger; but, as it was, she had many an interval of vagueness, in which the tired mind rested, many a doze of the thoughts; and, though their wide-awake complexion never changed, there was relief in the sense of something deferred that came to her with those lapses.

Then, too, she was so closely watched; the tending of her was so faithful, that she was bound to absolute self-control, and this was very well for her. Had anything been remarked about her not to be accounted for by her illness, she would straightway have been questioned by Julia, or by Mrs. Cathcart, or, perhaps, if mention had been made of it to him, by Captain Dunstan himself; and from the possibility of that she shrank with dread which would have impelled her to any amount of effort at concealment. Her very truth and loyalty were dangerous to her now, for they precluded even the perception by her of a middle course, as dictated by any thought for circum-

stances: they brought her face to face with her own belief and her own declaration that in the tie of marriage there must be found all, or nothing. She must get away; but how? This was the question that haunted her now—since the first one had been silenced by the terrible answer—all the beautiful long days of early summer, while the woods, and the fields, and the gardens she so dearly loved were putting on their fairest garments of greenery and delicate scented blossom for her eyes, when they should shine with the old brightness of her health and youth; and when those eyes were held waking by her trouble in the brief darkness, not to close for their respite of still sleep until the early dawn.

Janet had at times the strangest feeling, as though he were dead; a feeling which, when the spell of it was on her, did not yield to his presence. After she became able to observe what was passing around her—how much he had been with her during the worst of her illness she never asked or knew—she was aware that he came several times during the day to enquire how she was, to sit a little while in her room, speaking softly with her attendants, or with Julia or Amabel, for either was almost always with her, but he spoke little to herself, and did not seem surprised at her silence. At first the sight of him and the sound of his voice caused her such intense pain that she could conceal it only by a superhuman effort; and thence arose her habit of keeping her eyes closed while he was in the room—a habit which escaped notice except by one person. Amabel observed those closed eyelids, and heard the sigh that accompanied the lifting of them when Captain Dunstan went away. When several hours elapsed without her seeing him, Janet would get that strange feeling over her as if he were dead, or, still more frequently, as if she herself were dead, and all that had happened had been left behind in a world with which she had nothing henceforth to do, but whose shadowy memories pursued her with unrelenting eagerness, and put her to unremitting pain. This was the more tranquil of the two moods between which she alternated, and it became less frequent as she grew stronger, and drew nearer to health. The other mood was one of fierce and fiery suffering, in which the past mocked, the present tortured, and the future terrified her; one in which she

recounted to herself her own story with all the bitterness of deadly jealousy, and all the sickening anguish of despair.

The past that mocked her was a past in which she had dreamed but one dream, cherished but one love, in which she might have been happy with her dream, with her love, asking for nothing beyond them. But the friend who had filled her life with blessings had unconsciously overthrown them all by one action. Janet did not know, or care to know, how it was that Mrs. Drummond had made that revelation to Dunstan which had been the ruin of the life she longed and purposed to bless exceedingly; she did not know how it was that her old friend had found out the secret of her love. When there arose from her heart the voiceless cry: "Oh, my dear one, how could you have done this to me? How could you, who knew me so well, know me so little?" there was not mingled with it any blame of Mrs. Drummond. She had read the girl's heart, and had laid open the page before another reader; and so, with the best intentions, she had undone the work of several of her own past years.

Very differently did Janet think of Dunstan. Against him, at times, there rose up in her heart hot and bitter anger; such anger as can only coexist with love, because its agony could have no more superficial source.

He knew she loved him, and he married her for the sake of "gratitude." The word was his own, he had made the avowal in her hearing. He had done this false, horrible, cruel thing, against which her love, her pride, her dignity, her modesty, her self-respect, revolted almost equally. Because she had given him money, and he owed her "gratitude," he had taken herself, and never asked her consent to the transaction. He had deceived her, he had utterly sacrificed her to his own pride, to what he supposed to be his conscience, his sense of what he owed to her and himself! He had done this because it was comparatively easy for him to discharge his debt in this way, in that the woman he loved was unattainable by him. Janet's proud heart, its gentleness overborne for the time by the stronger feeling, was wrung with the agony of this thought. He had so little understood, so little cared to understand her, that he had not felt he was doing her a wrong, deadly, unspeakable, unpardonable, though it were never to be revealed to her in this world;

a wrong which every day of their lives passed together, while she lived in the fool's paradise of a lie, intensified. He had thought to repay her for fortune by marriage; how had he proposed to repay her for love? What a base imitation was that which had indeed never quite deceived her, though she had not known the origin, or been able to define the nature of the disappointment and the doubt which had beset her.

What a pure and single-hearted devotion hers had been; with what humility, and unbounded grateful joy, she had loved him, regarding herself as the most absolutely fortunate of women, and resting in the belief that the love which had been his sole motive for marrying her must, although it could not approach her own, be the strongest and the deepest of his feelings too. When the sense of disappointment with which she had vainly struggled importuned her most, when the doubt which she vainly resisted made most head against her peace, she was wont to assure herself of this. He had married her because he loved her; and if ever anything so dreadful as his coming to regret it should happen—for the haunting whisper took this form sometimes—the fault would be her own. But now there was no more of this humble deprecatory mood for Janet—a mood which might, perchance, had no catastrophe disturbed it, have helped her much in that inevitable transition from an unrealisable ideal to the actualities of a very tolerable sort of life as human lives are, which in the ordinary course of experience and training lay before her. By becoming her husband Dunstan had done her an intolerable wrong; the only wrong perhaps which he could have done her and found no plea for him in the heart which was so entirely his; and the very unity of her nature, the absolute absence in her of the faculty of comprehending compromise, made it impossible that she should regard that wrong in what others would call a reasonable light. She had been the victim of a polite sham from the first; it had all been nothing! Among the many sources whence Janet drew waters of bitterness during those terrible days, was that of her own increased knowledge of the way of looking at things common to her husband and to the "world" he had lived in, to which he belonged, to which she was altogether alien.

Unless she could conceal from him what she had learned, and get away without an

explanation, she might have to endure the torture of remonstrance from him, of persuasion, perhaps of incredulous surprise; and that she could not bear. He had married her from "gratitude," without love; he had married her, loving another woman; and he would, it might be, say to her that this indeed was so, but that she should have no cause to complain of him—had he not said just that to Julia?—that she must make the best of it; that married people, with good tempers, and good manners, and a good fortune, might get on very well together without romance. She had heard more than once some such treason and blasphemy as this spoken in the world of which she had had a glimpse, and she had revolted against it, even as only an external heresy, which in no way could profane the sanctuary of that loyal love which was part of poor Janet's religion. To hear such treason and blasphemy from him would be more than she could, more than she need endure; she must do anything rather than incur the risk of having to listen to it. He would try to keep her with him for the sake of appearances, out of consideration for the world which he prized and to which he deferred; the world which she neither loved nor hated, but simply did not take into account at all; which had no meaning for the bereft and betrayed heart that had been worshipping a phantom, and found it had made itself air. Not by any unkind means would he try to keep her, for Dunstan was essentially a gentleman, but by persuasion which would torture her, and reason which would be the most terrible kind of folly to a woeful mind like hers; but he would respect her last request, that she might be left unmolested, when the thing was done and over, and the gulf was set between them. She never asked herself how she was to bear the separation from him; how the long slow days would pass with her. It had all become impossible, it was all as though it had never been, save for the falsehood, and the ruin, and the pity of it; and there was no form or shape in the future for her who, held in bonds of pain and weakness by the present, was bent only on flight from the treason and betrayal of the past.

How the horrid tenacity of her memory tormented her: she had taxed it but little save with records of Dunstan, and it held them with scrupulous faith. She lived again through every hour of the time before the news of Mr. Thornton's death

had reached her husband, and realised that from that moment the question which had haunted her had taken voice; and then, trying to see clearly into a mental condition hardly comprehensible by her transparent truthfulness and oneness of soul, she discerned that the husband who had loved her never, whose debt of "gratitude" had unexpectedly become so irksome, because a barrier between himself and the woman whom he had loved always, would surely come to hate her. From that hour there had been before his mind's eye the image of Laura, not as the wife of another, parted from himself by her own act and choice, hopelessly out of his reach, the object of a regret, vague and fading—deadly wrong to Janet as such an image was—but the mocking picture of what might have been, but for Janet's importunate love, and his own disproportionate and untimely "gratitude." Thenceforth, Janet's presence became an active evil; his wife was no longer the mere obligatory accompaniment of his fortune and position; she was the living obstacle to his happiness, the woman who stood between him and Laura, free now, and to be won. How if Laura were won, and once more by another, and the pangs of jealousy were again to seize on Dunstan, as, together with the pangs of despised love, they had seized on Janet? From the picture that her imagination conjured up she shrank with terror; from the thought that he might come to hate her—after the polite and disguised fashion of household hatreds among people of the world, no doubt, but with all that repulsion which his love of Laura would lend to the feeling. He would come to hate her, when he should see, beside her, the image of the woman who, but for her, might sit at his table, and slumber on his breast; the woman whose husband had been happy, and had loved her, and was dead!

Yes; he would hate her; and nothing that she could do could hinder that hatred. For she could not die. Until great suffering comes to the young, they are apt to think that if it should come they will be sure to escape from it by death; the first tight grip it takes of them teaches them that it is not so. While Janet was very ill she had no memory of her sorrow, and when she awoke to it, clearly, without transition, she knew that she was not going to die. Yes; he would hate her, and with cause, for she must, while she lived, represent to him the

opposed and defeated. And she must bear that knowledge; but at least she need never read it in his face, hear it in his voice, look at him with the knowledge that it was stirring at his heart. Freedom to him, or to herself, it was not in her power to give; but she could go far from him, and until his freedom should be granted him by the hand that cannot err from justice and from mercy, no word or sign from her should reach him more.

With all her senses perfectly untroubled, and with her friends about her, Janet, living in a world infinitely apart from them, made her plans. Sometimes she wondered, in a vague way, that it did not grieve her to think of a parting for ever between herself and those friends. It did not. She loved them, she knew all their solicitude and care; she knew that they would grieve when she was gone; but she felt no grief on that account. There was no more room, there was no more strength in Janet's heart for sorrow. Julia had been brave and truthful in what she said to Dunstan; she had understood in part what he had done; she had at least a true woman's perception that for a man to marry a woman from any other motive than love is a cruel deed, and an outrage, however disguised, to honour. Janet was grateful to Julia, and she liked to think, whenever she could direct her thoughts from their centre of pain, of Julia as a happy wife. That would be soon, they told her, and then Julia would forget her, or, at least, cease to grieve about her. And Amabel? It was different with regard to her; numbed as were Janet's feelings, all but one, she was sensible of that difference; she did not forget the promise she had made to Amabel, nor how strangely Amabel had pressed her for a renewal of it on that wedding-day from the remembrance of which she shrank in terror, nor did she mean to be unfaithful to it. Janet knew that, no matter to what pain she should put her, she might trust Amabel; and many an hour did she lie still, or sit in the deep old-fashioned arm-chair by the window—as she had seen Mrs. Drummond sit, musing, in the by-gone years—and, holding the girl's hand in hers, ponder over the project which was to be put in execution when her strength returned, with a great pity and hope for Amabel in her poor tired heart.

"It will be hard on her at first," Janet would think, "but well for her in the end. Sir Wilfrid will come back with Mr.

when I am here no longer. I daresay he will blame me heavily, even if he knows all about the woman whom my husband loves, for men stand by men, and he will fall in love with Amabel this time. She will be very happy with him, she will not fret about his passing fancy for me, for she will not have been deceived."

All this time she was unaware of the close scrutiny with which Amabel was observing her, and she little thought how nearly the curious gift of intuition and of sympathy that her friend possessed was enabling her to discern her secret. "There is an arrow in her heart," Amabel said to herself, early in Janet's convalescence, "and the hand that shot it is her husband's." From that moment, without questioning her by so much as a look, she seconded Janet's wishes. No less clearly than she perceived Janet's state of mind, did Amabel discern that the intimation of Janet's wish that he should go to London was welcome to Captain Dunstan; and that there was something more in his acceptance of it than the not unnatural gladness with which a man escapes from a scene of dulness and illness, when things are mending, and he can take a holiday creditably.

When the intelligence of Mrs. Monroe's death was sent to Janet, those with her felt great uneasiness with respect to the effect that it might have upon her. It affected her but slightly. She said little to Julia on the subject, and Julia thought she had so long looked for the event, that she had grown accustomed to think of her sister-in-law as for ever passed away out of her own life. But Amabel knew better. To her Janet said briefly: "She has her wish at last; and he too. Am I to grudge that to them, for my poor sake?"

There was no sorrow at all in Janet's thoughts of her sister-in-law; on the contrary, she thought of her with unselfish congratulation, with sinless envy. There was one in the deathless world whose heaven had been incomplete until she joined him there. To Janet, the deathless world itself could never give that especial happiness. That night, Janet took from a drawer of the old bureau a packet of letters—among its contents were all those which Mrs. Monroe had written to her since she left England—and carefully read them through. There were none of very recent date; there were some of years ago.

From the latter Janet selected a few, which she placed in a pocket of her travelling bag; from those relating to Mrs. Monroe's sojourn at Nice, she made some careful memoranda, and then she burned the others.

The train by which Janet travelled to London arrived in time to enable her to cross the Channel the same night. The steamer that carried her to Calais was the same in which she and Dunstan had crossed to Dover on their return to England. A dreary wonder fell upon her as she recognised the cabin and the stewardess, and felt absolutely secure from recognition herself. As well she might, for who, even though the constant press of strangers had not intervened to blunt impressions, could have seen in the pale-faced, sad-eyed young woman, in deep plain mourning, her hair completely hidden by the white border of an English widow's cap, who sat in a corner of the cabin with a leather bag at her feet, the beautiful, richly-dressed, assiduously-waited-on lady, whose servants had made such a fuss about the amount and quality of accommodation for her and themselves, and whose equipment included every accessory of travelling fashion.

Twenty-four hours after she left Bevis, Janet was seated in the parlour of a humble little convent in a remote quarter of Paris, where the surroundings are of a squalid enough order, but where high walls shut in, and lofty trees shelter, the quiet unseen lives that are passed in teaching the children of the poorest among the poor, and succouring the aged sick. In a superior, but still humble portion of the house, a few ladies resided as boarders, and Janet was waiting to see whether she could be received among the number. Presently a mild grave woman in the dress of a religious entered the room, carrying in her hand a faded letter. It was one of those which Janet had put away in the corner of her travelling-bag.

She bowed to Janet, who rose with nervous anxiety plainly to be read in every feature, and said in French:

"Our reverend mother remembers Madame Monroe perfectly—that dear little widow who was here with us in her first days of great mourning—and she sees that madame is of her family, and dear to her. This letter is enough. Our reverend mother will receive madame."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

All THE YEAR Round

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXVIII. "FADING IN MUSIC."

"MRS. WINSTANLEY, on her marriage, by the Duchess of Dovedale."

That was the sentence which went on repeating itself like a cabalistic formula in Pamela Winstanley's mind, as her carriage drove through the dark silent woods to Ashbourne on the last night of the year.

A small idea had taken possession of her small mind. The duchess was the fittest person to present her to her gracious mistress, or her gracious mistress's representative, at the first drawing-room of the coming season. Mrs. Winstanley had old friends, friends who had known her in her girlhood, who would have been happy to undertake the office. Captain Winstanley had an ancient female relative, living in a fossil state at Hampton Court, and vaguely spoken of as "a connection," who would willingly emerge from her aristocratic hermitage to present her kinsman's bride to her sovereign, and whom the captain deemed the proper sponsor for his wife on that solemn occasion. But what value had a fossilised Lady Susan Winstanley, of whom an outside world knew nothing, when weighed in the balance with the Duchess of Dovedale? No; Mrs. Winstanley felt that to be presented by the duchess was the one thing needful to her happiness.

It was a dinner of thirty people; quite a state dinner. The most splendid of the orchids had been brought out of their houses, and the dinner-table looked like a tropical forest in little. Vixen went into

dinner with Lord Ellangowan, which was an unappreciated honour, as that nobleman had very little to say for himself, except under extreme pressure, and in his normal state could only smile and look good-natured. Roderick Vawdrey was ever so far away, between his betrothed and an enormous dowager in sky-blue velvet and diamonds.

After dinner there was music. Lady Mabel played a dreary minor melody, chiefly remarkable for its delicate modulation from sharps to flats and back again. A large gentleman sang an Italian buffo song, at which the company smiled tepidly; a small young lady sighed and languished through Non e ver; and then Miss Tempest and Lord Mallow sang a duet.

This was the success of the evening. They were asked to sing again and again. They were allowed to monopolise the piano; and before the evening was over everyone had decided that Lord Mallow and Miss Tempest were engaged. Only the voices of plighted lovers could be expected to harmonise as well as that.

"They must have sung very often together," said the duchess to Mrs. Winstanley.

"Only within the last fortnight. Lord Mallow never stayed with us before, you know. He is my husband's friend. They were brother officers, and have known each other a long time. Lord Mallow insists upon Violet singing every evening. He is passionately fond of music."

"Very pleasant," murmured the duchess approvingly: and then she glided on to shed the sunshine of her presence upon another group of guests.

Carriages began to be announced at eleven—that is to say, about half an hour after the gentlemen had left the dining-

room—but the duke insisted that people should stop till twelve.

"We must see the old year out," he said. "It is a lovely night. We can go out on the terrace, and hear the Ringwood bells."

This is how Violet and Lord Mallow happened to sing so many duets. There was plenty of time for music during the hour before midnight. After the singing, a rash young gentleman, pining to distinguish himself somehow—a young man with a pimply complexion, who had said with Don Carlos, "Three-and-twenty years of age, and nothing done for immortality"—recited Tennyson's Farewell to the Old Year, in a voice which was like anything but a trumpet, and with gesticulations painfully suggestive of Saint Vitus.

The long suite of rooms terminated in an orangery, a substantial stone building with tessellated pavement, and wide windows opening on the terrace. The night was wondrously mild, the full moon raining down her light upon the dark Forest, the shining water-pools, the distant blackness of a group of ancient yew-trees on the crest of a hill. Ashbourne stood high, and the view from the terrace was at all times magnificent, but perhaps finest of all in the moonlight.

The younger guests wandered softly in and out of the rooms, and looked at the golden oranges glimmering against their dark leaves, and put themselves into positions that suggested the possibility of flirtation. Young ladies, whose study of German literature had never gone beyond Ollendorff, gazed pensively at the oranges, and murmured the song of Mignon. Couples of maturer growth whispered the details of unsavoury scandals behind perfumed fans.

Vixen and Rorie were among these roving couples. Violet had left the piano, and Roderick was off duty. Lady Mabel and Lord Mallow were deep in the wrongs of Ireland. Captain Winstanley was talking agriculture with the duke, whose mind was sorely exercised about guano.

"My dear sir, in a few years we shall have used up all the guano, and then what can become of us?" demanded the duke. "Talk about our exhausting our coal! What is that compared with the exhaustion of guano? We may learn to exist without fires. Our winters are becoming milder; our young men are going in for athletics; they can keep themselves warm upon bicycles. And then we have the gigantic coal-fields of America, the vast basin of the Mississippi to fall back upon, with ever-increasing facilities in the mode of

transport. But civilisation must come to a deadlock when we have no more guano. Our grass, our turnips, our mangel, must deteriorate. We shall have no more prize cattle. It is too awful to contemplate."

"But do you really consider such a contingency at all probable, duke?" asked the captain.

"Probable, sir? It is inevitable. In 1868 the Chincha Islands were estimated to contain about six million tons of guano. The rate of exportation had at that time risen to four hundred thousand tons per annum. At this rate the three islands will be completely exhausted by the year 1888, and England will have to exist without guano. The glory of the English people, as breeders of prize oxen, will have departed."

"Chemistry will have discovered new fertilisers by that time," suggested the captain, in a comforting tone.

"Sir," replied the duke severely, "the discoveries of modern science tend to the chimerical rather than the practical. Your modern scientists can liquefy oxygen, they can light a city with an electric battery, but they cannot give me anything to increase the size and succulence of my turnips. Virgil knew as much about agriculture as your modern chemist."

While the duke was holding forth about guano, Vixen and Rorie were on the terrace, in the stillness and moonlight. There was hardly a breath of wind. It might have been a summer evening. Vixen was shrouded from head to foot in a white cloak which Rorie had fetched from the room where the ladies had left their wraps. She looked all white and solemn in the moonlight, like a sheeted ghost.

Although Mr. Vawdrey had been civil enough to go in quest of her cloak, and had seemed especially desirous of bringing her to the terrace, he was by no means delightful now he had got her there. They took a turn or two in silence, broken only by a brief remark about the beauty of the night and the extent of the prospect.

"I think it is the finest view in the Forest," said Vixen, dwelling on the subject for lack of anything else to say. "You must be very fond of Ashbourne."

"I don't exactly recognise the necessity. The view is superb, no doubt; but the house is frightfully commonplace. It is a little better than Briarwood. That is about all which an enthusiastic admirer could advance in its favour. How much longer does Lord Mallow mean to take up his abode with you?"

Vixen shrugged her cloaked shoulders with an action that seemed to express contemptuous carelessness.

"I haven't the least idea. That is no business of mine, you know."

"I don't know anything of the kind," retorted Rorie captiously. "I should have thought it was very much your business."

"Should you really?" said Vixen mockingly.

If the gentleman's temper was execrable, the lady's mood was not too amiable.

"Yes. Are not you the lodestar? It is your presence that makes the Abbey House pleasant to him. Who can wonder that he protracts his stay."

"He has been with us a little more than a fortnight."

"He has been with you an age. Mortals who are taken up to Paradise seldom stay so long. Sweet dreams are not so long. A fortnight in the same house with you, meeting with you at breakfast, parting with you at midnight, seeing you at noon-tide and afternoon, walking with you, riding with you, singing with you, kneeling down to family prayer at your side, mixing his 'Amen' with yours; why he might as well be your husband at once. He has as much delight in your society."

"You forget the hours in which he is shooting pheasants and playing billiards."

"Glimpses of purgatory, which make his heaven all the more divine," said Rorie.

"Well, it is none of my business, as you said just now. There are people born to be happy, I suppose; creatures that come into the world under a lucky star."

"Undoubtedly, and among them notably Mr. Vawdrey, who has everything that the heart of a reasonable man can desire."

"So had Solomon, and yet he made his moan."

"Oh, there is always a crumpled rose-leaf in everybody's bed. And if the rose-leaves were all smooth, a man would crumple one on purpose, in order to have something to grumble about. Hark, Rorie!" cried Vixen, with a sudden change of tone, as the first silvery chime of the Ringwood bells came floating over the woodland distance—the low moonlit hills; "don't be cross. The old year is dying. Remember the dear days that are gone, when you and I used to think a new year a thing to be glad about. And now what can the new years bring us half so good as that which the old ones have taken away?"

She had slipped her little gloved hand through his arm, and drawn very near to

him, moved by tender thoughts of the past. He looked down at her with eyes from which all the anger had vanished. There was only love in them—deep love—love such as a very affectionate brother might perchance give his only sister; but it must be owned that brothers capable of such love are rare.

"No, child," he murmured sadly. "Years to come can bring us nothing so good or so dear as the past. Every new year will drift us farther apart."

They were standing at the end of the terrace farthest from the orangery windows, out of which the duchess and her visitors came trooping to hear the Ringwood chimes. Rorie and Vixen kept quite apart from the rest. They stood silent, arm in arm, looking across the landscape towards the winding Avon and the quiet market-town, hidden from them by intervening hills. Yonder, nestling among those grassy hills, lies Moyles Court, the good old English manor-house where noble Alice Lisle sheltered the fugitives from Sedgemoor; paying for that one act of womanly hospitality with her life. Farther away, on the banks of the Avon, is the quiet churchyard where that gentle martyr of Jeffery's lust for blood takes her long rest. The creeping spleenwort thrives amidst the grey stones of her tomb. To Vixen these things were so familiar, that it was as if she could see them with her bodily eyes as she looked across the distance, with its mysterious shadows, its patches of silver light.

The bells chimed on with their tender cadence, half joyous, half sorrowful. The shallower spirits among the guests chattered about the beauty of the night, and the sweetness of the bells. Deeper souls were silent, full of saddest thoughts. Who is there who has not lost something in the years gone by, which earth's longest future cannot restore? Only eternity can give back the ravished treasures of the dead years.

Violet's lips trembled and were dumb. Roderick saw the tears rolling down her pale cheeks, and offered no word of consolation. He knew that she was thinking of her father.

"Dear old squire," he murmured gently, at last. "How good he was to me, and how fondly I loved him."

That speech was the sweetest comfort he could have offered. Vixen gave his arm a grateful hug.

"Thank God, there is someone who remembers him besides his dogs and me,"

she exclaimed; and then she hastily dried her tears, and made herself ready to meet Lord Mallow and Lady Mabel Ashbourne, who were coming along the terrace towards them talking gaily. Lord Mallow had a much wider range of subjects than Mr. Vawdrey. He had read more, and could keep pace with Lady Mabel in her highest flights; science, literature, politics, were all as one to him. He had crammed his vigorous young mind with everything which it behoved a man panting for parliamentary distinction to know.

"Where have you two people been hiding yourselves for the last half hour?" asked Lady Mabel. "You were wanted badly just now for Blow Gentle Gales. I know you can manage the bass, Rorie, when you like."

"Lo, behold a pennant waving!" sang Rorie in deep full tones. "Yes, I can manage that at a push. You seem music mad to-night, Mabel. The old year is making a swan-like end—fading in music."

Rorie and Vixen were still standing arm-in-arm; rather too much as if they belonged to each other, Lady Mabel thought. The attitude was hardly in good taste, according to Lady Mabel's law of taste, which was a code as strict as Draco's.

The bells rang on.

"The New Year has come!" cried the duke. "Let us all shake hands in the friendly German fashion."

On this there was a general shaking of hands, which seemed to last a long time. It seemed rather as if the young people of opposite sexes shook hands with each other more than once. Lord Mallow would hardly let Violet's hand go, once having got it in his hearty grasp.

"Hail to the first new year we greet together," he said softly; "may it not be the last. I feel that it must not, cannot be the last."

"You are wiser than I, then," Vixen answered coldly; "for my feelings tell me nothing about the future—except"—and here her face beamed at him with a lovely smile—"except that you will be kind to Bullfinch."

"If I were an emperor I would make him a consul," answered the Irishman.

He had contrived to separate Roderick and Vixen. The young man had returned to his allegiance, and was escorting Lady Mabel back to the house. Everybody began to feel chilly now that the bells were silent, and there was a general hurrying off to the carriages, which were

standing in an oval ring round a group of deodoras in front of the porch on the other side of the house.

Rorie and Vixen met no more that night. Lord Mallow took her to her carriage, and sat opposite her and talked to her during the homeward drive. Captain Winstanley was smoking a cigar on the box. His wife slumbered peacefully.

"I think I may be satisfied with Theodore," she said, as she composed herself for sleep; "my dress was not quite the worst in the room, was it, Violet?"

"It was lovely, mamma. You can make yourself quite happy," answered Vixen truthfully; whereupon the matron breathed a gentle sigh of content, and lapsed into slumber.

They had the Boldrewood Road before them, a long hilly road cleaving the very heart of the forest, a road full of ghosts at the best of times, but offering a Walpurgis revel of phantoms on such a night as this to the eye of the belated wanderer. How ghostly the deer were, as they skimmed across the road and flitted away into dim distances, mixing with and melting into the shadows of the trees! The little grey rabbits, sitting up on end, were like circles of hobgoblins that dispersed and vanished at the approach of mortals. The leafless old hawthorns, rugged and crooked, silvered by the moonlight, were most ghostlike of all. They took every form, from the most unearthly to the most grotesquely human.

Violet sat wrapped in her furred white mantle, watching the road as intently as if she had never seen it before. She never could grow tired of these things. She loved them with a love which was part of her nature.

"What a delightful evening, was it not?" asked Lord Mallow.

"I suppose it was very nice," answered Violet coolly; "but I have no standard of comparison. It was my first dinner at Ashbourne."

"What a remarkably clever girl Lady Mabel is. Mr. Vawdrey ought to consider himself extremely fortunate."

"I have never heard him say that he does not so consider himself."

"Naturally. But I think he might be a little more enthusiastic. He is the coolest lover I ever saw."

"Perhaps you judge him by comparison with Irish lovers. Your nation is more demonstrative than ours."

"Oh, an Irish girl would cashier such a

fellow as Mr. Vawdrey. But I may possibly misjudge him. You ought to know more about him than I. You have known him——”

“All my life,” said Violet simply. “I know that he is good and stanch and true, that he honoured his mother, and that he will make Lady Mabel Ashbourne a very good husband. Perhaps, if she were a little less clever and a little more human, he might be happier with her, but no doubt that will all come right in time.”

“Anyway it will be all the same in a century or so,” assented Lord Mallow. “We are going to have lovely weather as long as this moon lasts, I believe. Will you go for a long ride to-morrow—like that forest ride?”

“When I took you all over the world for sport?” said Vixen laughing. “I wonder you are inclined to trust me after that. If Captain Winstanley likes I don’t mind being your guide again to-morrow.”

“Captain Winstanley shall like. I’ll answer for that. I would make his life unendurable if he were to refuse.”

CHAPTER XXIX. CRYING FOR THE MOON.

DESPITE the glorious moonlight night which ushered in the new-born year, the first day of that year was abominable; a day of hopeless, incessant rain, falling from a leaden sky in which there was never a break, not a stray gleam of sunshine from morn till eve.

“The new year is like Shakespeare’s Richard,” said Lord Mallow, when he stood in the porch after breakfast, surveying the horizon. “‘Tetchy and wayward was his infancy.’ I never experienced anything so provoking. I was dreaming all night of our ride.”

“Were you not afraid of being like that dreadful man in Locksley Hall?”

‘Like a dog, he hunts in dreams,’”

asked Vixen mockingly.

She was standing on the threshold, playing with Argus, looking the picture of healthful beauty in her dark green cloth dress and plain linen collar. All Vixen’s morning costumes were of the simplest and neatest; a compact style of dress which interfered with none of her rural amusements. She could romp with her dog, make her round of the stables, work in the garden, ramble in the Forest, without fear of dilapidated flounces or dishevelled laces and ribbons.

“Violet’s morning-dresses are so dreadfully strong-minded,” complained Mrs.

Winstanley. “One would almost think to look at her that she was the kind of girl to go round the country lecturing upon woman’s rights.”

“No ride this morning,” said Captain Winstanley, coming into the hall with a bundle of letters in his hand. “I shall go to my den, and do a morning’s letter-writing and accountancy—unless you want me for a shy at the pheasants, Mallow?”

“Let the pheasants be at rest for the first day of the year,” answered Lord Mallow. “I am sure you would rather be fetching up your arrears of correspondence than shooting at dejected birds in a plantation; and I am luxurious enough to prefer staying indoors, if the ladies will have me. I can help Miss Tempest to wind her wools.”

“Thanks, but I never do any wool-work. Mamma is the artist in that line.”

“Then I place myself unreservedly at Mrs. Winstanley’s feet.”

“You are too good,” sighed the fair matron, from her armchair by the hearth; “but I shall not touch my crewels to-day. I have one of my nervous headaches. It is a penalty I too often have to pay for the pleasures of society. I’m afraid I shall have to lie down for an hour or two.”

And with a languid sigh Mrs. Winstanley wrapped her China crape shawl round her, and went slowly upstairs, leaving Violet and Lord Mallow in sole possession of the great oak-panelled hall; the lady looking at the rain from her favourite perch in the deep window-seat, the gentleman contemplating the same prospect from the open door. It was one of those mild winter mornings when a huge wood fire is a cheerful feature in the scene, but hardly essential to comfort.

Vixen thought of that long rainy day years ago, the day on which Roderick Vawdrey came of age. How well she remembered sitting in that very window, watching the ceaseless rain, with a chilly sense of having been forgotten and neglected by her old companion. And then, in the gloaming, just when she had lost all hope of seeing him, he had come leaping in out of the wet night, like a lion from his lair, and had taken her in his arms and kissed her before she knew what he was doing.

Her cheeks crimsoned even to-day at the memory of that kiss. It had seemed a small thing then. Now it seemed awful—a burning spot of shame upon the whiteness of her youth.

“He must have thought I was very

fond of him, or he would not have dared to treat me so," she told herself. "But then we had been playfellows so long. I had teased him, and he had plagued me; and we had been really like brother and sister. Poor Rorie! If we could have always been young we should have been better friends."

"How thoughtful you seem this morning, Miss Tempest," said a voice behind Vixen's shoulder.

"Do I?" she asked, turning quickly round. "New Year's Day is a time to make one thoughtful. It is like beginning a new chapter in the volume of life, and one cannot help speculating as to what the chapter is to be about."

"For you it ought to be a story full of happiness."

"Ah, but you don't know my history. I had such a happy childhood. I drained my cup of bliss before I was a woman; and there is nothing left for me but the dregs, and they—they are dust and ashes."

There was an intensity of bitterness in her tone that moved him beyond his power of self-control. That she—so fair, so lovely, so deeply dear to him already; she for whom life should be one summer-day of unclouded gladness; that she should give expression to a rooted sorrow was more than his patience could bear.

"Violet, you must not speak thus; you wound me to the heart. Oh, my love, my love, you were born to be the giver of gladness, the centre of joy and delight. Grief should never touch you; sorrow and pain should never come near you. You are a creature of happiness and light."

"Don't," cried Vixen vehemently. "Oh, pray don't. It is all vain—useless. My life is marked out for me. No one can alter it. Pray do not lower yourself by one word more. You will be sorry—angry with yourself and me—afterwards."

"Violet, I must speak."

"To what end? My fate is as fixed as the stars. No one can change it."

"No mortal perhaps, Violet. But love can. Love is a god. Oh, my darling, I have learnt to love you dearly and fondly in this little while, and I mean to win you. It shall go hard with me if I do not succeed. Dear love, if truth and constancy can conquer fate, I ought to be able to win you. There is no one else, is there, Violet?" he asked falteringly, with his eyes upon her downcast face.

A burning spot glowed and faded in her cheek before she answered him.

"Can you not see how empty my life is?" she asked with a bitter laugh. "No; there is no one else; I stand quite alone. Death took my father from me; your friend has robbed me of my mother. My old playfellow, Roderick Vawdrey, belongs to his cousin. I belong to nobody."

"Let me have you then, Violet. Ah, if you knew how I would cherish you. You should be loved so well that you would fancy yourself the centre of the universe, and that all the planets revolved in the skies only to please you. Love, let me have you—priceless treasure that others know not how to value. Let me keep and guard you."

"I would not wrong you so much as to marry you without loving you, and I shall never love any more," said Vixen, with a sad steadfastness that was more dispiriting than the most vehement protestation.

"Why not?"

"Because I spent all my store of love while I was a child. I loved my father—ah, I cannot tell you how fondly. I do not think there are many fathers who are loved as he was. I poured out all my treasures at his feet. I have no love left for a husband."

"What, Violet, not if your old friend Roderick Vawdrey were pleading?" asked Lord Mallow.

It was an unlucky speech. If Lord Mallow had had a chance, which he had not, that speech would have spoiled it. Violet started to her feet, her cheeks crimson, her eyes flashing.

"It is shameful, abominable of you to say such a thing," she cried, her voice tremulous with indignation. "I will never forgive you for that dastardly speech. Come, Argus."

She had mounted the broad oak stairs with light swift foot before Lord Mallow could apologise. He was terribly crestfallen.

"I was a brute," he muttered to himself. "But I hit the bull's-eye. It is that fellow she loves. Hard upon me, when I ask for nothing but to be her slave and adore her all the days of my life. And I know that Winstanley would have been pleased. How lovely she looked when she was angry—her tawny hair gleaming in the firelight, her great brown eyes flashing. Yes, it's the Hampshire squire she cares for, and I'm out of it. I'll go and shoot the pheasants," concluded Lord Mallow savagely; "those beggars shall not have it all their own way to-day."

He went off to get his gun, in the worst

humour he had ever been in since he was a child and cried for the moon.

He spent the whole day in a young oak plantation, ankle deep in oozy mud, moss, and dead fern, making havoc among the innocent birds. He was in so bloodthirsty a temper, that he felt as if he could have shot a covey of young children, had they come in his way, with all the ferocity of a modern Herod.

"I think I've spoiled Winstanley's covers for this year, at any rate," he said to himself, as he tramped homewards in the early darkness, with no small hazard of losing himself in one of those ghostly plantations, which were all exactly alike, and in which a man might walk all day long without meeting anything more human than a trespassing forest pony that had leapt a fence in quest of more sufficing food than the scanty herbage of the open woods.

Lord Mallow got on better than might have been expected. He went east when he ought to have gone west, and found himself in Queen's Bower when he fancied himself in Gretnam Wood; but he did not walk more than half-a-dozen miles out of his way, and he got home somehow at last, which was much for a stranger to the ground.

The stable clock was chiming the quarter before six when he went into the hall, where Vixen had left him in anger that morning. The great wood fire was burning gaily, and Captain Winstanley was sitting in a Glastonbury chair in front of it.

"Went for the birds after all, old fellow," he said, without looking round, recognising the tread of Lord Mallow's shooting-boots. "You found it too dismal in the house, I suppose? Consistently abominable weather, isn't it? You must be soaked to the skin."

"I suppose I am," answered the other carelessly. "But I've been soaked a good many times before, and it hasn't done me much harm. Thanks to the modern inventions of the waterproof-makers, the soaking begins inside instead of out. I should call myself parboiled."

"Take off your oilskins and come and talk. You'll have a nip, won't you?" added Captain Winstanley, ringing the bell. "Kirschenwasser, curaçoa, Glenlivat—which shall it be?"

"Glenlivat," answered Lord Mallow, "and plenty of it. I'm in the humour in which a man must either drink inordinately or cut his throat."

"Were the birds unapproachable?" asked Captain Winstanley, laughing; "or were the dogs troublesome?"

"Birds and dogs were perfect; but— Well, I suppose I'd better make a clean breast of it. I've had a capital time here— Oh, here comes the whisky. Hold your hand, old fellow!" cried Lord Mallow, as his host poured the Glenlivat somewhat recklessly into a soda-water tumbler. "You mustn't take me too literally. Just moisten the bottom of the glass with whisky before you put in the soda. That's as much as I care about."

"All right. You were saying—"

"That my visit here has been simply delightful, and that I must go to London by an early train to-morrow."

"Paradoxical!" said the captain. "That sounds like your well-bred servant, who tells you that he has nothing to say against the situation, but he wishes to leave you at the end of his month. What's the matter, dear boy? Do you find our Forest hermitage too dull?"

"I should ask nothing kinder from Fate than to be allowed to spend my days in your Forest. Yes; I would say good-bye to the green hills and vales of County Cork, and become that detestable being, an absentee, if—if—Fortune smiled on me. But she doesn't, you see, and I must go. Perhaps you may have perceived, Winstanley—perhaps you may not have been altogether averse to the idea—in a word, I have fallen over head and ears in love with your bewitching step-daughter."

"My dear fellow, I'm delighted. It is the thing I would have wished, had I been bold enough to wish for anything so good. And of course Violet is charmed. You are the very man for her."

"Am I? So I thought myself till this morning. Unfortunately the young lady is of a different opinion. She has refused me."

"Refused you! Pshaw, they all begin that way. It's one of the small diplomacies of the sex. They think they enhance their value by an assumed reluctance. Nonsense, man, try again. She can't help liking you."

"I would try again, every day for a twelve-month, if there were a scintilla of hope. My life should be a series of offers. But the thing is decided. I know from her manner, from her face, that I have no chance. I have been in the habit of thinking myself rather a nice kind of fellow, and the women have encouraged the idea. But I don't answer here, Winstanley. Miss Tempest will have nothing to say to me."

"She's a fool," said Captain Winstanley, with his teeth set, and that dark look of his which meant harm to somebody. "I'll talk to her."

"My dear Winstanley, understand I'll have no coercion. If I win her, I must do it off my own bat. Dearly as I love her, if you were to bring her to me conquered and submissive, like Iphigenia at the altar, I would not have her. I love her much too well to ask any sacrifice of inclination from her. I love her too well to accept anything less than her free unfettered heart. She cannot give me that, and I must go. I had much rather you should say nothing about me, either to her or her mother."

"But I shall say a great deal to both," exclaimed the captain, desperately angry. "I am indignant. I am outraged by her conduct. What in Heaven's name does this wilful girl want in a husband? You have youth, good looks, good temper, talent, tastes that harmonise with her own. You can give her a finer position than she has any right to expect. And she refuses you. She is a spoiled child, who doesn't know her own mind or her own advantage. She has a diabolical temper, and is as wild as a hawk. Egad, I congratulate you on your escape, Mallow. She was not born to make any man happy."

"Small thanks for your congratulations," retorted the Irishman. "She might have made me happy if she had chosen. I would have forgiven her tempers, and loved her for her wildness. She is the sweetest woman I ever knew; as fresh and fair as your furzy hill-tops. But she is not for me. Fate never meant me to be so blessed."

"She will change her mind before she is many months older," said Captain Winstanley. "Her father and mother have spoiled her. She is a creature of whims and fancies, and must be ridden on the curb."

"I would ride her with the lightest snaffle-bit that ever was made," protested Lord Mallow. "But there's no use in talking about it. You won't think me discourteous or ungrateful if I clear out of this to-morrow morning, will you, Winstanley?"

"Certainly not," answered his host; "but I shall think you a confounded ass. Why not wait and try your luck again?"

"Simply because I know it would be useless. Truth and candour shine in that girl's eyes. She has a soul above the petty trickeries of her sex. No from her lips means No, between this and eternity.

Oh, thrice blessed will that man be to whom she answers Yes; for she will give him the tenderest, truest, most generous heart in creation."

"You answer boldly for her on so short an acquaintance."

"I answer as a man who loves her, and who has looked into her soul," replied Lord Mallow. "You and she don't hit it over well, I fancy."

"No. We began by disliking each other, and we have been wonderfully constant to our first opinions."

"I can't understand——"

"Can't you? You will, perhaps, some day: if you ever have a handsome step-daughter who sets up her back against you from the beginning of things. Have you ever seen a sleek handsome tabby put herself on the defensive at the approach of a terrier, her back arched, her eyes flashing green lightnings, her tail lashing itself, her whiskers bristling? That's my step-daughter's attitude towards me, and I daresay before long I shall feel her claws. There goes the gong, and we must go too. I'm sorry Miss Tempest has been such a fool, Mallow; but I must repeat my congratulations, even at the risk of offending you."

There were no duets that evening. Vixen was as cold as ice, and as silent as a statue. She sat in the shadow of her mother's arm-chair after dinner, turning over the leaves of Doré's Tennyson, pausing to contemplate Elaine with a half-contemptuous pity—a curious feeling that hurt her like a physical pain.

"Poor wretch!" she mused. "Are there women in our days so weak as to love where they can never be loved again, I wonder? It is foolish enough in a man; but he cures himself as quickly as the mongoose that gets bitten by a snake, and runs away to find the herb which is an antidote to the venom, and comes back ready to fight the snake again."

"Are we not going to have any music?" asked Mrs. Winstanley languidly, more interested in the picots her clever needle was executing on a piece of Italian point than in the reply. "Lord Mallow, cannot you persuade Violet to join you in one of those sweet duets of Mendelssohn's?"

"Indeed, mamma, I couldn't sing a note. I'm as husky as a raven."

"I'm not surprised to hear it," said the captain, looking up from his study of the Gardener's Chronicle. "No doubt you managed to catch cold last night, while

you were mooning upon the terrace with young Vawdrey."

"How very incantious of you, Violet," exclaimed Mrs. Winstanley in her complaining tone.

"I was not cold, mamma; I had my warm cloak."

"But you confess you have caught cold. I detest colds; they always go through a house. I shall be the next victim, I daresay; and with me a cold is martyrdom. I'm afraid you must find us very dull, Lord Mallow, for New Year's Day, when people expect to be lively. We ought to have had a dinner-party."

"My dear Mrs. Winstanley, I don't care a straw about New Year's Day, and I am not in a lively vein. This quiet evening suits me much better than high jinks, I assure you."

"It's very good of you to say so."

"Come and play a game of billiards," said Captain Winstanley, throwing down his paper.

"Upon my honour I'd rather sit by the fire and watch Mrs. Winstanley at her point-lace. I'm in an abominably lazy mood after my tramp in those soppy plantations," answered Lord Mallow, who felt a foolish pleasure—mingled with bitterest regrets—in being in the same room with the girl he loved.

She was hidden from him in her shadowy corner; shrouded on one side by the velvet drapery of the fireplace, on the other by her mother's chair. He could only catch a glimpse of her auburn plaits now and then as her head bent over her open book. He never heard her voice, or met her eyes. And yet it was sweet to him to sit in the same room with her.

"Come, Mallow, you can sing us something, at any rate," said the captain, suppressing a yawn. "I know you can play your own accompaniment when you please. You can't be too idle to give us one of Moore's melodies."

"I'll sing if you like, Mrs. Winstanley," assented Lord Mallow; "but I'm afraid you must be tired of my songs. My repertoire is rather limited."

"Your songs are charming," said Mrs. Winstanley.

The Irishman seated himself at the distant piano, struck a chord or two, and began the old old melody, with its familiar refrain:

Oh, there's nothing half so sweet in life
As love's young dream.

Before his song was finished Violet had kissed her mother, and glided silently from

the room. Lord Mallow saw her go; and there was a sudden break in his voice as the door closed upon her—a break that sounded almost like a suppressed sob.

When Vixen came down to breakfast next morning she found the table laid only for three.

"What has become of Lord Mallow?" she asked Forbes, when he brought in the urn.

"He left by an early train, ma'am. Captain Winstanley drove him to Lyndhurst."

The old servants of the Abbey House had not yet brought themselves to speak of their new lord as "master." He was always "Captain Winstanley."

The captain came in while Violet knelt by the fire playing with Argus, whom even the new rule had not banished wholly from the family sitting-rooms.

The servants filed in for morning prayers, which Captain Winstanley delivered in a cold hard voice. His manual of family worship was of concise and business-like form, and the whole ceremony lasted about seven minutes. Then the household dispersed quickly, and Forbes brought in his tray of covered dishes.

"You can pour out the tea, Violet. Your mother is feeling a little tired, and will breakfast in her room."

"Then I think, if you'll excuse me, I'll have my breakfast with her," said Vixen. "She'll be glad of my company, I daresay."

"She has a headache and will be better alone. Stop where you are, if you please, Violet. I have something serious to say to you."

Vixen left off pouring out the tea, clasped her hands in her lap, and looked at Captain Winstanley with the most resolute expression he had even seen in a woman's face.

"Are you going to talk to me about Lord Mallow?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Then spare yourself the trouble. It would be useless."

"I cannot conceive that you should be so besotted as to refuse a man who offers so much. A man who has wealth, rank, youth, good looks——"

"Spare me the catalogue of your friend's merits. I think him a most estimable person. I acknowledge his rank and wealth. But I have refused him."

"You will change your mind."

"I never change my mind."

"You will live to repent your folly

then, Miss Tempest; and all I hope is that your remorse may be keen. It is not one woman in a thousand who gets such a chance. What are you that you should throw it away?"

"I am a woman who would sooner cut my throat than marry a man I cannot honestly love," answered Vixen with unblenching firmness.

"I think I understand your motive," said Captain Winstanley. "Lord Mallow never had a chance with you. The ground was occupied before he came. You are a very foolish girl to reject so good an offer for the sake of another woman's sweet-heart."

"How dare you say that to me?" cried Vixen. "You have usurped my father's place; you have robbed me of my mother's heart. Is not that cause enough for me to hate you? I have only one friend left in the world, Roderick Vawdrey. And you would slander me because I cling to that old friendship, the last remnant of my happy childhood."

"You might have a dozen such friends, if friendship is all you want, and be Lady Mallow into the bargain," retorted Captain Winstanley scornfully. "You are a simpleton to send such a man away despairing. But I suppose it is idle to ask you to hear reason. I am not your father, and even if I were, I daresay you would take your own way in spite of me."

"My father would not have asked me to marry a man I did not love," answered Vixen proudly, her eyes clouding with tears even at the thought of her beloved dead; "and he would have valued Lord Mallow's rank and fortune no more than I do. But you are so fond of a bargain," she added, her eye kindling and her lip curving with bitterest scorn. "You sold Bullfinch, and now you want to sell me."

"By Heaven, madam, I pity the man who may be fool enough to buy you!" cried the captain, starting up from his untasted breakfast, and leaving Vixen mistress of the field.

SOME POPULAR CURES.

A DILIGENT reader of the newspapers might cull therefrom, in the course of a year or two, instances of still prevalent superstitions enough to fill a bulky volume. Many persons are of opinion, that gross superstitions—such as are to be met with in more uncivilised countries—are no longer

existent in our own favoured land; and the result of a collection, such as the one suggested, would therefore surprise them not a little. The survival of a belief in witchcraft, as revealed in the trial for murder, at the Warwick assizes in 1874 of an agricultural labourer, who stuck an old woman, a reputed witch, with a pitchfork, in order, by drawing blood, to free himself from her witchery, would probably be regarded by them as something exceptional, like the preservation of a fly in amber. That that case, however, was not an exceptional one was shown by the facts brought to light in another similar criminal prosecution in the same county, in the course of which it was shown that the whole neighbourhood, in which the assault took place, was permeated with a most degrading belief in witchcraft.

These are but individual instances which have come to the surface, and gained publicity through the criminal courts. Those only who have trod the by-ways of English life know to what an extent a belief in witchcraft and other superstitions obtains, not merely in out-of-the-way country places, and among the illiterate, but in towns, and among the reputedly educated. Indeed, the writer's experience would lead him to the conclusion that there exists more abject superstition among town populations, where the means of education and enlightenment are the greatest, than in rural districts. He, himself, has met with more cases of belief in witchcraft and other foolish superstitions in towns, than in villages; although he has had equal chances for gaining information in each. He once heard a man, born and bred in London, and a Cockney to the backbone, describe a witches' sabbath he had attended, and the ceremony gone through in order to raise the prince of darkness. This person, though by no means an unread man, was not ashamed of avowing his belief in the black art. Many stupid superstitions are privately cherished by apparently educated and intelligent people, who yet are ashamed openly to acknowledge them. Take, for instance, the belief in the evil eye, which, doubtless, most people who know anything about it, imagine is confined to less favoured lands than ours. The writer is not able to say whether the superstition is believed in throughout England, but he has been informed, on good authority, that it is very prevalent in the southern counties, and he knows that it has many

believers in London. A lady of his acquaintance, both intelligent and tolerably well educated, constantly wears a charm against the evil eye. It is somewhat in the shape of a pair of horns, or of the finger and thumb somewhat apart, and is a sure preventive of harm—so she says. Another of his lady acquaintances, one who has seen the world, and who has, moreover, more than ordinary "nous" in the general affairs of life, always protects her children against evil influences, and the ills to which childhood is subject, by hanging a necklace of cloves about their necks. He had previously heard of amber necklets being considered prophylactic against witchcraft and other dread influences, but never before of cloves being similarly potent.

But this is mild fooling in comparison with the various forms of charm and spell against diseases and other ills still used in different parts of the country. Everyone has probably heard that a certain cure for a sty on the eye is to rub it with a wedding-ring, care being taken to rub all one way; but all may not know that an equally good remedy is to stroke the part with a tom-cat's tail! The ring specific is not a new notion, as reference is made to it in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Mad Lovers*:

I have a sty here, Chilax.

CHI. I have no gold to cure it, not a penny.

In Northamptonshire, the tail remedy is applied with a difference. The usual form of applying the charm is for the sufferer, on the first night of the new moon, to procure the tail of a black cat, and after pulling from it one hair, rub the tip nine times over the pustule. If anyone doubts the remedy, let him try it. Another "good thing" for bad eyes and other ailments, is rain-water caught on Holy Thursday. It will keep sweet for a long time if corked up in a clean bottle. This superstition is probably an Irish one, though the writer has met with it in the Staffordshire Potteries.

To take a hair from the dog that bit you is a proverbial cure, and is as commonly credited a superstition in China as here; and yet who would have thought that within a year or two past, in a town like Oldham, a woman could be found to summon the owner of a dog because he would not give her some of its hair to ensure her against any evil consequences accruing from the bite it had given her. And yet such was the case. Not so widely known, probably, but not the less effectual,

is the popular talisman for children during the period of teething. Pluck a few hairs from the dark cross on the back of a donkey, sew them up in a black silk bag, and hang it round a child's neck when teething, and the child will be proof against fits or convulsions. This cure is well known in the north and west of England. One that may very well compare with it for stupidity, is said to be popularly believed in in Gloucestershire. For the reduction of a wen, or "thick neck" in women, an ornamental necklace is made of hair taken from a horse's tail; some say it must be taken from the tail of a grey stallion (*Vide Notes and Queries*). Within a few years the "dead stroke" has also been resorted to in the midland counties, for the cure of wens. A rustic remedy for enlarged throat is to take a snake, and coil it round the neck of the sufferer nine times; then put the snake into a bottle, cork it up, and bury it; as it decays the enlargement will gradually disappear.

Touching for the king's-evil has long since gone out of date, but not by any means because people have become too enlightened to put faith in such a superstition; for a still grosser superstition is yet believed in as regards the cure of the king's-evil. That the toad,

though ugly and venomous,

Wears yet a precious jewel in his head,

is a faith still strong in the bucolic mind, and it consequently holds a prominent place in the rustic pharmacopœia. Its limbs are a cure for the king's-evil. They should be put into a bag, and tied about the patient's neck. For quinsy, get a live toad, fasten a string round its throat, and hang it up till the body drop from the head; then tie the string round your own neck, and never take it off, night or day, till your fiftieth birthday—and you will never have quinsy again! This is given by a correspondent in *Notes and Queries*, as a Cornish superstition; the writer has also met with it in Cumberland. In Northamptonshire, and probably other midland counties, the toad is likewise employed as a charm to prevent bleeding at the nose. The reptile is killed by transfixing it with some sharp-pointed instrument; afterwards it is placed in a little bag, and hung round the neck. The same charm is also used in cases of fever. Sir K. Digby, in his *Discourse on Sympathy*, has a passage which, in a measure, accounts for the belief in this and other folk-specifics.

"In the time of common contagion," he says, "they used to carry about them the powder of a toad, and sometimes a living toad, or spider, shut up in a box; or else they carry arsenick, or some other venomous substance, which draws into it the contagious air, which otherwise would infect the party."

The spider, also, is still a popular cure. Put into a box, and allowed to pine away, it is a remedy for the ague. The spider, by-the-way, plays a very diverse rôle in folk-lore. In France and Belgium there is a superstition that it has a penchant for the brains of infants, and that, if not watched, it will suck them. It is also imagined that one crossing the forehead in the night causes headache. One caught and buried, is a cure for it. According to other folk-tales it is highly detrimental to destroy one. In Kent the popular saying is:

If you wish to live and thrive,
Let a spider run alive;

and in Surrey there is a dread of killing them. To return to the remedies for the ague, a correspondent of Notes and Queries gives a charm which came under his own notice. It was to tie a bunch of common groundsel on the bare bosom. Certain incantations accompany the application. In Cambridgeshire, a ring of tar around the body is regarded as a cure for the ague. Another popular remedy for the same disease, believed in by the credulous of the same parts, is the wearing of a skein of silk round the part affected.

Some popular cures are rather difficult of performance. A lady in the Potteries informed the writer that to swallow a live mouse was a "sure cure" for consumption, and assured him that she had known a person resort to the remedy. If this were true, it would outdo the feat told by the teetotalers of the man who was treated to a tankard of ale with a dead mouse in it, and who drank it off at a draught—mouse and all—merely remarking that he thought there was a bit of malt in it. In some parts of the country it is hooping-cough that the swallowing of a mouse is good for.

Another popular remedy for hooping-cough, and one very widely believed in, is to take a fish, newly caught, put it into the mouth of the child suffering from the malady, and then let it go again. The theory is that the cough is communicated to the fish. The writer has met with this superstition both in North Germany and in the north of England. A correspondent in Notes and Queries, writing from Phila-

delphia, narrates an instance of the same superstition which came under his own observation in that neighbourhood. An equally intelligible remedy is believed in in some parts of England and Ireland. The writer has met with it in Lancashire and the north. It consists in passing a child suffering from the hooping-cough nine times—in some parts it is three times—under and over a donkey. This also is said to be an infallible cure. The ass is an especial object of regard with the superstitious; the common belief being that the cross he bears on his back was conferred on him, as a mark of peculiar distinction, when the Saviour rode on his back into Jerusalem.

Sheep, too, are gifted with a certain amount of prophylactic power. It is only collectively, however, that they exercise this potency, not individually. Thus, if you want to be cured of a cough, you must pass through a flock of sheep. They are too innocent and harmless, poor things, to be of much repute in folk-medicine; which attributes remedial properties somewhat in the ratio of uncouthness or repulsiveness. Thus we have seen the part the snake, the toad, the spider, &c., play in popular medicine; we might recount how the frog is good for consumption, the eel for deafness, the cockroach for earache, owl-broth for hooping-cough, and so on ad infinitum. With regard to the "owl-broth" cure, it was considered a certain specific in the writer's native place, in the East Riding of Yorkshire. In reference to the owl's place in the popular pharmacopœia, it may not be out of place to quote a bit of lore from Swan's *Speculum Mundi*. That quaint writer says: "The eggs of an owle broken, and put into the cups of a drunkard, or one desirous to follow drinking, will so work with him that he will suddenly lothe his good liquor, and be displeased with drinking." In Spain there is a superstition that a stork's egg has a similar potency (Vide Notes and Queries, 1874).

The popular cures for warts, and other like excrescences, are very numerous, and vary in almost every county. One mode of charming them away is to take an elder shoot, and rub it on the part; then cut as many notches on the twig as you have warts, bury it in a place where it will soon decay, and, as it rots away, the warts will disappear. This is a southern charm. In Yorkshire, and throughout the north generally, the cure for warts is to take a

black snail and rub the excrescences with it, then impale it on a thorn, and leave it to perish. As it dries up and disappears, the warts will vanish. According to another form of the charm, the warts must be rubbed with a fresh snail for nine successive nights. Still another wart charm is to take the shell of a broad bean, and rub the affected part with the inside thereof; bury the shell, and tell no one about it, and, as it withers away, so will the warts.

It is a curious fact, that while nearly all our most noisome reptiles and insects are possessed of curative virtues, flowers are, under certain circumstances, considered injurious and unlucky. For instance, in Suffolk, to sleep in a room with whitethorn bloom in it, during the month of May, is sure to be followed by some great misfortune. And, if you sweep the home with the

blossom'd broom in May,

You're sure to sweep the head of the house away.

This, of course, has nothing to do with the healing virtues of plants gathered under certain aspects of the moon or stars. In astrological lore, each of the planets governs certain herbs, and they should consequently, when for medicinal use, be gathered "when the planet that governs the herb is essentially dignified." Hence, probably, the superstition that herbs for curative purposes should be gathered when the moon is on the increase. An instance of this belief came under the writer's notice not long since in Northamptonshire, where a respectable man told him of the wonderful cure of a tumour he had seen effected, by means of an adder's tongue (*Ophioglossum Vulgatum*) plucked at the "fulling" of the moon, and applied with the accompaniment of an incantation. How strongly such superstitions still linger in rural districts, is evidenced by the fact that not only do the credulous regard it as necessary to gather herbs during the increase of the moon, but many will not sow their seeds, or kill their pigs, during the waning of the moon. It is believed by many graziers, shepherds, and agriculturalists, that it is not well to "let blood" when the moon is full, nor when there is a new moon; and they believe that if they operate on any of their cattle at the time when the moon is "southing," that animal will certainly die.

Some of the superstitious cures for animals are as curious as any of those given above. To mention a title of the charms had recourse to to cure animals

that have been "overlooked"—in other words, bewitched—would take up a chapter by itself. One of the commonest, and perhaps most widely spread, is to stroke the "overlooked" animal with a twig from an ash-tree, under the roots of which a horse-shoe has been buried. Within a few years past this charm has been practised in the midland counties. A horse-shoe is still nailed on stable and cow-house doors to protect the animals against witchcraft. A writer in *Notes and Queries* relates that in Oxfordshire he knew a case where a man cut a hole in the tail of a cow, which was suffering after calving, and put a piece of bacon in the wound. The narrator does not say whether the remedy was effectual, but there can be little doubt it was, as such cures usually are. A similar superstition is the "worming" of dogs to prevent rabies. In Sussex, "Good Friday Bread" is considered good for the "scours" in calves. But it is not in Sussex only that faith is put in the curative virtues of "Good Friday Bread." In all parts of the country bread or biscuits are still baked on that day, and kept for medical purposes. Bread thus made never gets mouldy, and is considered very useful, grated in brandy, as a medicine. It is often kept for years, sometimes as many as twenty. A hot-cross bun is frequently preserved in Northamptonshire as an astringent.

There are persons still living who have been "stroked" by a hanged man's hand for the dispelling of tumours; a dead man's hand being supposed to possess such virtues by being passed nine times over the part affected. In Devonshire there is a superstition, that if a person suffering from any disease throw a handkerchief on the coffin of a suicide, the disease will be cured as the handkerchief rots away. So, touching a dead body prevents the person so doing from dreaming of it.

Charms are still worn. The "lucky bone," for instance, is calculated to protect against all sorts of adverse influences. It is a bone taken from the head of a sheep; and its form, which is that of the T cross, may, perhaps, have had something to do with the talismanic virtue with which it is endued. This form of the sacred symbol is frequently found on Druidical monuments. In Northamptonshire, and also in Yorkshire, the fore-foot of a hare, worn constantly in the pocket, is considered a fine charm against the "rheumatiz." Scot, in his *Discovery of Witchcraft*, mentions the bone of a hare's foot, which,

he says, "mitigateth the cramp." Another charm for rheumatism, which, however, the writer has only met with in one part, that is, in Birmingham, is a potato. So long as it is carried in the pocket, the bearer will never suffer from that malady. *Probatum est!* is the conclusive dictum of two old ladies. One of the same dames communicated the following spell to prevent a thorn from festering, which, she said, she had been taught as a child:

Our Saviour was of a virgin born,
His head was crowned with a crown of thorn;
It never canker'd nor fester'd at all,
As I hope, in Christ, this never shall.

Similar rhymes may still occasionally be heard in country parts; but they seem, generally, to be giving place to more dismal superstitions. It would take too much space in this article to go into the question of written talismans for the causing or cure of love, for healing diseases, and for procuring luck; but the reader may take it for granted that there are plenty of professors of this art ready to impose on the credulous, and still greater numbers ever ready to be duped by them.

PARTING.

Weep not that we must part;
Partings are short, eternity is long.
Life is but one brief stage,
And they that say love ends with life are wrong.
List to thine own heart's cry—
Love cannot die.

What though so far away?
Thy thoughts are still with me, and with thee mine,
And absence has no power
To lessen what by nature is divine.
List to thine own heart's cry—
Love cannot die.

Then weep no more, my love;
Weeping but shows thy trust in me is small.
Faith is by calmness proved.
For know this truth: thou canst not love at all
Unless thine own heart cry—
Love cannot die.

THE POETS' LEAGUE.

A STORY.

HENRI and François were two pretty men; they lay in bed till the clock struck ten.

This melancholy fact might have brought them to a sense of shame, if they had known enough moral philosophy to be familiar with the rebuke of the early poet to a pair of worthies who similarly disgraced themselves. But lacking this guidance, and having, it must be admitted, some reason for wishing to remain as long as possible in a state of unconsciousness

on this particular morning, Henri and François slumbered pertinaciously till the sun was high in the heavens. Then they woke simultaneously, rubbed their eyes, and stared blankly at each other.

The room they occupied was situated near the summit of a mountainous edifice, known as the Hotel de Bourgogne, Rue du Bac, Paris. The architect of the Hôtel de Bourgogne must have been a moralist, who had the idea that it was a useful discipline, to people in search of a lodging, to be obliged to climb almost impracticable stairs. Henri and François were able to beguile their leisure, of which they had a good deal, by surveying from their elevated perch the passengers in the Rue du Bac who had the aspect of travellers, and speculating whether these would be rash enough to incur the Alpine perils which attended the quest of quarters in the Hôtel de Bourgogne. On the whole, the mountaineers were not numerous. Occasionally a family of provincials trooped into the courtyard, and were greeted by Madame Lafosse with the affectionate warmth characteristic of that little woman. They were Normans; people from her native place—sturdy, homely, and with an immense capacity for cider—who were either personally known to her, or commended to her care by relatives and friends. At such times Henri and François were not conspicuous, but showed a shyness not easy to reconcile with their customary behaviour. They were more at their ease, though they did not understand a word of English, with the few adventurous Britons who were "personally conducted" to the Hôtel de Bourgogne by a humble disciple of Cook.

Now the reason why these young men were so shy of the Norman visitors was not, I am sorry to say, at all creditable to them. Henri Dessarts and François Vernet were cousins, born at Caen, whence they had come to Paris only a year before to study medicine. They studied to such purpose, that, whenever they met their professor, he scowled at them, and made no further sign of recognition. It may have been, as Henri was fond of saying, that the professor was madly jealous, and afraid that if he helped them on, they would eclipse him. Or, to adopt François's favourite theory, he was devoured by spleen because of the squib they wrote about him in one of the boulevard journals. But Henri was careful not to mention his conjecture to anybody but his

cousin; and as to the soundness of François's theory there was some reasonable doubt, seeing that the journal in question had only lived three days, and that the authors of the squib aforesaid had monopolized the circulation.

The fact was, that the young Normans had grievously neglected the study of medicine, and with the perversity of youth had given their minds to everything except the object which their parents fondly supposed them to be pursuing. Henri was a philosopher; François was a poet. Henri wrote treatises on cosmogony, and puzzled simple Madame Lafosse with profound but incomprehensible observations on the origin of the universe. François declaimed his own verses and those of Théophile Gautier—with a marked preference for the former—to anybody who would listen to him. Both argued at great length that medicine was a commonplace profession, and that their vocation was not to check the petty ailments of the body, but to cultivate the public mind. Of some of the verses of Parisian poets which François was fond of reciting and imitating, I fear it must be said that they were eminently calculated, in a peculiar sense, to "minister to minds diseased."

It was the firm belief of Madame Lafosse that Henri and François were the most remarkable young men that France had produced. She had patted their heads long before they dreamt of medicine except as an unpleasant sequence to excessive consumption of sugar-candy; and when they were adolescent, and their parents proposed to send them to Paris, she had insisted on receiving them at the Hôtel de Bourgogne on terms which were ridiculously out of proportion to their appetites. Everything they did and said was wonderful in her eyes. Whatever they did not think fit to do she regarded as unworthy of them. She became quite convinced that the study of medicine was a waste of time, and that doctors were much overrated people, of whom there were far too many. Of a philosopher she had never before heard; so she took it for granted that Henri's claims to that mysterious distinction were such as would greatly benefit both himself and mankind at large, though the precise character of the operation might not be apparent. François's verses were more within her comprehension, and the vast number of cigarettes essential to the production of

those great works, gave her a vague idea that making rhymes was one of the industrial arts. But, as Henri showed with unanswerable force, these things, if reported at home, would very probably be misunderstood—the parental mind being, as everybody knows, prone to misconception in such matters—and so Madame Lafosse was not communicative to her provincial visitors about the young men's affairs; but when enquiries were made as to the progress of their studies, limited her responses to ejaculations of wonder, which were taken to mean that the attainments of MM. Vernet and Dessarts baffled description.

Now, in addition to the profitable labours which have been briefly indicated, our young Normans had taken upon themselves the arduous task of making love. That rugged fastness, the Hôtel de Bourgogne, had lately received two new inhabitants, about whom nothing very definite was known, except that they were not in very good circumstances—a fact sufficiently evident in their choice of a residence. M. Morel was an elderly gentleman who seemed to pass his time in profound abstraction, from which he was rarely seen to rouse himself except to make notes upon small pieces of paper, which he afterwards scattered about in an absent way, giving his daughter no little trouble in collecting them. Henri thought that M. Morel must be a philosopher, and that the reason why Mademoiselle Louise was so careful in gathering up all those scraps of paper was that they were the memoranda of her father's invaluable speculations. François was equally certain that the old gentleman was a poet, and burned to commune with a kindred spirit. They united in regarding mademoiselle as an angel.

After this the young lady received a succession of mysterious parcels, which puzzled her a good deal. These contained gloves, lace, ornaments of some little value, or bonbons of the costliest quality, accompanied by a document which always proved to be either a copy of verses, in which the writer declared himself enamoured of a being who was an embodied perfume, or something equally delightful; or a series of sparkling observations which began somewhat in this style: "Philosophers have long since decided that it is the highest aspiration of the human soul to find its counterpart, and having found it, to spare nothing that will bring about a union so beneficial to both."

"Is it this which is to lead to the union of souls?" asks mademoiselle, as she holds up a packet of sweetmeats for the inspection of Madame Lafosse, with whom she is conferring on the subject of these remarkable tokens.

"And Henri, too!" sighs madame, who recognises the philosopher's handwriting. "But it is most serious, mademoiselle, that you should have won the hearts of both these poor boys, for if——"

"You mean I may be a cause of quarrel, n'est-ce pas?" interrupts Louise. "For poetry and philosophy to fall out would be sad, would it not? And yet we cannot make a trio of united souls."

"But you need not be cruel, mademoiselle," says madame, who resents this raillery.

"Mon Dieu! who am I that I should be cruel?" returns mademoiselle in an altered tone. "It is good and kind of M. Vernet and M. Dessarts to send me such pretty things. I do not accept them, for that would be misunderstood; but I am grateful, very grateful, for it is long, hélas! since anybody was good to me."

And with these words she goes away, and Madame Lafosse, looking compassionately after her, murmurs "Pauvre enfant!" wondering that one so young should have felt the coldness of the world.

But mademoiselle's spirits must have revived, for with a touch of mischief she sent back Henri's gifts to François, and François's to Henri, and in two bewitching little notes made matters worse by thanking the philosopher for his charming poem, and the poet for his instructive and deeply interesting dissertation on the union of souls.

The young men had opened the amatory campaign without any exchange of confidence on the subject, and the discovery of the rivalry caused each to sink considerably in the other's estimation. François's poetical appeal to the beloved one seemed dreadful rubbish to Henri; and Henri's essay on the philosophical character of the tender passion made it clear to François that his cousin was suffering from softening of the brain. But as it seemed impossible to both that their advances could really have been declined, each cherished the conviction that mademoiselle had mistaken him for the other; François being certain that she carried his poem next her heart, and Henri that his epistle alone was admitted to that paradise. It was a little disconcerting that the lady should have

confused their identity, but it never entered their heads that she had impartially refused to encourage either.

In this state of opinion they observed a certain sulkiness towards each other, and as François considered that his cousin's behaviour justified him in temporarily confiscating that gentleman's property, and as Henri had much the same opinion with regard to François, nothing was said as to the bonbons, &c., which were invested with the melancholy interest of unrequited affection.

But there was a subject of vital importance which it was necessary to discuss without delay. When the cousins woke at that lamentably late hour when they were introduced to the reader, they were harassed by one painful idea. They were short of money, and had no visible means of raising any more. The virtue of thrift is not always practised by poets and philosophers, and as the gaieties of Paris had absorbed a large portion of their funds, and as the expenses of the preliminary operations against the citadel they were both besieging had made havoc with the remainder, and as there were certain debts which if not paid very soon might be the cause of unpleasant revelations, the financial embarrassment of François and Henri threatened to be serious.

"What's to be done?" demanded Henri, as he got out of bed and into his slippers. "You must have some money, François. What have you done with it?"

"Et vous, mon cousin?" replied François with a shrug. "What account can you give?"

"Have you got any ideas then?" asked Henri, who was naturally indisposed for financial explanation. "A man who thinks he can startle the world with his powers of invention ought to be able to find a way through a cul-de-sac!"

"Not a bit, mon cher. That is your department. You philosophers profess to know everything that is in heaven above and the earth beneath, and therefore you ought to have no trouble in getting two poor devils—yourself being one of them—out of a wretched little scrape about money. Isn't your profundity equal to producing an earthquake to swallow up these misérables who insist on being paid?"

"Enough of this folly," ejaculated Henri. "If we don't find some means of meeting the difficulty, one of us will have to write home, and you know what that will lead to."

François knew only too well. In Normandy they had the most inadequate ideas as to the cost of decent living in the capital; and if there were any hint that the young men were not solvent, there would be a rush of unreasonable fathers to Paris, and an enquiry into past and present, which would probably end in the rustication of the pair for an indefinite period.

François clutched his hair by way of encouragement to inspiration, stared wildly at the opposite wall, and then exclaimed: "I have it!"

"You have what?" enquired Henri incredulously.

"The plan which will save us. We will start a journal!"

As a matter of fact, François had been revolving this idea for two days, but, like many geniuses, he did not choose to admit that what seemed a sudden conception was really the result of cold calculation.

"Nothing simpler, nothing surer, nothing more admirable," he continued. "Listen. Your philosophy has taught you that there are a good many fools in the world."

"It has," assented Henri briskly. "The follies of mankind may be divided into two heads; first——"

"Never mind lecturing now; the only heads wanted in the present affair are yours and mine. I imagine that a large proportion of these fools believe themselves to be poets. Paris is full of them. Now, if we set up a journal which will give them the chance of distinguishing themselves, they will come about us in shoals."

"And the money?" interposed the sceptical Henri.

"Will be assured at once. We will announce our journal as *La Ligue des Poètes*, and make it a condition that every contributor shall pay a hundred francs for the privilege of calling himself a member of the league. There will be a score of subscriptions in a week."

Anywhere but in Paris this enterprise would have been impossible. In London such an invitation to join a league of poets would be scouted as a transparent attempt to obtain money under false pretences. No one would suppose that association with such a body could bring any sort of distinction. But though François Vernet was not very wise, he knew something of the vagaries of the Parisian imagination, and he knew that his project would be taken in sober earnest by a number of

people, who would be delighted to pay for the pleasure of making it known that they belonged to a poetical society.

He had another object. M. Morel being, as François believed, a poet, would naturally take an interest in the new journal. This, the young man hoped, would afford him opportunities of converse with mademoiselle, and of deepening the impression which he had not the least doubt he had made upon her heart.

The father and daughter kept themselves very much aloof from the rest of the household, rarely appearing save at meals, and often not even then. Both François and Henri had frequently lain in wait for Louise on the stairs, but that young lady treated them as if she had been accustomed to such ambuscades all her life, and thought they were rather a waste of ingenuity. From the day that François presented her with a copy of the first number of *La Ligue des Poètes*, mademoiselle became more reserved, rarely went out, and almost invariably dined with her father in their own room. So far from being discouraged, François was more enamoured than ever, and even admired the maidenly tact with which Louise dissembled that tender regard for him which he was confident she entertained.

The journal actually made its appearance, and the immediate result was that no inconsiderable number of poets emerged from their obscurity like worms after a shower. Money, too, was forthcoming, and for the time, at all events, François and Henri were quite affluent. Ambitious versifiers paid their hundred francs, and if they had been content with that, and with proclaiming to their friends that they were members of the Poets' League by having that distinction printed on their cards, all might have been well; but they persisted in sending in enormous bundles of manuscript—the accumulated musings, and imaginings, and ravings of years—and in demanding that every line should be published. Unfortunately, *La Ligue des Poètes* was of necessity a very small sheet, and as it was obviously indispensable to its success that the products of François's brilliant imagination, and of Henri's studies of the human mind, should figure in its columns, there was little space left for the glorification of anybody else. Hence the majority of the poets became discontented, not to say mutinous, and their bad humour was not diminished by the prominence accorded to a new and very singular contributor.

As M. Morel made no sign, François determined to have a private interview. The opportunities were few, for mademoiselle was vigilant, and more than once intimated for his edification that her father was not well enough to see anyone. But one day, taking advantage of her temporary absence, he made his way into their sitting-room.

The old man was seated in an arm-chair, engaged, as usual, in making notes and dropping them on the floor.

He looked up as François entered, but showed no sign of recognition.

"You know me, M. Morel?" suggested François, after a pause, during which he was much impressed by the multitude of ideas which were committed to the carpet. "I am François Vernet."

"Oh, M. Vernet. Yes—yes," responded the old gentleman, who then relapsed into his literary occupation.

"What do you think of our new enterprise?" asked François, who was pained by this indifference.

"New enterprise? What is it?"

"Why, the journal we have established—*La Ligue des Poètes*."

"What do you say?" exclaimed M. Morel, suddenly becoming much excited.

"A poets' journal! My dear M. Vernet, how do you do? I am charmed to see you. Excuse me one moment while I collect my verses. A poets' journal—ah!" Then with trembling fingers he began to pick up from the floor the scraps of paper which seemed all at once to have become precious. "My verses, M. Vernet," he continued, "are, as you see, somewhat in disorder. It is my method of composition. When I have written down my idea, I cannot bear to have it on the page under my eye. When the mind is creating, it should not be troubled by the imperfections of its previous work."

François felt that he was in the presence of original genius, and reverently assisted in collecting the stray thoughts which M. Morel, under pressure of inspiration, had thrown into the fireplace.

A step was heard on the stairs.

"Quick!" cried M. Morel, thrusting the papers into François's hand. "That may be Louise, and she must not know what we have been doing. Poor girl! she says I must not write, because it is bad for my health. Women are very good, but small minds—small minds, M. Vernet. Make haste! When you have published these I can give you plenty more. Always

creating," he added, tapping his forehead, "always."

François put the poetical fragments into his pockets with a vague misgiving that they were scarcely in the form for publication. Moreover, his enthusiasm was damped by the knowledge that so far from making a further agreeable impression on mademoiselle, he would, by feeding the excitement so injurious to her father, incur her displeasure. However, there was nothing for it now but to humour the old man, and so secure his goodwill.

Preoccupied with these thoughts, François did not pay much attention to a stranger whom he met on the stairs, and who was enquiring the whereabouts of M. Morel's apartments; nor when Louise, flying past him, overtook the new-comer, and with a cry of joyful surprise almost hugged that personage, did François manifest much concern, for the stranger was an elderly gentleman with a grizzled moustache, who was probably mademoiselle's uncle, or godfather, or somebody equally unlikely to excite jealousy in an amorous breast. François's feelings were of an entirely opposite description, for as she took the visitor's arm, after this affectionate greeting, Louise favoured the young man with a smile which filled him with infinite satisfaction, especially as it was observed by Henri, who happened to come upon the scene at that precise moment.

But when François came to examine M. Morel's verses, his exultation was a little sobered. He spent some hours in the vain endeavour to reconcile the fragments, which were consistent neither with themselves nor with one another. M. Morel's system favoured rapidity of production, but it was not equally favourable to coherence. As a last resort François resolved to publish the verses separately, except in one or two instances in which he thought there was sufficient congruity to justify his venturing on a couplet. The result was that the isolated verses were like signposts which pointed nowhere; while the couplets resembled semi-detached houses, having a similarity of aspect but no internal connection.

The appearance of these compositions, and the space which they occupied, made the other poets very angry. Letters of indignant remonstrance became frequent. Some people even went the length of insisting that their precious verses should be given to the world forthwith, or their

subscriptions returned. As the money was spent, and as it would have been impossible, even if *La Ligne des Poètes* had been published three times a day, to thrust upon Paris a tithe of the effusions which were struggling towards publicity, the minds of MM. Vernet and Dessarts were not free from care.

Henri's soul was especially exercised. He was not troubled by the advent of the gentleman with the grizzled moustache any more than François. On the contrary, having heard from Madame Lafosse that this was an old friend of the Morels, who had just returned from the Mauritius or Macedonia—madame was not sure which—with a fortune, Henri devoted some part of his time to a calculation of the probable amount of dot which mademoiselle would receive out of this Mauritian or Macedonian treasure. Obviously nothing was more likely than that this wealthy friend, who was so much attached to M. Morel that he came every day to visit him, would give mademoiselle at her marriage a dowry which would very considerably enhance her charms. Of course a philosopher could not have any hankering after mere money, but it was necessary to the success of his investigations of human character that he should take account of facts.

In this state of mind Henri was naturally less concerned about the quality of M. Morel's poetry than about the circumstance that François had ingratiated himself with the old man. It was clear to Henri that his cousin had already made some progress in mademoiselle's affections, for not only had he seen her smile on François in a way which no philosopher could tolerate, but he had since observed them whispering together on the stairs. The shock of this spectacle was aggravated by the intelligence communicated to him immediately afterwards by Madame Lafosse.

"My poor Henri," said madame, "you do not look well. And no wonder!"

"What is the matter with me now?" asked Henri with an uneasy laugh. Madame was wont to worry herself about the real or supposed ailments of the young men.

"Ah! I know; it is the heart. You suffer here"—she smote herself sympathetically on the left side—"and I cannot help you! Hélas! you have more to bear, mon pauvre enfant!"

"What do you mean?"

"She is to be married in two days."

"Diable!"

"But she has a tender heart for you, Henri; for she told me not to tell you yet because——"

"No more!" he exclaimed. "That 'because' is enough to poison me!" And he rushed away in a most unphilosophical rage.

For the moment Henri had a firm conviction that François was the happy man. He believed he saw it all. He was to be kept in the dark until it was all over, and François was in possession of mademoiselle and the dot from Macedonia or Mauritius. How to defeat this project was his first thought. Suddenly an idea struck him. The printer of *La Ligue des Poètes* was expecting "copy." There was but too much reason to believe that the next number of that remarkable journal would be the last. The funds were all but exhausted; money was owing to the printer, and he had made it plain that he would do no more unless this was paid. All this passed through Henri's mind, as he wrote some hurried sentences, took a few gold pieces from a drawer, and started for the office.

La Ligue des Poètes came out next day, and François was astounded to read in it a wild denunciation of the Government. Henri absented himself till the middle of the afternoon, when he returned to the Hôtel de Bourgogne just as a commissary of police, accompanied by a gendarme, entered the courtyard. The object of this visit was soon manifest. The officers had presented themselves with the view of escorting François and Henri to the prefecture.

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed Madame Lafosse, before whose eyes arose a horrid vision of the guillotine. "What have they done? Have pity, messieurs. They are so young. François was only twenty last June, and Henri——"

"Hush! It is a mistake. We shall soon set it right," said François, who had no fancy for being seen in this predicament by mademoiselle.

Henri smiled grimly.

"You wrote that imbecility!" said François as they marched towards the prefecture.

"Yes."

"Do you know what the penalty is when a journalist discusses politics without the permission of the Government?"

"Two thousand francs fine, which we cannot pay, or six months' imprisonment,

which we shall certainly get," said Henri with equanimity.

"Ciel! Are you mad?" demanded his cousin in amazement.

Henri shrugged his shoulders. François's agitation was a luxury to him, though he was himself going into durance vile.

Arrived at the prefecture, they found that they could not be examined until the following morning. Accordingly, they passed the night under the affectionate care of the gendarmes, and early the next day they were taken before the prefect. Their appearance in the streets caused considerable commotion, for they were evidently expected by a band of about fifty people, who pursued them with savage cries of, "Where are my hundred francs?" and threatened them with sticks and umbrellas. In the midst of this demonstration a carriage rolled by in which were seated M. Morel, his daughter, and the friend with the grizzled moustache. Mademoiselle was in travelling costume, and her face was flushed and happy.

"Pardieu! but our roads are different," said François half aloud, as he turned his head another way. "She to happiness; I to prison!"

"Why—you don't mean to say—she is—married?" gasped Henri, who began to have an inkling of the truth.

"Did not Madame Lafosse tell you what was going to happen?" said François, surprised. "Mademoiselle half admitted it when she begged me three days ago not to publish any more of her father's verses, because it disturbed his nerves. Other people's nerves were a good deal the worse for it too," he added ruefully, as he looked around at the angry crowd.

"Then my stratagem was——" Henri could say no more. As for François, he no sooner grasped the situation than the humour of it proved too much for him, and he burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter in the middle of the street; which indecorous performance so exasperated the members of the Poets' League that they were with difficulty prevented from falling upon the projectors of that defunct society tooth and nail.

Their misdemeanour having been clearly proved, François and Henri were duly incarcerated; but, after having had the advantage of a month's meditation in seclusion, they were released. The course of events had convinced M.M. Vernet and Desarts, senior, that the study of medicine

in Paris was not a desirable pursuit, and, accordingly, their hopeful offspring returned home, where they continued to practise poetry and philosophy with a success which, if not very serviceable to themselves, was at all events inoffensive to other people.

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY.

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRIVIER'S DOUBTS," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXIV. A QUESTION OF IDENTITY.

A FEW weeks after the death of Mrs. Monroe, Miss Wells, having hung up the key of her apartment in the bureau of the old hotel at Nice, set out in that independent fashion which she prized so highly, not indeed for Jericho, but on a sufficiently vague expedition. She needed change and recreation; the last task of the self-appointed work that she had accomplished had cost her a good deal, and if she was to go on, she must not fret, or look back; and, above all, she must take care of her own health. She would have a pleasant ramble among mountains somewhere, but first, she must go to Paris for a few days. It was rather warm weather for Paris, where there was no sea to temper the heat which Miss Wells did not mind at Nice; but that could not be helped. It was not her way to let herself be influenced by considerations of that kind. She had something to do at Paris, and when it was done she would begin to take her holiday.

As she journeyed up to the beautiful city in a crowded and stuffy train, Miss Wells arranged in her methodical mind all that she meant to do in Paris, and the order of it. The business she had undertaken first, then a visit to a certain hospital where she should get some useful hints, a few hours at the Salon, a few minutes in each of the great churches, a few purchases at the Bon Marché, a drive in the Bois, and then she would be off to the mountains.

"Barrière de la Glacière," said Miss Wells to herself, as she looked over some memoranda in her pocket-book; "I have not a notion where it is, but I daresay it will be a pleasant drive. And I am going on a pleasant errand. How glad they will be to get the money for their poor old people, and how pleased at her remembrance of them! It was a fine act of hers, too; there is a great deal of self-denial in that hundred pounds."

Miss Wells's business in Paris was the fulfilment of a request made by Mrs. Monroe shortly before her death. She had saved out of her very limited means—she possessed only a small annuity, which died with her—one hundred pounds, and this sum she had confided to Miss Wells for a special purpose. She had no relative in the world except Mrs. Dunstan, to whom she wished a few of her personal effects to be sent; but the money she had saved she was free to dispose of, and it was to be given to the first friends whom she had found in her great trouble, by the hands of the last friend, who would see her safely through it. Every other wish which she had expressed had been faithfully carried out by Miss Wells, who was now about to fulfil this one. She felt rather curious, and a little hurt about Mrs. Dunstan, who had taken no notice of the letter in which she had written her the particulars of her only relative's death. The receipt of a packing-case containing the articles sent to Bevis from Nice—not immediately after Mrs. Monroe's death, but when Miss Wells became convinced that Mrs. Dunstan did not mean to write—was formally notified to her by Captain Dunstan; but no other communication reached her. Even that dear lovely Mrs. Thornton, who had been so fond of Mrs. Monroe, had not written a line, and though she was in such trouble herself Miss Wells thought she might have done that; indeed, her own trouble would but have been a reason the more. It was very strange, considering all that they had gone through together, and Miss Wells felt a curious contradictory kind of retrospective pity for the loneliness of her dead friend who was so little missed or remembered. She almost wondered that nice Miss Carmichael had not written, but she felt she must put these things out of her head. She had been particularly interested in a certain set of people who had chanced to come in her way, but she was not going to be disappointed because they had soon and easily forgotten her. In this healthy frame of mind Miss Wells set out on her expedition to the distant region of Paris, where her business lay.

A porte cochère in a lofty, dingy wall, above which the gently stirring boughs of some fine acacia trees were visible, admitted Miss Wells to a peaceful scene. Three sides of a large piece of ground, which combined the features of a lawn and a garden, were enclosed by the main build-

ing and the wings of a very old house, with a leaden roof, tall narrow windows, and a flagged verandah. A superb acacia tree occupied the centre of the lawn; and two or three wicker chairs, and a light table strewn with needlework, indicated that the inmates of the house were wont to make a summer drawing-room of the smooth green sward under the spreading shade. There would be some delay before Miss Wells could see the person for whom she enquired, and, the lawn being vacant, she asked to be permitted to wait there in the cool air, rather than in the parlour. She took one of the wicker chairs, and sat patiently under the shade of the great acacia, feeling pleasantly the stillness and seclusion of the place, in which no one seemed to be stirring, though, as she knew, there was plenty of busy life within those walls. She had been there perhaps a quarter of an hour when a slight sound caused her to turn in its direction. No doubt the person whom she expected to see was coming to her there. A low-lying branch hid the approaching figure, but she discerned a plain black skirt. The next moment the figure came from behind the tree into full view. A tall, slight, youthful form, clad in deep mourning; a fair, delicate, pale face surmounted by a widow's bonnet, which hid the bright hair, revealed themselves to Miss Wells, who sprang up with an exclamation of almost terrified surprise, and gazed at the lady with mingled fascination and recoil.

"I beg your pardon; I have disturbed you. I came for my book," said the lady, as she passed Miss Wells with a bow, and approached the table. But Miss Wells, from whose florid face the colour had vanished, and who was trembling quite visibly, made no conventional reply.

"For God's sake, tell me who you are?"
No answer.

"Pray forgive me; I don't mean to be rude; but it is impossible—the likeness is so remarkable—I never saw such a thing—and she was very dear to me."

"She! Whom?"

"Janet Monroe."

As they had come to her that day at The Chantry; as they had come to her that other day upon the terrace at Bevis; so the ringing in her ears, the dull throbbing at her heart, came to Janet now, warning her. She caught at a chair, and sank into it with a deep sigh, to the great alarm of Miss Wells.

"Ah, mon Dieu! Is it that Madame Monroe finds herself ill?"

This question was asked by the person whom Miss Wells had come to see; a kindly middle-aged woman in the dress of a religious, who had joined them unperceived.

"Madame Monroe? Is that the name of this lady?"

"Yes—yes; this is Madame Monroe. Ah, she is better; it is nothing. It is the heat, and she is not strong. See, she is quite revived. Pardon, madame, you wished to speak with me."

"I did; but is it well to leave this lady. Are you better?" She addressed Janet in that tone, solicitous but firm, which seldom failed to inspire liking and confidence, and Janet opened her eyes with a faint smile.

"I am quite well now; it was nothing; only the heat."

"Remain where you are," said the religious, "and when madame has told me her business, we will return to you. Poor little lady," she added, as she conducted Miss Wells to the parlour, "she has had her troubles, I fear, like all in this sad world; but she is at peace here, and she comes to us recommended by an old friend." They entered the house, and were hidden from Janet.

She was recovering from the shock of the words that had been spoken to her, but only to bewilderment and fear. Had her term of rest and peace come to an end? Who was this stranger, kindly-natured and good, indeed, if her face and her voice might be trusted, who evidently had a clue of some kind by which she might trace Janet's identity? Supposing she were to use it, and, discovering her secret, consider that she ought to reveal it? Then what could come to Janet except the miserable dread that her husband might disregard her prayer, from any of those motives which were so small and meaningless to her. Then she tried to think that she was frightening herself for nothing: the stranger had come to the reverend mother on business of her own; she would forget the accidental likeness, that had struck her so strongly, in the claims of that business; and, seeing Janet no more, would think of her no more. Then Janet rose, with the intention of going away, but found she could not walk a yard, or stand steadily, for the ringing and the throbbing; and when she sat down again she could not think at all clearly,

but knew she must wait until somebody should come, who would help her to get back to her room. She had heard somebody, she supposed it was Dr. Andrews, say during her illness that it looked as if she had had a shock, and that she was a bad subject for shocks. She must be so, indeed, when an occurrence such as this could make her so ill and helpless.

Miss Wells acquitted herself of her commission, and was well rewarded by the gratitude of the reverend mother, who asked her many questions about the young widow who had cherished so lasting a remembrance of her sojourn in the little convent. It was curious, she said, except that the finger of the good God was to be seen in everything if it were but looked for, that they were able just then to do something in memory of their benefactress. The poor little lady out there—the reverend mother pointed to the window—had come to them in the character of a relative of Mrs. Monroe, asking them to receive her as a boarder for Mrs. Monroe's sake, and they had done so.

"Indeed!" said Miss Wells; "and when was that?" She had not mentioned the date of Mrs. Monroe's death, and the reverend mother's answer let in a flood of light upon her, by informing her that this relative of Mrs. Monroe's had been received at the convent within ten days after that event.

"What was her precise relationship to Mrs. Monroe?"

"She was her cousin, of the same name, too, as she tells me. She will be cheered when she learns this curious circumstance; and she needs it. She has no friends in Paris."

What had happened? Of Janet's identity Miss Wells had no doubt. That the mysterious fact of Mrs. Dunstan's being where she was implied some great misfortune, she felt equally certain; and the recollection that the friend she had so lately lost had loved this only relative stirred strongly in Miss Wells's heart.

At this moment the reverend mother was told that somebody else wanted to see her, and Miss Wells availed herself of the opportunity to return to the lawn, and, as she said, introduce herself to her country-woman.

Janet was still sitting where they had left her. Her head lay back wearily against the tall back of the deep wicker chair, her hands lay idly in her lap; she was the very image of lassitude and hopelessness, far

more sad to see than ever her namesake had been, even when she was fading most rapidly.

Miss Wells went close up to her, and dealing promptly with the nervous apprehension in her grief-stricken face, said: "I am Martha Wells. It was I who wrote to you from Nice. Janet Monroe died with her hand in mine. Will you not trust me, Mrs. Dunstan?"

In England, as elsewhere, time was running on, and the first impression made by the events that had occurred at Bevis had passed away. Captain Dunstan had been solicitous only that it should be understood in the fullest possible sense that his wife was not to blame for the separation between them, which, it soon became known, had taken place. For this very reason Janet was all the more severely blamed, especially as the "rights and wrongs" of the matter were but imperfectly known; and the most charitably disposed towards her supposed she must be mad, and that Captain Dunstan was hushing it up. At all events it was plain that he felt it very severely, and that there was an end to all the pleasant prospects of Bevis proving an "acquisition" to the neighbourhood.

Captain Dunstan did feel Janet's flight very severely—as a terrible blow to his pride, and an extraordinary revelation of her character. It was not only that he had never suspected the existence of such love and such jealousy, such an exalted and impossible ideal in her mind as would render the knowledge of his motives for making her his wife intolerable to her, while yet she should be perfectly secure from anything that could be regarded as want of kindness and observance on his part; but he had never believed in feelings of the kind at all, on anyone's part, out of a romance. Of course he knew she loved him. Had not Mrs. Drummond told him so, and had not she herself owned it in a very dignified and becoming way when he "proposed" to her, and many times during the brief engagement which he had found, to tell the truth, rather irksome? But that she should take things in this tragic way astonished him. It hurt him keenly, too, and made him think, as he had never thought before, of what the vows and the promises of marriage mean, how awful they are, how lightly taken, and how ill-kept, even when there is no open or defiant breach of the letter of them. He had

not doubt that he should always have continued to do so; but he could not deny to himself that he had always been thinking of another woman, and that she had accused him truly, convicting him out of his own mouth, and left him—her interpretation of their respective positions being granted—justly. It was more the manner of it than the action itself that he regretted so vividly. Perhaps the unsuitability between them would, under any circumstances, have proved too great for comfort; but in that case there would have been a middle course so easily taken, one adopted by lots of people every day, without scandal, or gossip, or the unpleasantness of this method of hers. He was very seriously troubled about Janet, and oppressed by the fear that she might be actually suffering in material ways while her retreat remained undiscovered. Of course he should find her some day; he never really doubted that; and in the meantime he was most anxious that it should not be suspected that he did not know what had become of her, and it was not suspected, beyond the small circle of those who knew the fact. The shock and surprise of the desperate step that his wife had taken, and the success that attended her intention of concealment, had the effect upon him of clearing his moral vision very considerably; and Janet, if it would have been a satisfaction, might have had that of knowing that she was perpetually in his remembrance, and, in a strange sort of way, an object of curiosity, a subject of questioning to him, such as she had never been before. It was as though he had married one woman, and his wife had turned out to be another just as she vanished from him; that other a less gentle, less perfect, less complaisant being, indeed, but more interesting, more individual, more wilful. And yet, in the bottom of his heart, when Edward Dunstan mused upon the revelation of Janet's love, and what was her ideal, his real thought was: If it had only been the right woman who had loved him thus!

Events had marched also with time; and late in the autumn Julia Carmichael and John Sandilands were to be married. John had come home with Sir Wilfrid Esdaile, and the wedding was to take place at Hunsford. Dunstan and Esdaile had not met since Esdaile's return; but they were to meet soon, for Dunstan had asked Esdaile to come to Bevis after the wedding, at which he was to be present,

Sandilands and Julia were also to visit him before they left England. It would be a strange meeting, and Dunstan would be glad when it was over.

Sir Wilfrid Esdaile and Amabel Ainslie were the only guests at Hunsford, in addition to the bridegroom, and the wedding was a very quiet affair, both because the parties chiefly concerned wished it, and on account of Laura, who had come from Scotland to be with her cousin on the occasion and take leave of her. Lady Rosa Chumleigh was in an unusually amiable mood; she liked John Sandilands; he was very glad to get Julia disposed of; and since things had been so comfortably settled by the birth of her grandson, she had been on unusually good terms with providence—persons of her kind sometimes are affected in this way by what they feel to be an escape—and even disposed to let the colonel approach nearer to the realisation of his ideal, a quiet life, than he had ever done within his long but little varied experience. Julia looked very well, and was very happy in her quiet way, and John Sandilands had a piece of news to tell her when they had left Hunsford—it had been especially stipulated that he was not to tell her sooner—which would make her happier still. Sir Wilfrid's wedding-present to his friend was a splendid one: it was the coffee plantation. John was going out to manage his own property now. Sir Wilfrid had hit upon this conclusive and satisfactory method of redressing to a certain extent the inequality between his own lot and that of John Sandilands that had always been a puzzle to him.

"Considering that he has just married the only woman he ever wanted to marry, and that she is quite ideally suited to him, I'm inclined to think the weight has got into the other scale now," said Sir Wilfrid to himself a little ruefully, as he re-entered the house after he had speeded the happy pair on their way and done a little good-natured pottering with the colonel, and went in search of Laura.

He found her in the morning-room with Amabel. The infant was sleeping in his lace-bedecked cradle beside the hearth; and Sir Wilfrid was indulged with a peep at him. Then he and Laura began to talk, of the wedding and present matters first, then of the past; of the dark days at Nice, of Julia's arrival, of their journey back to

England, of the friends whom they left behind.

"If I had wanted reminding of it, which I certainly did not," said Sir Wilfrid, "I should have had it all brought before me by the sight of Miss Wells and Mrs. Monroe—"

"Miss Wells and Mrs. Monroe?"

"Yes. I saw them for a moment; it was only on the platform at Fontainebleau, as we went by; I put my head out of the carriage and waved my hat; but I can't tell whether they recognised me. Miss Wells looked just the same; Mrs. Monroe very wan and ill; it was only a glimpse, but I saw that, I am sorry to say. What accounts do you get of her?"

He paused, and glanced from Laura to Amabel. The former was staring at him in unmitigated astonishment; the face of the other was suffused with a peculiarly vivid sample of what Amabel called her "unfortunate blush."

"What have I said?" asked Sir Wilfrid.

"That you saw Mrs. Monroe with Miss Wells, on your way home with John. It is impossible."

"But I tell you I did see them; there is no doubt about it; I saw them as distinctly as I see you and Miss Ainslie."

"At what date was that, Sir Wilfrid?"

"The 15th of August."

"And Mrs. Monroe," said Laura solemnly, "died at Nice in June!"

"Died! Died in June! Mrs. Thornton, you must think me mad, if you will, but I most emphatically declare that I saw her, in her usual dress—the English widow's cap, I think, caught my eye first—standing beside Miss Wells on the platform at Fontainebleau. Pray don't doubt me; pray don't laugh at me; I tell you the exact truth."

"Laugh! I am not likely to laugh at such a thing. What can it mean?"

She put her hand to her brow for a moment and thought; the next she exclaimed:

"Amabel, it was Mrs. Dunstan! She has been with Miss Wells all this time! Rely upon it, it was she. Oh, Sir Wilfrid, you have found her!"

"Thank God!" said Amabel in her heart, while her tears fell silently; "thank God, she will be persuaded, she will come back; it will all come right; and yet she will know that I kept her secret as faithfully as she kept her—*Nice*."

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXX. "KURZ IST DER SCHMERZ
UND EWIG IST DIE FREUDE."

CAPTAIN WINSTANLEY said no more about Lord Mallow; but Violet had to listen to much plaintive bemoaning from her mother, who could not understand how any well-brought-up young woman could refuse an Irish peer with a fine estate, and the delights of a trousseau made by the renowned Theodore. Upon this latter detail Mrs. Winstanley dwelt at more length than upon that minor circumstance in a marriage—the bridegroom.

"It would have been such a pleasure to me to plan your trousseau, darling," she said; "such an occupation for my mind in these wretched winter afternoons, when there is no possibility of driving or making calls, I should have attended to everything myself. Theodore's general way is to make a list of what she thinks necessary, allowing her customer to correct it; but I should not have been satisfied with that, even from Theodore, though I admit that her taste is perfect. And then, you know, she is hand in glove with Worth, and that alone is a liberal education, as somebody says somewhere about something. No, dear; I would have done it all myself. I know the exact shades that suit your complexion, the dashes of colour that contrast with and light up your hair, the style that sets off your figure. Your trousseau should be talked about in society, and even described in the fashion magazines. And then Lord Mallow is really so very nice, and has such a charming baritone—what more can you want?"

"Only to love him, mamma dearest, which I do not, and never shall. That frank loud voice of his does not stir a fibre of my heart. I like him extremely, and so I do Mr. Scobel, and Bates the groom. Lord Mallow is no more to me than either of those. Indeed, Bates is much nearer and dearer, for he loved my father."

"My dear Violet, you have the most republican ideas. Imagine anyone putting Bates on a level with Lord Mallow!"

"I don't, mamma. I only say he is more to me than Lord Mallow could ever be."

"Your travelling-dress," murmured Mrs. Winstanley, her mind still dwelling on the trousseau. "That affords more scope for taste than the wedding-gown. Velvet suits your style, but is too heavy for your age. A soft clinging cashmere, now, one of those delicious neutral tints that have been so fashionable lately, over an underskirt of a warmer colour in poul de soie, a picturesque costume that would faintly recall Lely's portraits at Hampton Court."

"Dear mamma, what is the use of talking about dresses I am never going to require? Not for all the finery that Theodore ever made would I marry Lord Mallow, or anybody else. I am happy enough with you, and my horse, and my dog, and all the dear old things, animal and vegetable, that belong to this dear old place. I shall never leave you, or the Forest. Can you not be content to know this and let me alone?"

"You are a very wilful girl, Violet, and ridiculously blind to your own interests," remarked Mrs. Winstanley, throwing herself back in her chair with a fretful

look, "and you put me in an absurd position. The duchess quite congratulated me about your brilliant prospects, when we were chatting together on New Year's Eve. Anybody could see how devoted Lord Mallow was, she said, and what a splendid match it would be for you."

"Let the duchess marry her own daughter, and leave me alone," cried Vixen scornfully.

This was the kind of thing she had to endure continually, during the chill winter months that followed Lord Mallow's departure. Even her old friends the Scobels worried her about the Irish peer, and lamented her inability to perceive his merits. It was known throughout her particular circle that she had been idiotic enough to refuse Lord Mallow. Mrs. Winstanley had whispered the fact to all her friends, under the seal of strictest secrecy. Of all Vixen's acquaintance, Roderick Vawdrey was the only one who said no word to her about Lord Mallow; but he was much kinder to her after the Irishman's departure than he had shown himself during his visit.

Spring put on her green mantle; and when the woods were starred with primroses, and the banks lovely with heaven-hued dog-violets, everyone of any pretension to importance in the social scale began to flee from the Forest as from a loathsome place. Lord Ellangowan's train of vans and waggons set out for the railway-station with their load of chests and baskets. Julius Cæsar's baggage was as nothing to the Saratoga trunks and bonnet-boxes of Lady Ellangowan. The departure of the Israelites from Egypt was hardly a mightier business than this emigration of the Ellangowan household. The duke and duchess, and Lady Mabel Ashbourne, left for the Queen Anne house at Kensington, wherest the fashionable London papers broke out in paragraphs of rejoicing, and the local journals bewailed the extinction of their sun.

The London season had begun, and only the nobodies stayed in the Forest to watch the rosy sunsets glow and fade behind the yellow oaks; to see the purple of the beech-boughs change mysteriously to brightest green; and the bluebells burst into blossom in the untrodden glades and bottoms. Captain Winstanley found a small house in Mayfair, which he hired for six weeks, at a rent which he pronounced exorbitant. He sacrificed his own ideas of prudence to the gratification

of his wife; who had made up her mind that she had scarcely the right to exist until she had been presented to her sovereign in her new name. But when Mrs. Winstanley ventured to suggest the Duchess of Dovedale as her sponsor on this solemn occasion, her husband sternly tabooed the notion.

"My aunt, Lady Susan Winstanley, is the proper person to present you," he said authoritatively.

"But is she really your aunt, Conrad? You never mentioned her before we were married."

"She is my father's third cousin by marriage; but we have always called her aunt. She is the widow of Major-General Winstanley, who distinguished himself in the last war with Tippoo Sahib, and had a place at court in the reign of William the Fourth."

"She must be dreadfully old and dowdy," sighed Mrs. Winstanley, whose only historical idea of the Sailor King's reign was as a period of short waists and beaver bonnets.

"She is not a chicken, and she does not spend eight hundred a year on her dress-maker," retorted the captain. "But she is a very worthy woman, and highly respected by her friends. Why should you ask a favour of the Duchess of Dovedale?"

"Her name would look so well in the papers," pleaded Mrs. Winstanley.

"The name of your husband's kinswoman will look much more respectable," answered the captain; and in this, as in most matters, he had his own way.

Lady Susan Winstanley was brought from her palatial retirement to spend a fortnight in Mayfair. She was bony, wiggy, and snuffy; wore false teeth and seedy apparel; but she was well-bred and well-informed, and Vixen got on with her much better than with the accomplished captain. Lady Susan took to Vixen; and these two went out for early walks together in the adjacent Green Park, and perambulated the picture-galleries, before Mrs. Winstanley had braced herself up for the fatigues of a fashionable afternoon.

Sometimes they came across Mr. Vawdrey at a picture-gallery or in the park; and at the first of these chance meetings, struck by the obvious delight with which the two young people greeted each other, Lady Susan jumped to a conclusion.

"That's your young man, I suppose,

my dear," she said bluntly, when Rorie had left them.

"Oh, Lady Susan!"

"It's a vulgar expression, I know, my dear, but it comes natural to me; I hear it so often from my housemaids. I fancied that you and that handsome young fellow must be engaged."

"Oh, no. We are only old friends. He is engaged to Lady Mabel Ashbourne—a very grand match."

"That's a pity," said Lady Susan.

"Why?"

"Well, my dear," answered the old lady hesitatingly, "because when one hears of a grand match, it generally means that a young man is marrying for the sake of money, and that young old friend of yours looks too good to throw himself away like that."

"Oh, but indeed, Lady Susan, it is not so in Rorie's case. He has plenty of money of his own!"

The important day came; and Lady Susan, Mrs. Winstanley, and Violet packed themselves and their finery into a capacious carriage, and set off for St. James's. The fair Pamela's costume was an elaborate example of Theodore's highest art; colours, design, all of the newest—a delicate harmony of half-tints, an indescribable interblending of feathers, lace, and flowers. Violet was simply and elegantly dressed by the same great artist. Lady Susan wore a petticoat and train that must have been made in the time of Queen Adelaide. Yes; the faded and unknown hue of the substantial brocade, the skimpieness of the satin, the quaint devices in piping-cord and feather-stitch—must assuredly have been coeval with that good woman's famous hat and spencer.

Poor Mrs. Winstanley was horrified when she saw her husband's kinswoman attired for the ceremony, not a whit less wiggly and snuffy than usual, and with three lean ostrich-feathers starting erect from her back hair, like the ladies in the proscenium boxes of Skelt's Theatre, whose gaily-painted effigies were so dear to our childhood.

Poor Pamela felt inclined to shed tears. Even her confidence in the perfection of her own toilet could hardly sustain her against the horror of being presented by such a scarecrow.

The ceremony went off satisfactorily, in spite of Lady Susan's antiquated garments. Nobody laughed. Perhaps the habitués of St. James's were accustomed to scare-

crows. Violet's fresh young beauty attracted some little notice as she waited among the crowd of débutantes; but, on its being ascertained that she was nobody in particular, curiosity languished and died.

Mrs. Winstanley wanted to exhibit her court-dress at the opera that evening, but her husband protested against this display as bad style. Vixen was only too glad to throw off her finery, the tulle puffings and festoonings, the floral wreaths and bouquets, which made movement difficult and sitting down almost impossible.

Those six weeks in town were chiefly devoted to gaiety. Mrs. Winstanley's Hampshire friends called on her, and followed up their calls by invitations to dinner, and at the dinners she generally met people who were on the eve of giving a garden-party, or a concert, or a dance, and who begged to be allowed to send her a card for that entertainment, spoken of modestly as a thing of no account. And then there was a hurried interchange of calls, and Violet found herself meandering about an unknown croquet-lawn, amongst unknown nobodies, under a burning sun, looking at other girls, dressed like herself in dresses à la Theodore, with the last thing in sleeves, and the last cut in trains, all pretending to be amused by the vapid and languid observations of the cavalier told off to them, paired like companions of the chain at Toulon, and almost as joyless.

Violet Tempest attended no fewer than eight private concerts during those six weeks, and heard the same new ballad, and the same latest gavotte in C minor, at every one of them. She was taken to pianoforte recitals in fashionable squares and streets, and heard Bach and Beethoven till her heart ached with pity for the patient labour of the performers, knowing how poorly she and the majority of mankind appreciated their efforts. She went to a few dances that were rather amusing, and waltzed to her heart's content. She rode Arion in the Row, and horse and rider were admired as perfect after their kind. Once she met Lord Mallow, riding beside Lady Mabel Ashbourne and the Duke of Dovedale. His florid cheek paled a little at the sight of her. They passed each other with a friendly bow, and this was their only meeting. Lord Mallow left cards at the house in Mayfair, a week before the Winstanleys went back to Hampshire. He had been working hard

at his senatorial duties, and had made some telling speeches upon the Irish land question. People talked of him as a rising politician; and whenever his name appeared in the morning papers, Mrs. Winstanley uplifted her voice at the breakfast-table, and made her wail about Violet's folly in refusing such an excellent young man.

"It would have been so nice to be able to talk about my daughter, Lady Mallow, and Castle Mallow," said Pamela in confidence to her husband.

"No doubt, my dear," he answered coolly; "but when you bring up a young woman to have her own way in everything, you must take the consequences."

"It is very ungrateful of Violet," sighed the afflicted mother, "after the pains I have taken to dress her prettily, ever since she was a baby. It is a very poor return for my care."

CHAPTER XXXI. IN THE FAIR JUNE WEATHER.

THEY were all back at the Abbey House again early in June, and Vixen breathed more freely in her sweet native air. How dear, how doubly beautiful, everything seemed to her after even so brief an exile! But it was a grief to have missed the apple-bloom and the bluebells. The woods were putting on their ripe summer beauty; the beeches had lost the first freshness of their tender green, the amber glory of the young oak-leaves was over, the last of the primroses had faded among the spreading bracken; masses of snowy hawthorn-bloom gleamed white amidst the woodland shadows; bean-fields in full bloom filled the air with delicate odours; the summer winds swept across the long lush grass in the meadows, beautiful with ever-varying lights and shadows; families of sturdy black piglings were grubbing on the waste turf beside every road, and the forest-fly was getting strong upon the wing. The depths of Mark Ash were dark at noontide under their roof of foliage.

Vixen revelled in the summer weather. She was out from morning till evening, on foot or on horseback, sketching, or reading a novel in some solitary corner of the woods, with Argus for her companion and guardian. It was an idle purposeless existence for a young woman to lead, no doubt, but Violet Tempest knew of no better thing that life offered for her to do.

Neither her mother nor Captain Winstanley interfered with her liberty. The captain had his own occupations and

amusements, and his wife was given up to frivolities which left no room in her mind for anxiety about her only daughter. So long as Violet looked fresh and pretty at the breakfast-table, and was nicely dressed in the evening, Mrs. Winstanley thought that all was well; or at least as well as it ever could be with a girl who had been so besotted as to refuse a wealthy young nobleman. So Vixen went her own way, and nobody cared. She seemed to have a passion for solitude, and avoided even her old friends, the Scobels, who had made themselves odious by their championship of Lord Mallow.

The London season was at its height when the Winstanleys went back to Hampshire. The Dovedales were to be at Kensington till the beginning of July, with Mr. Vawdrey in attendance upon them. He had rooms in Ebury Street, and had assumed an urban air which, in Vixen's opinion, made him execrable.

"I can't tell you how hateful you look in lavender gloves and a high hat," she said to him one day in Clarges Street.

"I daresay I look more natural dressed like a gamekeeper," he answered lightly; "I was born so. As for the high hat, you can't hate it more than I do; and I have always considered gloves a foolishness on a level with pigtails and hair-powder."

Vixen had been wandering in her old haunts for something less than a fortnight, when, on one especially fine morning, she mounted Arion directly after breakfast and started on one of her rambles, with the faithful Bates in attendance to open gates or to pull her out of bogs if needful. Upon this point Mrs. Winstanley was strict. Violet might ride when and where she pleased—since these meanderings in the Forest were so great a pleasure to her—but she must never ride without a groom.

Old Bates liked the duty. He adored his mistress, and had spent the greater part of his life in the saddle. There was no more enjoyable kind of idleness possible for him than to jog along in the sunshine on one of the captain's old hunters; called upon for no greater exertion than to flick an occasional fly off his horse's haunch, or to bend down and hook open the gate of a plantation with his stout hunting-crop. Bates had many a brief snatch of slumber in these warm enclosures, where the air was heavy with the scent of the pines, and the buzzing of summer flies made a perpetual lullaby. There was a delicious

sense of repose in such a sleep, but it was not quite so pleasant to be jerked suddenly into the waking world by a savage plunge of the aggravated hunter's hind legs, goaded to madness by a lively specimen of the forest-fly.

On this particular morning Vixen was in a thoughtful mood, and Arion was lazy. She let him walk at a leisurely pace under the beeches of Gretnam Wood, and through the quiet paths of the New Park plantations. He came slowly out into Queen's Bower, tossing his delicate head and sniffing the summer air. The streamlets were rippling gaily in the noontide sun; far off on the yellow common a solitary angler was whipping the stream—quite an unusual figure in the lonely landscape. A delicious slumberous quiet reigned over all the scene. Vixen was lost in thought, Bates was dreaming, when a horse's hoofs came up stealthily beside Arion, and a manly voice startled the sultry stillness.

"I've got rid of the high hat for this year, and I'm my own man again," said the voice; and then a strong brown hand was laid upon Vixen's glove, and swallowed up her slender fingers in its warm grasp.

"When did you come back?" she asked, as soon as their friendly greetings were over, and Arion had reconciled himself to the companionship of Mr. Vawdrey's hack.

"Late last night."

"And have the duchess and her people come back to Ashbourne?"

"Pas si bête. The duchess and her people—meaning Mabel—have engagements six deep for the next month: breakfasts, lawn-parties, music, art, science, horticulture, dancing, archery, every form of laborious amusement that the genius of man has invented. Fashionable festivities are my aversion. So I told Mabel frankly that I found my good spirits being crushed out of me by the weight of too much pleasure, and that I must come home to look after my farm. The dear old duke recognised that duty immediately, and gave me all sorts of messages and admonitions for his bailiff."

"And you are really free to do what you like for a month?" exclaimed Vixen naïvely. "Poor Rorie! How glad you must be!"

"My liberty is of even greater extent. I am free till the middle of August, when I am to join the Dovedales in Scotland. Later, I suppose, the duke will go to Baden, or to some newly-discovered fountain in the Black Forest. He could not

exist for a twelvemonth without German waters."

"And after that there will be a wedding, I suppose?" said Violet.

She felt as if called upon to say something of this kind. She wanted Rorie to know that she recognised his position as an engaged man. She hated talking about the business, but she felt somehow that this was incumbent upon her.

"I suppose so," answered Rorie; "a man must be married once in his life. The sooner he gets the ceremony over the better. My engagement has hung fire rather. There is always a kind of flatness about the thing between cousins, I daresay. Neither of us is in a hurry. Mabel has so many ideas and occupations, from orchids to Greek choruses."

"She is very clever," said Vixen.

"She is clever and good, and I am very proud of her," answered Rorie loyally.

He felt as if he were walking on the brink of a precipice, and that it needed all his care to steer clear of the edge.

After this there was no more said about Lady Mabel. Vixen and Rorie rode on happily side by side, as wholly absorbed in each other as Launcelot and Guinevere—when the knight brought the lady home through the smiling land, in the glad boyhood of the year, by tinkling rivulet and shadowy covert, and twisted ivy and spreading chestnut fans—and with no more thought of Lady Mabel than those two had of King Arthur.

It was the first of many such rides in the fair June weather. Vixen and Rorie were always meeting in that sweet pathless entanglement of oak and beech and holly, where the cattle-line of the spreading branches was just high enough to clear Vixen's coquettish little hat, or in the long straight fir plantations, where the light was darkened even at noonday, and where the slumberous stillness was broken only by the hum of summer flies. It was hardly possible, it seemed to Violet, for two people to be always riding in the Forest without meeting each other very often. Various as the paths are they all cross somewhere; and what more natural than to see Rorie's brown horse trotting calmly along the grass by the wayside, at the first bend of the road? They made no appointments, or were not conscious of making any; but they always met. There was a fatality about it; yet neither Rorie nor Violet ever seemed surprised at this persistence of fate. They were always

glad to see each other; they had always a world to tell each other. If the earth had been newly made every day, with a new set of beings to people it, those two could hardly have had more to say.

"Darned if I can tell what our young miss and Muster Vawdrey can find to talk about," said honest old Bates, over his dish of tea in the servants' hall; "but their tongues ha' never done wagging."

Sometimes Miss Tempest and Mr. Vawdrey went to the kennels together, and idled away an hour with the hounds; while their horses stood at ease with their bridles looped round the five-barred gate, their heads hanging lazily over the top-most bar, and their big-soft eyes dreamily contemplating the opposite pine wood, with that large capacity for perfect idleness common to their species. Bates was chewing a straw and swinging his hunting-crop somewhere in attendance. He went with his young mistress everywhere, and played the part of the "dragon of prudery placed within call;" but he was a very amiable dragon, and nobody minded him. Had it come into the minds of Rorie and Vixen to elope, Bates would not have barred their way. Indeed, he would have been very glad to elope with them himself. The restricted license of the Abbey House had no charm for him.

Whither were those two drifting in the happy summer weather, lulled by the whisper of forest leaves faintly stirred by the soft south wind, or by the low murmur of the forest river, stealing on its stealthy course under overarching boughs, mysterious as that wondrous river in Kubla Khan's dream, and anon breaking suddenly into a clamour loud enough to startle Arion as the waters came leaping and brawling over the shining moss-green boulders? Where were these happy comrades going, as they rode side by side under the glancing lights and wavering shadows? Everybody knows what became of Lancelot and Guinevere after that famous ride of theirs. What of these two, who rode together day after day in sun and shower, who loitered and lingered in every loveliest nook in the Forest, who had the same tastes, the same ideas, the same loves, the same dislikes? Neither dared ask that question. They took the happiness fate gave them, and sought not to lift the veil of the future. Each was utterly and unreasonably happy, and each knew very well that this deep and entire happiness was to last no longer than the long summer

days and the dangling balls of blossom on the beechen boughs. Before the new tufts on the fir-branches had lost their early green, this midsummer dream would be over. It was to be brief as a schoolboy's holiday.

What was the good of being so happy, only to be so much the more miserable afterwards? A sensible young woman might have asked herself that question, but Violet Tempest did not. Her intentions were pure as the innocent light shining out of her hazel eyes—a gaze frank, direct, and fearless as a child's. She had no idea of tempting Roderick to be false to his vows. Had Lady Mabel, with her orohids and Greek plays, been alone in question, Violet might have thought of the matter more lightly; but filial duty was involved in Rorie's fidelity to his betrothed. He had promised his mother on her death-bed. That was a promise not to be broken.

One day—a day for ever to be remembered by Vixen and Rorie—a day that stood out in the foreground of memory's picture awfully distinct from the dreamy happiness that went before it, these two old friends prolonged their ride even later than usual. The weather was the loveliest that had ever blessed their journeyings—the sky Italian, the west wind just fresh enough to fan their cheeks, and faintly stir the green feathers of the ferns that grew breast-high on each side of the narrow track. The earth gave forth her subtlest perfumes under the fire of the midsummer sun. From Boldrewood the distant heights and valleys had an Alpine look in the clear bright air, the woods rising line above line in the far distance, in every shade of colour, from deepest umber to emerald green, from darkest purple to translucent azure, yonder, where the farthest line of verdure met the sunlit sky. From Stony Cross the vast stretch of wood and moor lay basking in the warm vivid light, the yellow of the dwarf furze flashing in golden patches amidst the first bloom of the crimson heather. This southern corner of Hampshire was a glorious world to live in on such a day as this. Violet and her cavalier thought so, as their horses cantered up and down the smooth stretch of turf in front of The Forester's Inn.

"I don't know what has come to Arion," said Vixen, as she checked her eager horse in his endeavour to break into a mad gallop. "I think he must be what Scotch people call 'fey.'"

"And pray what may that mean?" asked Rorie, who was like the young lady made famous by Sydney Smith: what he did not know would have made a big book.

"Why, I believe it means that in certain moments of life, just before the coming of a great sorrow, people are wildly gay. Sometimes a man who is doomed to die breaks out into uproarious mirth, till his friends wonder at him. Haven't you noticed that sometimes in the accounts of suicides, the suicide's friends declare that he was in excellent spirits the night before he blew out his brains?"

"Then I hope I'm not 'fey,'" said Rorie, "for I feel uncommonly jolly."

"It's only the earth and sky that make us feel happy," sighed Violet, with a sudden touch of seriousness. "It is but an outside happiness after all."

"Perhaps not; but it's very good of its kind."

They went far afield that day; as far as the yews of Sloden; and the sun was low in the west when Vixen wished her knight good-bye, and walked her horse down the last long glade that led to the Abbey House. She was very serious now, and felt that she had transgressed a little by the length of her ride. Poor Bates had gone without his dinner, and that dismal yawn of his just now doubtless indicated a painful vacuity of the inner man. Rorie and she were able to live upon air and sunshine, the scent of the clover, and the freshness of the earth; but Bates was of the lower type of humanity, which requires to be sustained by beef and beer; and for Bates this day of sylvan bliss had been perhaps a period of deprivation and suffering.

SWORDS OF CELTIC ROMANCE AND CHIVALRY.

THE subject of swords—their antiquity, their history, their uses, and their manufacture—has already been considered in these columns.* We do not propose to go over it again, as our present purpose is not with the use, but with the chivalry and romance of the weapon; and more particularly with the philological meaning of the affectionate names which our early British ancestors bestowed upon the

weapons of their heroes. In our day men entertain something of the same feeling for their horses, and sailors for their ships; but modern romance does not encircle either horses or ships with such a fairy aureole of poetry as that which settled over hilt, and blade, and even scabbard of the swords which were wielded by such illustrious warriors as King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. In that remote period every sword was fabled to be the protector of innocence and beauty, and a sacred combatant in the cause of divine justice. The sword was used in hand to hand, and heart to heart struggles, when scarcely a hair's breadth separated the brave men, who could look into each other's eyes, and feel each other's breath upon their cheeks in the deadly intensity of the encounter. It thus became natural to bestow an endearing epithet upon the weapon that saved its owner's life, or, what was still more precious, his honour; but no true knight could look with the same affection upon a cannon, or a gun, or a pistol, that did the killing without equalising the powers of the combatants. It thus followed that all the romance of the sword perished with the invention of gunpowder, and that only its remembrance was left to cling around the mighty, and more or less fabulous, deeds of the olden time.

The most famous of the many swords of mediæval poetry is that of King Arthur. That renowned weapon bore two names, by some supposed to be identical—*Excalibur* and *Caliburn*. These names, however, though so much alike, are susceptible of different interpretations. *Excalibur*, sometimes written *Escalibur* (which latter is probably correct, as the alphabet of the Kymric, Gaelic, and other Celtic languages and dialects do not possess the letter *x*), is either derived from the Celtic words *sgaile*, signifying bright, flaming, and *bor*, signifying noble; or from *sgal*, a champion, and *bor*, noble. These words are still used by the Gaelic-speaking population of Ireland and the Scottish Highlands. *Caliburn*, on the other hand, is derivable from *cail* and *cailleachd*, of noble quality or endowment, and *buirean*, a loud impetuous sound; a word signifying a noble sword, descending in the conflict with a loud sound upon the shields and bucklers of the enemy.

Another very famous sword in Celtic poetry is *Marandoise*, though it has not

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 17, p. 538, February 17th, 1877, "Swords."

attained in after time the renown of the great Excalibur. Arthur, according to the old ballad, of which a full synopsis is to be found in Ellis's Early English Metrical Romances, was engaged in conflict with a royal Irish giant named Ryance, who appears to have led an army of giants as formidable as himself. The two met hand to hand, and Arthur with his sword Excalibur aimed a blow at his antagonist which cut off a quarter of his helmet, divided his shield, and falling on his shoulder would have cut him to the middle, had not the violence of the blow been deadened by the toughness of the serpent's skin that the Irishman wore under his coat of mail. Ryance fled; Arthur pursued, and having given him the death-stroke, despoiled him of his sword—Marandoise. The name of this weapon signified the servant of God, from Maor, a servant or messenger, and an Dia, of God; though it is possible that the meaning may be sought in the Celtic words Maor an dith, the messenger of destruction.

Sir Bevis of Hampton, the gallant warrior and rescuer of distressed damsels, who, next to Arthur himself, was one of the most renowned of the traditionary knights, had a sword named Morglay, celebrated in many ballads. It was given him by the lady of his heart, the fair Josyan.

At first blush, it might appear that Morglay was no other than the Gaelic clay-more, a great sword; but this name would not distinguish the weapon from other great swords. Seeking the etymology of the word in another direction, it is found that clai, pronounced glay, signifies protection, or a protector, and mor, great; so that Morglay, as the great protector of beauty, innocence, and right—would be a name worthy of the noble deeds attributed to its possessor, all of which are set forth in the ballad of Sir Bevis, and in the Dragon of Wantley, in Ellis's Specimens, and in Percy's Reliques. Ellis states that, in his time, a sword, purporting to be Morglay, was kept as a relic in Arundel Castle. Considering that the identical pair of pincers with which St. Anthony pinched the nose of his Satanic majesty, was recently shown at a little village in Sussex; that the very poker with which, red-hot, the valiant Baillie Nicol Jarvie defended himself against Major Galbraith, as related in the immortal novel of Rob Roy, was long suspended from a tree at the clachan of Aberfoyle;

and that there is at the present moment wood enough in the churches and cathedrals of Roman Catholic Europe, purporting to be genuine relics of the Cross, to build a three-decker; no one need be accused of incredulity, if he doubts the genuineness of the Arundel Morglay. It may be mentioned, as curious, that the steed of Sir Bevis, on which he was mounted when he slew a dragon, is celebrated in the old ballads under the name of Arundel.

The sword of another famous knight, Sir Lancelot du Lac, the guilty lover of Queen Guenever, was called Arondight. The owner could boast, like Sir Bevis, that he also had slain a fire-drake, or dragon, with his redoubtable weapon.

A sword he took of mickle might
That was ycleped Arandight;
It was Sir Lancelot's du Lake,
Therewith he slew the fire-drake;
The pummel was carbuncle stone—
A better sword was never none.

This sword, borrowed from Sir Lancelot, and wielded by Sir Guy of Warwick when the latter went to the rescue of his father, Sir Bevis of Hampton—sore beset in London, at a place called Goose Lane, by the forces of Edgar, King of England—did excellent service. It saved Sir Bevis, his sword Morglay, and his steed Arundel, from a crowd of assailants in Cheape—our modern Cheapside. It was at the dawn of day, and a London burgess, well-armed and mounted, was just aiming a deadly blow at Sir Bevis, when Sir Guy of Warwick, Arondight in hand,

To that burgess a stroke sent
Through helm and hauberk, down it went;
Both man and horse in that stound
He down cleav'd to the ground.

Sixty thousand men, says the ballad, were slain in this battle; after which, Sir Bevis, with Morglay, and Sir Guy, with Arondight, returned to their camp at Putney. Though the ballad, as it has come down to us, has been modernised by a Saxon hand, as is evident from the mention of Goose Lane and Cheapside, the name of the good sword is pure Celtic, and signifies—as it ought to do, if we accept the sixty thousand slain—the battle of havoc, Ar-an-dith; from ar, battle, and dith, havoc or destruction.

The sword of Roland, another doughty champion, was called Durindale, and gained its celebrity by the despatch in deadly conflict of a ferocious Saracen or Paynim giant, named Ferragus. Its last great achievement was to slay a Paynim

king, named Marsine, who was mounted on a bay charger and bore a golden dragon on his shield, and was surrounded by a troop of chosen warriors. Roland, at sight of him, dashed through the body-guard, and "with one blow clove his enemy to the saddle-bows." But he received so many wounds that he had to retreat, and, dismounting from his horse, lay down under a tree, and drawing his good sword Durindale, for a last look at it,

He began to make his moan,
And fast looked thereupon
As he held it in his hand:
"O sword of great might,
Better bare never no knight
To win with no land.
Thou hast been in many batayle,
That never Sarraayn saw fail,
No might thy stroke withstand."

After these and similar words, says the romance, he rose, and exerting his whole force struck the sword against a rock, in hope of breaking it, so that no hand inferior to his own might ever wield it; but Durindale sank deep into the solid stone, and when the dying Roland had, with some difficulty, drawn it out, he found the edge uninjured. The name of his weapon signified in Celtic "hard and fierce."

The sword of "Sir Eglamour, that valiant knight," whose name is still preserved in English song—see Chappell's collection—with the odd chorus of "Fa! la! lanky down dilly!" is reported by the old romancists to have been found in the sea, and to have been given to him by the fair Christabel, that he might win her hand by killing "a most terrible giant," named Maroke. The sword—of which the name has not been recorded, though it doubtless had a noble one—was of such exceeding brightness, that he no sooner flashed it in the eyes of Maroke than that giant was totally deprived of sight! Though blind, the giant fought for three whole days before Sir Eglamour could vanquish him and cut off his head. The which, however, he did, and received the hand of the lovely Christabel as his reward for ridding the realm of so hideous a monster.

Among other chivalric swords, which, in the words of our international and national exhibitions, "deserve honourable mention," are Durindana, Joyeuse, Courrouge, and Curtan or Curtana. Durindana was the weapon of Orlando, and its name signifies, in Celtic, dur—eager, keen—and dana—bold. Joyeuse was the sword of Charlemagne, and had a modern name carrying its own meaning without need of

interpretation. Courrouge belonged to Sir Otuel, with which he smote down a fierce Saracen or Mahoun, and signifies, coir—justice, and ruadh—red, or red-handed justice; words that may possibly be the etymons of the French courroux—wrath, or red-wrath. Curtin, or Curtana, is the name of a sword used at the coronation of Henry the Third, and still preserved in the records of the Heralds' College as that of the "sword of justice and mercy"—part of the regalia of Great Britain. Its name is derivable from the Gaelic, or Celtic, ceart (keart)—right, just, and ceartas (keartas)—justice, equity.

The French Flamberg and the German Flamberg—the latter word employed by Theodore Körner, the gallant young soldier poet, who endeared his name to all Germans by his spirited and patriotic war lyrics—signifies a sword:

Stosst mit an
Mann für mann
Wer den Flamberg schwingen kann.

The word is derived from the Gaelic fiathan (pronounced flahn), plural of fiath—a hero, and beirte (pronounced beirt-je)—borne or wielded by. Körner is perhaps the last of the poets who have glorified the sword in the true spirit of the old troubadours. He has immortalised his name by the magnificent Schwertlied, in which he compares his sword to his betrothed bride, and lavishes upon it all the tender epithets of which the German language is susceptible.

There is one word applied to the sword by the writers of the Elizabethan and Shakespearian age—namely, Fox—which has been a stumbling-block in the way of all who have attempted to explain it. Many instances of its former use are brought forward by Archdeacon Nares in his valuable Glossary. He calls it a familiar and jocular term for a sword, but he scarcely ventured to explain the etymology of the word. He cites the following:

What would you have, sisters, of a fellow that knows nothing but a basket hilt, and an old fox in it?
—B. JONSON, BART. FAIR, ii., 6.

To such animals,
Half-hearted creatures as these are, your fox
Unkennell'd, with a choleric ghostly aspect,
On two or three ominous terms
Would run, &c.—IBID. MAGN. LADY I., 3.

O what blade is it?

A Toledo, or an English fox.

—WHITE DEVIL, OLD PLAY, ii., 370.

A cowardly slave, that dares as well
Eat his fox, as draw it in earnest.

—PARSON'S WEDDING, OLD PLAY, xi.

I wear as sharp steel as another man,
And my fox bites as deep.—BEAUMONT AND
FLETCHER, KING AND NO KING.

Old foxes are good blades.

—BROOME, ENGLISH MOOR.

Nares properly suggests that "fox un-kennell'd means a sword drawn;" and also, which is not so apparent, that there was a celebrated sword-maker of the name of Fox in those days; or that the blade was browned of a fox colour. If we bear in mind, as already shown, that the most celebrated swords had Celtic names, we may find a clue to the English word fox—which is unmeaning—in the Gaelic, *bhuadach*—to conquer, and *bhuadhachas* (pronounced, *vu-ai-cheas*)—a near approach to fox—which signifies, victory or conquest. The supposition that this derivation is correct is strengthened by the fact that "foxed," in old slang, meant intoxicated, conquered, or overcome with liquor, as in the lines from *Poor Robin*, 1738:

Or have their throats with brandy drenched,
Which makes men foxed ere thirst is quenched.

It only remains to add, that the custom of naming swords was not peculiar to the Celtic races, or to comparatively modern times, but prevailed among the earliest nations of antiquity. The sword of Julius Cæsar, for instance, was known as *Crocea Mors*, or the red death. The champions or heroes of the *Cimbri*, according to *Plutarch*, as quoted in *Mallet's Northern Antiquities*, "took particular care to procure very keen swords, which they inscribed with mysterious characters, and called by such names as might inspire terror." And they not only named their swords, but their banners; the banner of *Harold Hardrada* was called the *Land Ravager*; and to this day the green flag of *Ireland* is celebrated as the *Sun burst of Erin*. We have no modern epithets to describe the sword, and such names as we have for our banners are prosaic enough. What can be more commonplace than the name of the flag of *Great Britain*—the *Union Jack*? The star-spangled banner of the *United States* takes a less vulgar appellation, but spangled is a poor word, and excites no particular enthusiasm. And all the better. To be fond of implements and emblems of slaughter, and to talk of them affectionately, is to be fond of using them, and it is, as far as it goes, a hopeful sign that the weapons of modern warfare are not considered to have any romance or poetry about them, but are held

at best to be the necessary evils of our expanding but still imperfect civilisation; and leads men to think of the time so long in coming, but which all of us hope will come at last, "when swords will be turned into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks."

IDLE WOMEN.

WE talk much in the present day about the employment of women. Civilisation and statistics seem to insist upon the necessity that large numbers of them must earn their own living. Whether this be desirable and natural, or whether, as *Mr. Ruskin* says, "The men of this generation have driven their women mad," we have no purpose to enquire. The other aspect of the subject seems to us to present itself, more silently, perhaps, but with equal force; namely, the number of women who fail to see the work waiting at their doors, who neither labour themselves, nor with wise kindness try to lighten the labour of others.

The most thoughtful women in the country are mainly workers also, and are partly indifferent, partly incredulous, about the undeveloped force slumbering in their more apathetic sisterhood, the waste of latent intellectual power among the thousands of women living throughout the country in easy circumstances. They themselves have been urged on to exceptional effort by some strong inward impulse, or by the force of external conditions; they are looked upon as remarkable, and are, perhaps, too ready to assume a position of isolated superiority. In many or in most cases, however, such superiority consists less in the possession of great gifts than in the attainment of a freer, fuller development. Natural energy, scientific or artistic culture, or felicitous direction of natural capacity, have given them a definite work to do, and this work becomes to them life, growth, character. If we look around among our ordinary acquaintances, including especially those living in the provinces, how small do we find the number of the actively intelligent to whom life is a growth, compared with the many well-to-do women who are content to waste their energies in the pursuit of the emptiest material gratification, and the weight of whose ambition is a sumptuous display beyond the attainment of surrounding neighbours.

In such a survey we can all recall some Angelina we once knew, and the bright but unfulfilled promise of her life. How at fourteen she was full of animal spirits, walking, riding, skating, learning her brothers' games, indispensable to them on all expeditions, always quick, inventive, cheerful. But she caught also their slang phrases, and objected to sitting in state in the drawing-room; hence a severe course of boarding-school discipline was ordained. At eighteen she emerged from this with every original angle well planed down, with a general distaste for books, a faintly surviving interest in music, and a passion for dress. Her education was understood to be completed, and no further mental effort had to be made beyond that required by the newest novel. A few social festivities, with the elaborate and varied dress needful for them, formed the main interest of her life. After thus giving to Mrs. Grundy every satisfaction for a year or two as a perfectly well-conducted and well-dressed young lady, she married an unexceptionable young man of property. As a matron of six or seven years' standing Angelina now appears to us tryingly commonplace. The brightness is all extinguished; everything natural has been sacrificed to the conventional; and those intellectual faculties which promised well are all but dormant. Money, which can always command an efficient staff of servants, makes her domestic cares comparatively light. Every luxury is within reach at the briefest notice, or to be compassed by a pleasant morning drive. In the matter of needlework Angelina has little done at home but a few trifles for the children, which she tucks and braids with her sewing-machine, and gives to the nurse to make up. Linen and dresses are bought ready made, since the latter have of late years been above the mechanical skill (as they have been below the inventive faculty) of the ordinary maid. Angelina's more elaborate toilettes exhibit the imagination of her milliner rather than an inventive effort of her own mind, and are worn in implicit obedience to the fiat which has gone forth from some mysterious "nobody" in Paris. The nursery is under the jealous supervision of a head nurse—quite a treasure—and mamma is only a visitor. The children make little demand upon her head or heart; they are a pleasant distraction in the drawing-room before dinner, and charm-

ing to take out in the carriage with their lovely new hats! If they are not quite well, the medical man from the next square is summoned, and Angelina's responsibility at once relieved. Angelina pays lavishly her doctor, her nurse, her milliner, her cook, who each assume in their own departments an authority based upon knowledge and experience, which is beyond dispute. Thus, by degrees, relinquishing all to them, she not only grows incapable of vigorous mental effort, but becomes possessed of the idea that effort of any kind is derogatory to her station.

To the English gentlewoman of a century ago housekeeping was an art requiring forethought, knowledge, tact, accuracy, promptitude. Our grandmothers were constrained to put their brains into their handiwork, to plan, arrange, compound; by their own inventive genius or practised knowledge to keep well filled store-rooms, overlook and make elaborate preserves, confectionaries, medicines, which Angelina orders in without an effort, mental or physical. In the matter of clothing also they had need of skill and forethought, since only the raw materials could be bought, and were of necessity made up mostly in the house.

It would be easy to multiply instances tending to show that the usages of modern domestic life are calculated rather to repress than to call out the intellectual faculties of women; to widen that breach between brain-work and hand-work which is one great cause of bitterness and heart-burning in our prosperous nineteenth century. It is not without grievous, though impalpable loss, that money takes to so great an extent in our daily life the place of brains. Our artisans work to order largely after the manner of machines; their work is not their own, and makes no demand upon their minds; hence those in whom the intellectual faculty is irrepressible (and they are not a few) drift into International Societies, or drown in drink those thoughts that will not rest. The irrepressible women of the upper classes appear for the most part to write novels; a safety-valve of which they can avail themselves without any special training. But to every ten of these there are a hundred or two whose capacities never have fair play; who never throw off the incubus of an artificial education, and of a conventional code of life, sufficiently to find out the gift that is in them and the work they were intended to do.

We of to-day have very few illusions, but we cling all the more firmly to them. The ancient one remains, that every woman should be abundantly contented with the interests of the family circle. And yet the scope of such interests seems lessening every day; the household occupation of the wealthy gentlewoman is gone. It is not possible, perhaps not desirable, to return to the busy housewifely days of the past, but we are not therefore the less responsible if we allow the wasting hours to drag idly by; the sinking forces, mechanical and mental, to die of inanition. Science insists that dwelling-houses, barracks, hospitals, must be ventilated, since it is fatal to breathe repeatedly the same air. What then if women continue to think the same thoughts, feel the same feelings over and over again, until the mental oxygen is exhausted? One common result is met with every day in the prescription of the baffled physician: "Change of air and port wine." We believe that pure water and fresh air are needful for the purification of the blood, and forget that the brain in like manner needs for its life renewed supplies of varied pleasurable sensations. Even in the easiest circumstances the daily round of cares or occupations brings petty harassment, brings monotony, from which the mind seeks relief. This is the explanation of that restlessness which in some women takes the shape of frivolity, in others of religious dissipation. Surely these cannot be the only resources? The modern gentlewoman undoubtedly misses much of the wholesome occupation of thought and hand which filled the quiet days of her ancestry. She sacrifices instead both time and energy to the exactions of a conventional code; she prefers the small tyrannies of society to the alternative of deadly ennui or unladylike effort.

Surely we must be very far indeed from successful civilisation when it tells us on all hands that work is a thing to be despised. The best kind of education and our own common-sense ought to teach us at least to renounce two fallacies: the first, that work means degradation; the second, that relaxation means idleness. Having learnt this much, any young girl or mistress of a house may rescue an hour or two daily from her novels, kettledrums, and fancy work, and use them for one definite object. She will then, before long, have the new and delightful experience of the pleasure

of exercise, the satisfaction of achievement, and in the course of a lifetime may have done something to ward off the woman's curse of "incompleteness."

In most families the future career of a boy is discussed before he discards his last pegtop. The decision, although influenced by circumstances, is determined by individual taste or talent. Such indications are rarely watched for in a girl. If, therefore, a woman ever accomplishes anything, it is most frequently in spite of early disadvantages, and not as the result of any carefully adjusted education. What we would urge upon every intelligent woman of leisure is, that she should, as a matter of personal culture and of social usefulness, have some definite object of pursuit or study beyond her domestic interests. Whatever her choice, let it be followed with steadfast purpose; let supreme excellence be the first object of desire. The personal culture, or the broader advantage to others which will result from her effort, must be patiently waited for, as we learn to wait for all that is worth having in life.

The common choice will fall on music, on drawing, on painting, and in the present day the failing steps of the amateur find generous assistance in both regions of art. But the vigorous child disdains leading-strings. The real student can feel no complacency in her work so long as the trail of the amateur is over it all; she will press on toward mastery. Glancing at science, we scarcely need point out the various branches in which the privileged girls of the present day may obtain elementary knowledge; if their awakened interest be cherished and further study encouraged, how boundless the range, how incalculable the results, of such an object of pursuit. Then, again, the advantages of concentration in the study of one language and its literature are, perhaps, still more definite and immediate. Suppose a young girl to have mastered the technical difficulties of Italian, French, or German, and also to have become familiar (easily in these days of much travel) with the external life of the people. When she begins a serious study of their literature it is like the revelation of a fresh life; an entirely new page of human history is opened up to her. The acquisition of another literature beyond our own is mental change of air. It suggests fresh development of character, broader views of life, new forms of utterance, varied association of thought and incident; it throws the light of reality upon the dim

outline of events and dates; and as the history of the people, their inner life and thought, are thus completed for her, so much richer, brighter, broader, becomes her own intellectual progress.

Concerning the immorality and waste which has prevailed and still prevails in the matter of dress, there is much to be said, and still more to be done. It rests with women who have money and position to expose and reform such abuses. From the best draper's shop in Regent Street, to that of the small suburban haberdasher, the main object in business appears to be the production of ready-made dresses whose construction shall involve the greatest amount of material and the smallest expenditure of work, and which, from the badness of both (varying according to locality), shall bring most profit to the seller, most loss to the wearer. These articles are designed by men, and made in large wholesale houses. In this way a department of work, for which the taste and the invention, to say nothing of the experience of women, make them especially fitted, has drifted out of their hands. Ten years ago the dressmaker of ordinary skill and diligence could, with one or two assistants, carry on a fairly remunerative business. But she can now no longer struggle against the increased amount of work needed in every dress, against bad debts, and against the competition of large houses; these have absorbed her work, her customers, her profits. It is no doubt true that many ladies of the upper classes will not buy these ready-made articles. If they abstain from such purchases, upon reflection and principle, they cannot stop there; they must further use their influence to discourage among their tradesmen a practice hostile at once to good taste and to honest work. It may be said in defence of the work we are referring to that it does employ a large number of women; no doubt the treadles of the sewing-machines are worked by women. Such work, however, cannot for one moment be compared with the effort of brain and hand needful in the dressmaker who designs, shapes, adjusts, and ornaments her work, with special care for the characteristic requirements of a well-known customer. While we endeavour with one hand to thrust women into the employments of men, we seem with the other to take away their rightful work, and to sacrifice them by hundreds to the tradesman's greed.

The above instance is only one out of very many such wrongs done by kind-hearted but thoughtless women. They abound on all hands, and it rests with those who possess leisure, influence, culture, to find them out and see them redressed. It is because most women are habitually too idle to use the quiet influence they possess in the industrial affairs of the country that such grievances exist.

The honestly religious woman finds her work of brain and hand and does it "with her might." The practical woman, with some noble exceptions, has of late years lost ground, and has some lessons to recover from her despised ancestry. The intellectual woman is developing with the century to which she especially belongs. It remains for the idle woman to ponder and decide among which band of workers she will heartily become enrolled.

THE SEA'S ANSWER.

THE pale moon rushed along the stormy sky,
Now hid, now seen, like some belated bark,
That drives among the breakers aimlessly,
Their white crests gleaming silver through the dark.
Pale as the moon, beneath the lighthouse cowered,
The silent watcher on the great stone pier,
She saw how black the gathering cloud wrack
lowered,
She heard the gale's hoarse warning muttering near;
She felt the kindred tumult in her breast,
With Nature's angry mood was prompt to blend;
Yet the sea answered, stilling her unrest,
"The hardest hap comes ever to the end."

Though the great waves roll thundering to the shore,
And o'er the reef the cruel surf-clouds foam,
Though fierce and high the crashing breakers roar,
Between the weary fisherman and home;
Calm to its depths the tide will ebb at night,
The waves creep whispering backward from the Scar,
And as the cottage hearth shows welcome light,
The laden coble leaps the harbour bar.
Ears that can hear, hearts that can understand,
Know Ocean tells us, like a staunch old friend,
"God holds the future in His loving hand,
The hardest hap comes ever to the end."

The red-roofed houses piled beneath the Head
In silent separate lights began to shine,
The struggling moon her tearful radiance shed
On the grand beauty of the ruined shrine;
From the quay-side, laugh, snatch of song, and call,
Came fitful to the pier upon the breeze,
And, regular as pulse's rise and fall,
Boomed the long echo of the breaking seas.
And still the watcher on the great stone pier,
Lingered above the eternal waves to band,
Taking their answer home to hush and cheer,
"The hardest hap comes ever to an end."

ON THE TRAMP, FROM THE PACIFIC TO THE ATLANTIC.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

WHEN I entered Panama from the South Pacific in the end of February, 1863, I had just thirteen dollars in my pocket. I landed from a small sailing-boat, which

had picked me and a modest bag of clothes up on one of the islands in the bay. Two dollars out of my treasury of three sovereigns went to pay the boatmen, leaving me with thirteen dollars or thereabouts. I did not feel justified, under the circumstances, in patronising the Washington House, although it might have turned out the wisest plan after all; for had I spent the contents of my purse in the character of a guest, my smattering of French and Spanish might have secured me employment as a waiter afterwards. What I did, however, was to go to a less pretentious establishment in a back street, where for thirteen days my money would ensure me the respect due to a distinguished patron. The place was kept by two Dutchmen, who, in addition to their own language, knew the Spanish synonyms for the articles in which they trafficked, as well as for every variety of coin which could be tendered them. Beyond this their knowledge of languages did not extend. The one Dutchman was short and broad, as all Dutchmen should be; the other was tall and slender, which no Dutchman ever had any right to be; and neither of them wore a coat. The *salle à manger* was the space between the front door and the bar, where, on a deal table, the short landlord served the meals in a slow meditative way; while behind the counter his lank partner dispensed cocktails with as much celerity as a slow demand admitted of. The sleeping accommodation provided by myneers was in a row of low cellars built across a flagged passage which ran behind the shop. Each little cellar had a truckle bed, but was destitute of any other article of furniture. The door of the cellar was furnished with a primitive lock, the bolt of which could be shot from the inside without the assistance of a key. I think one key, kept religiously in the custody of the short Dutchman, opened every door in the range from the outside; but all the guests, on leaving their bedrooms in the morning, had to leave the doors open, as they had no means of shutting them. The beds were not provided with mosquito-curtains, and with a close atmosphere and an unprotected sleeper the whitewashed little cell presented a most attractive recreation-room to bands of playful mosquitoes. It was useless to make any representation to mine hosts on the subject, owing to their limited knowledge of any language save Low Dutch, which of course nobody but themselves knew any-

thing of. Stop! there was an exception. This was a pallid man who had been practising the profession of opium-smuggler in Peru, and whose pride it was to tell of having had his sailing-boat sunk under him by a ball from one of the Huascar's guns. This man could talk Low Dutch, and I can't say that he slept more than a single night in the cellars. I have some misgiving about this man. He talked of having met me in Callao, but I never could remember anything about him. I am afraid he had some connection with the two Low Dutchmen, and possibly wormed himself into the confidence of their customers to discover the exact state of their finances, that the short man and the long man might know precisely when to show a guest the outside of the door. Such knowledge was worth money in an establishment where impecuniosity often burst out suddenly, without exhibiting any premonitory symptoms. Thirteen days was the limit of my sojourn in this hotel, and I had not been long there when I was sure the Low Dutchmen knew it as well as myself. They would not have taken me on to board by the month on credit, even if I had offered them a tariff of a dollar and a half a day. Panama, I found, was a good place for a white man to look for work in. It could keep him going at it for a lifetime, easy, no matter how industrious he might be. My hope had been to get leave to work my passage, in any capacity, to San Francisco in one of the mail-steamers; but as these ran only once a fortnight, and as the boat which left Panama during my stay in the place had not a vacancy, this hope came to an end with the departure of the vessel.

I soon found out that nobody wanted me in Panama. I might have started in the shoeblack line; but I could only have done so in opposition to an army of Jamaica niggers, whose colour seemed to give them a prescriptive right to a monopoly of the trade. The driver of the ice-house cart kept so closely by his horse's head that there was no likelihood of ousting him from his position; and the coachman who drove the railway bus being proof against sunstroke, this situation also was not likely to be soon vacant. It was on the eleventh day of my sojourn that I made these important discoveries, and on that same day there was a notable arrival at the Dutchmen's Hotel in the person of an American Irishman. This gentleman was in the lightest possible marching order.

His entire wardrobe was on his person, and on taking stock of it, I found it to consist of only a cap, a shirt, and a pair of trousers. I am quite sure he had not a pocket-handkerchief. He accounted for the simplicity of his attire by remarking that he had shipped rather suddenly at San Francisco as a stowaway in the mail-steamer which had just arrived at Panama; and as the profession of stowaway was not recognised by the captain, he had been set to work in the coal-bunkers when his illustrious presence was discovered; a fact which went far to explain the sombre hue of his few garments. He was a young man of pleasing manners, and in possession of a dollar. How he had come by it delicacy forbade me to enquire; how he had managed to keep it entire till he reached the Dutchmen's lodgings was a mystery too deep for words; but he proved his solvency at once by placing the coin in the palm of the short partner in the hotel business, and till next day he was free to take his ease in his inn. This young man was anxious to make the acquaintance of someone who could write a letter, and having found out that I was equal to the task, he unbosomed himself to me without wasting precious time in unprofitable palaver. He hailed originally from Philadelphia, but had gone to California to try his luck. He had tried it too much, and it had deserted him. Now he was homeward bound. Such were the short and simple annals of his life, up to the moment he encountered me. It was very undesirable to waste the day of grace his dollar had purchased for him, so he was already planning how to accomplish in the most comfortable fashion the next stage of his journey towards Philadelphia. To his dictation I inscribed a letter setting forth how a luckless citizen of the United States (I did not state that he spoke with a pronounced brogue) had stranded centless in Panama on his way back to his native state. Though low in the funds he did not write for pecuniary aid; all he asked being that the American Consul, to whom the communication was addressed, should exert his influence to procure him a free passage across the Isthmus by railway. Writing-paper is dear in Panama, and as neither of us was in possession of a sheet or an envelope, a page of an old pass-book was pressed into the service. The young man's ideas of the proper way in which to address the representative of a free and enlightened nation being simple, my effort at letter-writing pleased him;

and after I had torn out the page on which it was written, he folded it up, leaving the mark of his fingers along the creases in place of a seal, and carried it off to the Consulate where he left it. Then he came back to the hotel, and ate his supper with the appetite of a man who had got rid of every burden that can possibly depress the human mind. Prior to this man's arrival I had been feeling low a little, owing to the circumstance that my dollars were dwindling, while the prospect of obtaining employment was not brightening. The cheerful manner in which this young man despatched his victuals, with only half the time for something to turn up which still belonged to me, put me to the blush, and, mentally, I took off my hat to him. Next day, when he came back from the Consulate in capital spirits to tell me that the consul was not to be come round, he took pains to assure me of his belief that if anything could have fetched the old boy it would have been my admirably worded memorial. He had still a dinner to eat off the Dutchmen, and then he would make up his mind what he would do. I confess that this young man had wormed himself into my liking; so much so that I had made up my mind to give him the offer of a partnership. I therefore said that if he had no objection we might talk over what was to be done at once. Upon his agreeing to this I briefly stated that, like himself, I was still creditor to the Dutchmen for a dinner, and that I had still a dollar to the good; upon which he congratulated me unaffectedly. Then I informed him that if he made up his mind to resume his journey towards the States at once, I was willing to accompany him, upon which he grasped my hand, and the matter was settled. Then we did great justice to the dinner which the short Dutchman placed upon the table, and after that I went across the flagged passage to the cell for my bag, while Jim (I will call my new partner Jim, though I think I never knew that he possessed any name) sauntered to the door. When I joined him with my bag, he was slowly sauntering down the street towards the shore, and in this quiet way we started on foot from Panama for Philadelphia. To lighten my bag I took from it a topcoat I had worn nearer Cape Horn; and as the easiest way of carrying it, Jim put it on, thereby improving his appearance considerably; at least, it would have had that effect in another climate. Stowed

away in the bag was one article which caused me much uneasiness. This was a large Spanish-English dictionary, bound in thick calf. The extra weight of learning was not so bad as its awkward corners. Cram it into the centre as I might, it would work its way, cornerwise, to the side of the bag next my person, and thrust its keen rim into me in the most annoying fashion; and I had not gone far when, with my partner's acquiescence, I determined to dispose of it. In through an open door in a quiet street I saw two men working at the cooper trade, who seemed to me like men who would like to learn a foreign language. Whether it was the manner in which they handled their hammers, or the intelligent way they went about their trade, or what it was that sent the conviction home to me, I can't say; but my estimate of their thirst for knowledge proved correct, for they invested half a dollar in the mixture of Spanish and English which I found too much for me. It is always a pleasure to meet with intelligent people, and these were the first I had come across in Panama. I would fain hope the lexicon did them no harm. Even with the topcoat on I think Jim would have executed a step of a jig, in celebration of the transaction, had we not had a reputation for sedateness to keep up as men who had just parted with so much learning. There is no doubt, however, that I walked lighter without it as we resumed our journey under the tropical sun towards Philadelphia.

I suppose, even yet, there is no highway across the Isthmus of Panama. There was none, at any rate, in 1863; the railway track being the only open route; so that my partner and I had no choice but to adopt the railway as our means of transit. We had waited in Panama till four in the afternoon, so that the heat of the day might be over before we began our journey, but there was another reason for choosing this late hour for setting out. Ordinary railway travellers find it convenient to reach the station in time for the train. Though we were going by railway it was most convenient for us to wait till all the trains were over for the day. It was not difficult to manage this. Except on mail days, there is but one slow train across the Isthmus every twenty-four hours, and it is run early in the day, after which the line under ordinary circumstances is clear of traffic. Apart altogether from its primary purpose, the railway has

proved a real boon to the natives of the Isthmus by providing a clear path for foot travellers. There is, no doubt, some danger of an odd train coming unexpectedly upon unwary pedestrians now and then, but that is a small tax on the general convenience. I am not aware of the law of trespass ever having been put in force against those who use the line in this manner. The station on the south-western side of the Isthmus is erected close to the beach, about a mile from the city of Panama, and towards this building, after disposing of the dictionary, my partner and I directed our steps. I remember we passed a cane hut, at the door of which a woman was sitting bruising some maize in a large calabash, while a naked child played at her feet. I wonder what she thought of us as we passed? I know that the thought which occurred to me was the simple one that this woman and her child were at home, while my home—but it was of no use to think of that. I have no doubt the prospect from the shore-road, looking out upon the Bay of Panama, was as glorious that afternoon as ever it was; that the dreamy blending of sea and sky towards the horizon, and the bridal-veil haze draping the gorgeous foliage of the islands, were as charming as usual. I believe that a more splendid blaze of sunlight never fell on a sea of deeper blue, whose polished surface doubled every object on its bosom. Nay, I know that, out of fairyland, no scene more beautiful ever claimed the lingering gaze of mortal eye than that which spread itself out for the delectation of us two tramps as we marched along the shore. But the white-painted wooden shed, that seemed so out of place beneath the cocoa-nut palms, had more powerful attractions for us that day than all the loveliness of nature around us; and as we skirted the fence by which it was enclosed, and ascended to the metals beyond its northern extremity, we had not a single regret for the circumstance that we had taken our last look of the beautiful Bay of Panama.

We had scarcely begun our journey when we encountered a difficulty which we had not foreseen. It is not so easy to walk on a railway-track as upon a footpath. The distance between the sleepers makes it too great a stride to pass from one to the other at every step for any length of time; and the uneven nature of the ballast would soon cut up the feet of anyone walking upon it. The iron rails them-

selves looked temptingly level and smooth, but then, though only raised a few inches above the sleepers, they were so narrow, that our first attempts to balance ourselves upon them were complete failures. It was tantalising to have got hold of the direct road to the Atlantic, and yet to be unable to make any very satisfactory use of it. To attempt to continue our journey in any of the ways mentioned presented rather a gloomy prospect, for it seemed as if we would make very little progress, and even that at the expenditure of a great amount of exertion. While jogging along with two short steps and a long one among the metals and the sleepers, we met a woman and a tall boy (the latter, with the exception of a straw hat, as naked as the day he was born) coming swiftly and easily towards Panama, and the mystery of foot-travelling by railway was in a moment solved. They were marching on the rails, upon which they supported themselves by the aid of a long pole, the end of which they stuck among the metals every few steps. My partner and I found little difficulty in furnishing ourselves with similar staves, and were soon speeding along at a fine rate, much to our relief and satisfaction. The distance from Panama to Aspinwall is forty-eight miles, and Jim and I calculated we would walk eight miles each morning, from dawn till the heat became too great, and as many every afternoon between four o'clock and dusk. We might have set ourselves a longer day's journey; but, as we had nothing to hurry us, we determined to take it comfortably. That was one of the advantages we enjoyed from the fact of not having through tickets for the mail steamer.

We had learned that there was a station four miles, and another eight miles from Panama, and the latter we determined to reach and make our halting-place for the first night. By-and-by we found that the rate of travelling we could make with the help of the pole was so good that we had no need to hurry lest we should be belated ere reaching Paraiso station, and I remember we took time to stop for a good while and watch the marching of an army of ants across the line with great interest. Our attention was at first attracted by what seemed a moving line of animated green leaves following each other in Indian file across the track; but on stooping to inspect the phenomenon, we found that underneath each leaf was an ant, that was bearing its spoil towards their camp.

They, too, were taking advantage of the hours when traffic was suspended to take a short cut home by the railway.

Even after the extreme heat of the day is over, a spin of a few miles on foot in the tropics is warm work; and we had not gone far when we had a great admiration for the sense of the tall boy, who had left all his clothing at home except his straw hat, when he began his journey. Further encounters with young gentlemen in similar attire served to deepen our conviction of the natural intelligence of the natives, and their aptitude for accommodating themselves to circumstances in a rational manner.

At various points upon the line the sudden advent of a mineral train would have been a very serious matter for Jim and myself, as the situation would have been something like a choice between jumping into a swamp to escape the train, or remaining on the line to be run over, that we might not perish in the swamp. Fortunately, no such awkward juncture arose in the course of our journey, and we were spared the necessity of making the disagreeable election. Four miles from Panama we came upon the first station, built presumably for the accommodation of some cane village or villages in the vicinity, but hidden among the trees. We made no halt, but passed on through the station without speaking to, or being spoken to by anyone. Two white tramps upon the line was not a circumstance sufficiently out of the way to attract attention; and a white painted wooden shed, doing duty as a railway station, was not interesting enough to arrest either the attention or the footsteps of two white tramps. Paraiso, four miles farther on, was our goal for the night, and not till we reached Paraiso would we halt. The name of the place was itself attractive. A large town on the west coast of South America might rejoice in the designation, Valley of Paradise, but this place was Paradise without any qualification, so towards it we held on at the rate of three miles an hour. The sun was setting in the west, the mosquitoes were commencing their evening song, and the fireflies were trimming their lamps among the branches, as the Irish-American with the topcoat, otherwise Jim, and the true Briton with the modest bag of clothes, otherwise the reader's humble servant, deployed upon the station platform at Paraiso.

There was a commotion at Paraiso when

we arrived; but our advent had nothing to do with it. Men were strutting about the platform smoking cigars, niggers were murdering English to each other and laughing from ear to ear, while among the general din of voices the funny half-gutturals of some Chinamen mingled with peculiar effect. The talking and laughing and general uproar were not such as would have caused remark at a railway station in Britain; but met with at a solitary station, buried among the forests of the Isthmus of Panama, they fell unexpectedly upon the ear and awoke curiosity. My topcoat upon Jim might have lent him dignity enough to go forward and exclaim in true X 41 tones, "What's all this about?" but want of dignity was the one failing I had discovered in my partner. I was not sufficiently versed in the true etiquette for tramps, to adopt an independent course of action upon the occasion, so I meekly followed the example of Jim, who had seated himself in an easy position on the edge of the station platform, with his feet dangling, like those of a child on a tall chair, over the rails. Had it not been for the bag of clothes beside us, anyone arriving five minutes later might have fancied that Paraiso had been our home for some time. Not one of the many occupants of the station had exhibited the slightest curiosity regarding us. Nobody invited us to go inside; nobody enquired whence we had come; nobody exchanged the most distant salutation with us; nobody, so far as I am aware, even looked at us among that company of fifty or sixty negroes, Chinamen, mulattoes, half-castes, and Spanish Americans that loitered about the station of Paraiso. Judging by the indifference with which our presence was regarded, white tramps were at a discount at Paraiso. By-and-by, as the short twilight deepened and at last went out with a plunge into the darkness, the stir outside the station-house grew less, while the hum of conversation within doors grew greater, and at last my partner and I were left alone to look after the rails. When the last man had gone in Jim and I looked at each other and animadverted a little upon the want of hospitality which obtained in this paradise. Then we took out some bread that we had saved at the Dutchmen's place, and supped upon it as well as the circumstances permitted. By this time we became aware that some lights which had begun to shine among the trees were too large and too steady for fireflies, and came to the conclusion that they indicated

the whereabouts of the cane village. Then arose the question of whether we should remain where we were, or make for the cane huts, and see if we should be received there with any greater hospitality. For various reasons we decided to stay where we were. We had no idea what sort of people the natives might be, and even the modest bag of clothes and the topcoat might serve as incitements to robbery. Then the lights were some distance away, and we did not know the path. It might be safe enough for us to force our way through the trees towards them; but snakes, and wild animals, or a river, or some inequality in the ground, might make the attempt to reach the native village dangerous in the darkness. So, although the lights kept blinking an invitation from the distance, we made up our minds to remain at the station. But we had no intention of sitting on the edge of the platform with our legs dangling over the rails all night. After all the lights had been put out, and deep silence reigned within the building, we got up and looked around. The station was two stories high, and the platform ran right round the house, being as wide at the ends and back as at the front, while beneath the upper windows was a verandah corresponding to the platform on the ground floor. On making a circuit of the building, Jim and I found an outside stair at the south end leading to the upper story. On making this discovery we looked at each other and smiled a happy smile. It was evident the same thought had occurred at the same moment to us both. Without more ado the bag of clothes was arranged as a bolster and pillow for two, and creeping underneath the outside stair we laid us down to rest upon the boards of the station platform. It was a night which will live in history, for it was the identical one upon which the Prince of Wales was married to the Princess Alexandra of Denmark.

ALL OR NOTHING.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY,

AUTHOR OF "A HOUSE OF CARDS," "GRIFFIN'S DOUBLE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXIV. THE WINDOW IN THE WALL.

AMABEL AINSLIE had grieved much over Janet's flight; no other fulfilment of a prevision—there had come many such to her, or she had fancied them—was ever so unwelcome as the conviction that the marriage in which she had foreseen unhap-

pinness was not happy; no other effort so painful as that by which, accepting the fact that Janet could not but do as she had done, Amabel resolutely kept her secret through the wonderings and conjectures that followed. Only to Captain Dunstan, and to Julia, were the real circumstances that led to Janet's departure known, and it was never suspected that Amabel had any further knowledge. She accepted without comment Mrs. Cathcart's suggestion that the matter could not be discussed with any profit, and scrupulously avoided it. Of Captain Dunstan she had seen very little since the early summer, and Janet had not been mentioned between them.

And now Amabel might speak! In the consultation that ensued on Laura's convincing elucidation of Sir Wilfrid's surprising statement Amabel joined, without letting it be discerned that she had previously known anything, by earnestly entreating Sir Wilfrid to carry the news to Captain Dunstan, and to accompany him, if, as no doubt would be the case, he should decide on immediately going in search of Janet.

"I believe there is no one in the world who could speak to her with such effect as you could," said Amabel, "and she is too just to refuse to see you. None of us can tell whether she might not entirely refuse to see Captain Dunstan. And then, Miss Wells thinks so highly of you; she will take your view."

It was agreed that this should be done. Laura thought there was a very perceptible readiness to accept Amabel's judgment on that and every other point on the part of Sir Wilfrid Esdaile. Laura was interested in this strange story more than she had expected ever to be interested in anything again, but it was not until afterwards that she came to the knowledge of the large part she herself had played in it. On the following morning Sir Wilfrid Esdaile left Hunsford; and the first meeting between the friends, since that memorable day on which he had quitted Bevis a rejected suitor to the woman whom he now hoped would be restored to her husband through his means, took place a few hours later.

Dunstan met him at the railway station, and before they reached Bevis, Esdaile, to whom he had not meant to mention Janet at all, had told him the news. Two days later they left England together, and travelled with but little delay to Nice. Sir Wilfrid Esdaile was readily recognised

at the hotel in the old part of the town, whither he proceeded in the first instance unaccompanied by Dunstan; and on his enquiring for Miss Wells, he learned that she was not there just then. Miss Wells had been a good deal away from her headquarters of late, since shortly after the English lady's death; she had gone away then for three months, and when she returned—

"Alone?" asked Sir Wilfrid of the proprietor of the hotel, who held his eccentric English locataire in great respect, and was ready to give any information to a friend of hers.

No, not alone; and the strange thing was that the lady who came with her might have been the twin sister of the poor little lady, so sad and gentle, who died in the summer. They had all been astonished; it was like seeing a ghost; but, after all, there was nothing surprising; the new lady was the near relation of the other, and of the same name. After a short stay, Miss Wells went away again, taking her friend with her. No; the proprietor could not tell his excellency where they had gone to, Miss Wells had not sent him an address, she never had her letters forwarded when she was away, and he could not say positively when she might be expected to return. There was no doubt at all that she would come back, only the exact time was uncertain; and it was also sure that she was not returning alone, for she had given orders about certain changes in her rooms on account of the new lady. This was satisfactory to a certain extent, and Sir Wilfrid proceeded to act on the information he had elicited. He enquired whether the rooms adjoining Miss Wells's apartments were vacant, and learning that they were, engaged them for himself and a friend, from that day. He then wrote a few words on one of his cards, which he put in an envelope addressed to Miss Wells, requesting that it might be given to her immediately on her arrival, and waited in the bureau until he saw it tucked under her key which hung on its numbered hook. He then returned to Captain Dunstan at the Hôtel de France, and reported progress. To them both it was a disappointment to find that they must wait, and for an uncertain time, before they could hope to see Janet. The delay, with its restraint, its uncertainty, and its prolonged excitement, was very irksome to them. There was a ready resource; time need not hang heavily on their hands; and with the

sight of the place the former fascination of the gaming-tables for Esdaile revived. Dunstan had no particular taste for gambling, but he was restless and nervous, and he wanted to kill time. Three, four, five days passed away; the weather was very fine; there was no sign of Miss Wells's return; and when the regular enquiry made by Sir Wilfrid each morning had received the regular reply, the two young men would leave their dull hotel for the fashionable quarter, and soon find themselves with the rest of the world at Monte Carlo. It seemed as if fate were bent on playing Sir Wilfrid Esdaile an ill trick by this delay; for he not only fell into the old temptation, but "the devil's luck" declared itself for him, and he won largely and continuously; so that he came to be talked about among the frequenters of the place.

Their sojourn at Nice had lasted for ten days, when one morning Esdaile turned into the bureau as usual to ask his invariable question, and found himself a spectator of a household row. The stern and business-like lady who presided in the bureau, the proprietor of the hotel, and a waiter, the identical person who was in the habit of waiting on Esdaile and Dunstan, were the parties to the quarrel. Esdaile immediately withdrew, having heard only the curt and determined order of the proprietor to the misdemeanant to "make his packet, and go." The man was civil and quick, though an ill-looking fellow, a Nizzard of the hard and dark type, and singularly taciturn. Esdaile had noticed him, because as neither Dunstan nor himself had a servant with them—a precaution against talk being carried back to Bevis which Mrs. Cathcart had suggested—he had been in constant request. The man passed him presently, as he stood at the porte-cochère, with a civil bow, and Esdaile returned to the Bureau. The irate proprietor was no longer there, the lady in charge was totting up a row of figures with angry energy, and, interrupting herself to answer Sir Wilfrid's question, she could not repress an allusion to her grievance. Never was there known such a corvée as the management of those garçons nowadays. And Giuseppe had been a pearl, a true pearl, until now, when his insolence, all about a nothing, a miserable little nothing, had procured him his congé, for the patron never would suffer insolence. And a nothing! Anyone would think Giuseppe had done it express, for the very pur-

pose of being chased. But she begged pardon—no, there was no news of Miss Wells, this morning, more than another. Presently Dunstan and Esdaile went out, as usual, for the day.

The business of the hotel, not very brisk, went on, and to all appearance just as usual. Giuseppe and his packet of modest size—he carried it, with a scowl, past the bureau—were gone, and the afternoon was drawing in towards dusk. There was no noise and no stir about the entrance or in the court of the old hotel, and for the moment the bureau was unoccupied. This must have been a moment watched for by a man, who, passing boldly enough through the open gateway, paused in front of the green-curtained door of the bureau, and listened for a moment; then boldly entered. He was not in the room a minute, but he came out of it with a key hidden up his sleeve, quietly turned to the staircase on the right, and ascended it with perfect unconcern. True, Giuseppe was a dismissed servant, and he had no business there; but if anyone should meet and question him, there was a ready answer in the incompleteness of his packet, something forgotten in the "combles" where he had slept; and his neglecting to use the staircase "de service" would be only an impertinence the more. Fortune, who, if she favours the brave, is not always unkind to the dishonest, was propitious to Giuseppe; he met no one; and he let himself into the little vestibule of Miss Wells's apartment with perfect ease and safety. He then passed with a noiseless tread through the suite of rooms, and, reaching the last of them, profited by the still lingering light to make certain arrangements in a business-like manner. The furniture of the room had undergone some alterations since the time of its occupation by Mrs. Monroe; but the large table, with its ranges of books and papers, was still in its former place, across the door of communication with the adjoining apartment. Giuseppe cleared the books and papers away, and then, having lightened the table, he very slowly drew it along the wall, so carefully that a passer-by in the corridor outside must have had quick ears indeed to hear a sound, thus leaving the door free. He easily picked the old-fashioned lock, and opening the door looked into the room on the other side. Apparently he only wanted to look in just at present, for he softly shut the door again, and having

deposited a pocket-lantern and a box of matches on the floor in a corner, and selected a particularly comfortable chair, which he placed in the shelter of the bed-curtains, so near to the door that any sound in the next room would be audible to him at once, he sat down, and waited. Waited, while the darkness fell, and the stars came out, and the unoccupied rooms turned chill and ghostly; waited with set purpose and patience that would have become a good deed. He munched a slab of chocolate, and waited. The ordinary noises of the hotel, as night fell, came to his ears; then the entry of the chambermaids into the adjoining room, and their departure; then no sound for a long while. And then came the sound that Giuseppe was waiting for.

It was that of the voices of the English excellencies, who were such good friends and good comrades—in his ordinary business Giuseppe would not ask better than to serve them—and one of whom was so wonderfully lucky at the tables that one might almost believe he had drawn a good number *pour tout de bon*, only for this stroke of extraordinary business which Giuseppe was about to do, thereby crossing the luck of the English excellency. He waited while the friends talked; he heard them laugh (his ear was at the keyhole now); he heard another sound, sweeter than any laughter, the clear musical clink of gold, as the English excellency who had the devil's luck threw a handful of tinkling pieces on the table; he heard the only English phrase whose meaning he knew, "Good night," spoken by each, and then there was silence, and he waited again; waited a long while, it seemed to him, for the light to be put out in the room of the excellency who had the devil's luck. At length it occurred to Giuseppe that perhaps the excellency did not intend to put out the light at all. With cat-like agility and noiselessness he climbed on the table, and standing on its edge, steadied himself with one hand against the door, while he looked through the little window in the wall. Looked into a large, dingy, but not uncomfortable room, well lighted, and with a pleasant fire of deep red logs upon the open hearth. In front of the hearth was a fauteuil of the traditional red velvet, and in it reclined Sir Wilfrid Esdaile, sound asleep; a half-smoked cigarette between his lips. Giuseppe's eager gaze took in every feature of the scene; but dwelt with all the eagerness of

greed upon the table at Esdaile's elbow. There, scattered in careless profusion, lay the devil's luck, in the form of a heap of gold and notes, and a bulky pocket-book. On the table lay also an open book. Esdaile had been cutting its pages open—with a curious paper-knife, too, for it was Dunstan's dagger, that fine thin blade in the carved tortoiseshell sheath which he had bought at Galle. A curtained alcove which contained the bed, and across which the curtains were snugly drawn, faced the door in the wall. As things were going, Giuseppe might have long to wait; the English excellency slept with such unembarrassed ease in his *fauteuil* that he was not more likely to wake, while the fire kept the temperature even, than if he were in his bed. Time was growing precious, for although Giuseppe knew a way of getting out of the hotel without resorting to *concierge* or *cordon*, he would rather not resort to it if he could contrive to slink out again by the entry as he had slunk in. He stepped softly down from the table, and gently pushed the door open, glided through the aperture, and approached the table without making the slightest sound. At this instant one of the red-hearted logs tumbled over and struck the ash tray, rousing Esdaile, who opened his eyes and shifted his position. Still as a stone stood Giuseppe behind him, holding his breath, his eyes glittering and terrible. Esdaile moved again, threw his arm out, and knocked the open book off the edge of the table. It fell just behind him, and the dagger dropped at Giuseppe's feet. Slowly, with utter noiselessness, he bent down, and felt for it on the ground, but without shifting his eyes from Esdaile's head, showing above the back of the *fauteuil*. Again Esdaile moved, and this time he pushed the chair upon its castors so that he was turned half away from the hearth, half towards the door in the wall; and only a movement, as instantaneous as it was noiseless, enabled Giuseppe to shift his own ground and escape detection. That half turn of Esdaile's, rendering Giuseppe's retreat by the door in the wall impossible, made a difference of immense import in the situation. Giuseppe's intentions in the scheme which he had been contemplating had been strictly limited to robbery. The English excellency asleep, he would enter the room, secure his booty, leave the room in the same way, replace the table, restore everything in Miss Wells's apartment to its usual appearance, and

decamp. But now, the man whom he had come to rob was, only half asleep, facing the table and half facing the door.

"So much the worse for him; his luck has turned. I shall have to kill him now." With this thought, Giuseppe—his hand closed upon Dunstan's dagger—fell back, step by step, until he had reached the alcove, then he glided behind the curtain, and waited, until the swift moments should decide whether Esdaile would wake up completely, or drop into a deep sleep again.

Long after the sober business of the old hotel was supposed to be concluded for the night, there arose a hubbub in the bureau, and the concierge was loud in protest, and vehement in apologies. Miss Wells and her friend had arrived, no preparation was made for them, no message had been received—"That comes of trusting people to send one's messages," said Miss Wells, "henceforth I do my own wiring"—no fires had been lighted; it was most unfortunate, but it could not be helped. Miss Wells and her friend had been detained for several hours in consequence of an accident on the line, which was also unfortunate, for her friend was far from strong. Quite a procession escorted the ladies to their apartments, with luggage, lights, and a basket of firewood—with everything, it seemed, except the means of getting into the rooms, for the key, with the right number on its leaden label, taken off the numbered hook in the bureau, would not unlock the door, and consternation ensued. There was nothing for it but to fetch a locksmith, and in the interval Miss Wells seated herself on a box and opened her letters, while the lady of the bureau, with whom nothing had gone right that day since Giuseppe's unaccountable conduct, took such care as she could of Janet. One of those communications which had been awaiting Miss Wells gave her so much satisfaction, that she was ready to meet any and every inconvenience with good humour.

"I accidentally discovered that Mrs. Dunstan is with you," such were the words on Esdaile's card, "to the great relief and joy of us all. I am here to see you on behalf of Captain Dunstan—staying in the house. Say nothing to her, but let me know when you can see me."

How thankful Miss Wells was! How doubly glad, that the person to intervene in this matter, which caused her so much anxiety, was Sir Wilfrid Esdaile, the friend of the former dark days, and a paragon

of perfection in the eyes of Miss Wells. She had looked upon Janet as she would have looked upon one who was going through the phases of a great illness, and concerning whom the bystanders had sore need of hope and patience. The "turn" would come, and then the convalescence; she felt sure of that; meantime her care and tending of that sick soul, for the sake of Janet herself, for the sake of her dead friend, for the sake of her own mission in life, had been most tender and most vigilant. And now the "turn" was near; with her husband's message would begin the healing of Janet's "grievous wound," and the dawn of better days for her, when she should be brought to accept this mortal life as it is, to discard her dreams of it as it can never be.

"I will see him to-morrow," said Miss Wells to herself, "while she is taking a long rest." The door was now opened, the luggage carried into the ante-chamber, fires lighted, and while Miss Wells was discussing the possibilities of supper, Janet found her way to her own room, and declining any aid, shut the door upon the bustle of their unexpected arrival. Except for the light she carried, the room was dark; the gloom was grateful to her, and she set the candlestick on the lofty mantelpiece, took off her bonnet and cloak, and seated herself with her back to the feeble light in a chair which stood near to the door in the wall. She was very tired, but her thoughts were clear, and they were following a track on which they had been all that day, the track of investigation of her own will, of the meaning of herself and her life, of perception that she had been altogether wrong, not so much in what she had done, as in the theory, the scheme of possibilities that she had constructed for herself; that track which, after many windings it may be, or perhaps with inconceivable quickness, leads the human spirit into the great liberty and the great light of the message:

"I am the Lord thy God, and thou shalt have no other gods but Me."

"No" other, simply: not the fairest fancies, not the loftiest ambitions, not the purest affections. That was the liberty, that was the light towards which Janet was being led along the track of her thoughts, and the emancipation, the dawn, were close at hand. She was thinking, with a curious clearness, considering the surroundings, when a strange and startling sound, coming from the other side of the door, caught her ear. It was a deep and

dreadful groan; and it drew Janet up, rigid, and horror-stricken, on her feet. Only for an instant did she stand thus; the next she perceived that light from the inner room was reflected on the little window in the wall. Once more came that dreadful sound. It never occurred to Janet that the door could be unlocked; though with the instantaneous perception of terror she saw that the table was drawn away beyond the door, and with a great exertion of strength she pushed it sufficiently far back into its former place to enable her to stand on it and reach the glimmering glass. In a moment, she was looking into the room, at this:

Sir Wilfrid Esdaile had fallen forward on the table where the gold and the notes had lain, his arms stretched out, his face, white and ghastly, resting on his right arm. He was bleeding profusely from a wound in the neck; and the dagger had been thrust under one of his nerveless hands. For one moment Janet saw only this, and even as she tried to utter a cry, but was seized with the dreadful dumbness of horror, she felt the door against which her body was pressed shake, and the latch on the other side move. Then she shrank away for an instant, and again a desperate effort to push the door open was made; but the weight of the table, with hers added to it, resisted the attempt, and the assassin, suddenly apprised that his plan of retreat was foiled, stepped back from the door into her sight. She saw him plainly; it was the hotel servant, Giuseppe. For one instant he looked about him, as if at bay; the next he walked quickly towards the other door, which was on the same side as the hearth, and opened into an ante-room giving on the corridor. But something arrested his steps; he slid back, and in a second was again hidden by the curtain of the alcove. Then Janet, stone dumb, with bursting eyeballs, and icy hands clutching the wall, saw the door on the same side as the hearth open, and a man enter the room. She heard the exclamation he uttered, as he rushed across to the fauteuil and raised Esdaile's lifeless body in his arms. He saw the wound, he saw the dagger, he knew what it meant; he rolled a handkerchief tight and pressed it against the wound, and tied another handkerchief over that, not daring to let the blood flow while he gave the alarm; all this with incalculable quickness, and bending over Esdaile with his back to the alcove. Then Giuseppe stole out once more, and Janet saw him. He must get out of that door

by which the man had come in, unseen, if possible, if not, then the other excellency's luck would have turned also, and he should be obliged to kill him too. So Giuseppe swung his strong blue cotton pocket handkerchief into a wisp, and knotted the ends in a trice, and glided out with it ready in his hand. He was close upon the group beside the hearth; the door lay open, the man's back as he bent over his friend was turned towards him; in another moment he would have crept past, and out into the darkness into safety. But Janet, who saw his terrible face, and the knotted throttling-cloth, and could see in them no other design than murder, burst the bonds of her dumb terror, and dashed her clenched hand through the little window in the wall, with a loud and piercing cry: "Edward! Edward!" It had hardly rung through the room ere Dunstan had the assassin by the throat.

There was no hope from the first; and they all knew it. She could hardly have survived the shock, the doctors said, even though she had not been fatally injured by the fall, as Miss Wells knew she was, when she lifted her. She suffered little, and was very quiet; speaking so little that they were not quite sure of her consciousness at times; but they took the chance of it, and said everything to her that they wanted her to know; especially that Esdaile was recovering, and that Amabel would soon be with her. She was little moved, but she understood them; and she would listen when Dunstan spoke, and follow him with her eyes when he moved about the room. They thought she did not remember where she was, but fancied she was at Bevis, for she said, on the third day, very distinctly: "I should like to see Mrs. Thornton, just once," and then, when they assured her that Mrs. Thornton would certainly come to her, she dozed for a few moments, and said, on waking: "We will walk on the stone terrace, and I will tell her." Miss Wells telegraphed to Laura, and she started for Nice at once; but Janet was not there any longer when Laura arrived. In the same room where she had been told of Robert's death, Laura stood beside the fair fading form in which the lofty and loving spirit of Dunstan's wife had dwelt for its few earthly years.

"You saw her, living?" she whispered to Amabel.

"Yes. I was here a few hours before. I heard her last words; they were very

some, but quite distinct: 'Thou shalt have no other gods but Me.'

There was a long silence.

"How does he bear it?" Laura asked.

"I did not think he could have felt so much about anything."

"Poor fellow."

Then Laura laid rich roses on the pillow by the side of the fair calm face that would never shrink with pain from the thought of her any more, and went away, back to England.

"She was worth a million of me," thought Laura, as she caught the last glimpse of the Bay of the Angels, and the sun was shining on the sea as if winter and wreck were not, "and Robert was worth a million of Edward Dunstan; and yet, they are gone, and we are left. Why? Ah me, why?"

But it did not come to Laura's mind, that perhaps just that difference of value may have furnished the why.

In the wide shady verandah of John Sandilands' bungalow, which has quite a comfortable, not to say elegant appearance in these later days, when Julia, who requires something more of her abode than space and shelter, rules there well and wisely, a party of three are enjoying the cool and scented evening air. It is a year after the events which are now a tale that is told. The party is composed of John Sandilands, Julia, and Mr. Gilchrist, who has the liveliest regard for these young people, and is happily convinced that they would not go "home," if they had made their fortune. Mr. Gilchrist, arrayed in a suit of white almost too spotless for belief, is walking up and down the verandah with a springy and juvenile step, and his face is rippling all over with smiles. John and Julia are ensconced in their big Ceylon chairs, and a bamboo table laden with letters and newspapers stands between them.

"Read it out again for me, my dear," says Mr. Gilchrist, coming to a standstill by Julia's side; "though it is all in her own letter, and how she wore my poor coral on the happy occasion, I should like to hear it read out again."

Julia smilingly complied.

"On the 9th instant, at St. Stephen's Church, South Kensington, London, by the Rev. Charles Cathcart, Vicar of St. Mary's, Wold, Suffolk, Sir Wilfrid Esdaile, Bart., to Amabel, only daughter of Claudius Ainslie, Esq., of The Chantry, near Bury, Suffolk." Amabel was married from Mrs. Thornton's house in Prince's Gardens, you know," added Julia.

"Very nice, indeed, very nice," said Mr. Gilchrist, "only Ainslie might have hinted at his thirty years as a Civil Servant in it. 'Late of Bombay' would have been graceful, I think. However, that's a matter of taste. The fact is that the best girl in the world has got a husband almost worthy of her. The second time he came out I felt sure it would be all right with Tom Esdaile's boy."

Mr. Gilchrist walked off, and smoked many congratulatory cheroots among the oleanders.

"John!" said Julia, after they had both been silent for some time, "do you think Laura will ever marry him? Do you think he will ever ask her?"

"I don't know. I don't think. Not for many a day, if ever."

"And then, suppose each of them should come to contrast the other with a vanished figure?"

"Not much fear of that, my dear. They would be very happy, I should say, admirably suited; and as he is always to be lucky, she would be just a little too good for him."

"You are a little hard on Captain Dunstan, as I used to be. No, John; the only two persons absolutely matches in feeling and in purpose whom I have ever known, were Janet and Mr. Thornton. And they never even met."

"Of course they did not. What would you have? But Janet never would have been happy, for she must always have looked in human nature for what is not in it, and expected from the world what it has not to give."

"We are very happy, John," said Julia, with a little remonstrance in her tone.

"Very, my dear love; as happy as we can be. But life as Janet dreamed of life, and love as Janet would have had love, means heaven; and heaven is not here."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

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VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXII. STORM CLOUDS:

VIOLET had been accustomed to be at home, and freshly dressed, in time for Mrs. Winstanley's afternoon tea. She had to listen to the accumulated gossip of the day—complaints about the servants, praises of Conrad, speculations upon impending changes of fashion, which threatened to convulse the world over which Theodore presided; for the world of fashion seems ever on the verge of a crisis awful as that which periodically disrupts the French Chamber.

To have been absent from afternoon tea was a breach of filial duty which the mild Pamela would assuredly resent. Violet felt herself doomed to one of those gentle lectures, which were worrying as the perpetual dropping of rain. She was very late—dreadfully late—the dressing-bell rang as she rode into the stable-yard. Not caring to show herself at the porch, lest her mother and the captain should be sitting in the hall, ready to pronounce judgment upon her misconduct, she ran up to her dressing-room, plunged her face into cold water, shook out her bright hair, brushed and plaited the long tresses with deft swift fingers, put on her pretty dinner-dress of pale blue muslin, fluttering all over with pale blue bows, and went smiling down to the drawing-room like a new Hebe, dressed in an azure cloud.

Mrs. Winstanley was sitting by an open window, while the captain stood outside and talked to her in a low confidential voice. His face had a dark look which Vixen knew and hated, and his wife was

listening with trouble in her air and countenance. Vixen, who meant to have marched straight up to her mother and made her apologies, drew back involuntarily at the sight of those two faces.

Just at this moment the dinner-bell rang. The captain gave his wife his arm, and the two passed Vixen without a word. She followed them to the dining-room, wondering what was coming.

The dinner began in silence, and then Mrs. Winstanley began to falter forth small remarks, feeble as the twitterings of birds before the coming storm. How very warm it had been all day, almost oppressive; and yet it had been a remarkably fine day. There was a fair at Emery Down—at least, not exactly a fair, but a barrow of nuts and some horrid pistols, and a swing. Violet answered, as in duty bound; but the captain maintained his ominous silence. Not a word was said about Violet's long ride. It seemed hardly necessary to apologise for her absence, since her mother made no complaint. Yet she felt that there was a storm coming.

"Perhaps he is going to sell Arion," she thought, "and that's why the dear thing was 'fey.'"

And then that rebellious spirit of hers arose within her, ready for war.

"No, I would not endure that. I would not part with my father's last gift. I shall be rich seven years hence, if I live so long. I'll do what the young spendthrifts do. I'll go to the Jews. I will not be Captain Winstanley's helot. One slave is enough for him, I should think. He has enslaved poor mamma. Look at her now, poor soul; she sits in bodily fear of him, crumbling her bread with her pretty fingers, shining and sparkling with rings.

Poor mamma! it is a bad day for her when fine dresses and handsome jewels cannot make her happy."

It was a miserable dinner. Those three were not wont to be gay when they sat at meat together; but the dinner of to-day was of a gloomier pattern than usual. The strawberries and cherries were carried round solemnly; the captain filled his glass with claret; Mrs. Winstanley dipped the ends of her fingers into the turquoise-coloured glass, and disseminated a faint odour of roses.

"I think I'll go and sit in the garden, Conrad," she said, when she had dried those tapering fingers on her fringed doily. "It's so warm in the house."

"Do, dear. I'll come and smoke my cigar on the lawn presently," answered the captain.

"Can't you come at once, love?"

"I've a little bit of business to settle first. I won't be long!"

Mrs. Winstanley kissed her hand to her husband, and left the room, followed by Vixen.

"Violet," she said, when they were outside, "how could you stay out so long? Conrad is dreadfully angry."

"Your husband angry because I rode a few miles farther to-day than usual? Dear mother, that is too absurd. I was sorry not to be at home in time to give you your afternoon tea, and I apologise to you with all my heart; but what can it matter to Captain Winstanley?"

"My dearest Violet, when will you understand that Conrad stands in the place of your dear father?"

"Never, mamma, for that is not true. God gave me one father, and I loved and honoured him with all my heart. There is no sacrifice he could have asked of me that I would not have made; no command of his, however difficult, that I would not have obeyed. But I will obey no spurious father. I recognise no duty that I owe to Captain Winstanley."

"You are a very cruel girl," wailed Pamela, "and your obstinacy is making my life miserable."

"Dear mother, how do I interfere with your happiness? You live your life, and I mine. You and Captain Winstanley take your own way, I mine. Is it a crime to be out riding a little longer than usual, that you should look so pale and the captain so black when I come home?"

"It is worse than a crime, Violet; it is an impropriety."

Vixen blushed crimson, and turned upon her mother with an expression that was half startled half indignant.

"What do you mean, mamma?"

"Had you been riding about the Forest all those hours alone, it would have been eccentric—unladylike even. You know that your habit of passing half your existence on horseback has always been a grief to me. But you were not alone."

"No, mamma, I was not alone. I had my oldest friend with me; one of the few people in this world who care for me."

"You were riding about with Roderick Vawdrey, Lady Mabel Ashbourne's future husband."

"Why do you remind me of his engagement, mamma? Do you think that Roderick and I have ever forgotten it? Can he not be my friend as well as Lady Mabel's husband? Am I to forget that he and I played together as children, that we have always thought of each other and cared for each other as brother and sister, only because he is engaged to Lady Mabel Ashbourne?"

"Violet, you must know that all talk about brother and sister is sheer nonsense. Suppose I had set up brother and sister with Captain Winstanley! What would you—what would the world have thought?"

"That would have been different," said Vixen. "You did not know each other as babies. In fact you couldn't have done so, for you had left off being a-baby before he was born," added Vixen naively.

"You will have to put a stop to these rides with Roderick. Everybody in the neighbourhood is talking about you."

"Which everybody?"

"Colonel Carteret to begin with."

"Colonel Carteret slanders everybody. It is his only intellectual resource. Dearest mother, be your own sweet easy-tempered self, not a speaking-tube for Captain Winstanley. Pray leave me my liberty. I am not particularly happy. You might at least let me be free."

Violet left her mother with these words. They had reached the lawn before the drawing-room windows. Mrs. Winstanley sank into a low basket-chair, like a hall-porter's, which a friend had sent her from the sands of Trouville; and Vixen ran off to the stables to see if Arion was in any way the worse for his long round.

The horses had been littered down for the night and the stable-yard was empty. The faithful Bates, who was usually to be found at this hour smoking his evening pipe

on a stone bench beside the stable pump, was nowhere in sight. Vixen went into Arion's loose-box, where that animal was nibbling clover lazily, standing knee-deep in freshly-spread straw, his fine legs carefully bandaged. He gave his mistress the usual grunt of friendly greeting, allowed her to feed him with the choicest bits of clover, and licked her hands in token of gratitude.

"I don't think you're any the worse for our canter over the grass, old pet," she cried cheerily, as she caressed his sleek head, "and Captain Winstanley's black looks can't hurt you."

As she left the stable she saw Bates, who was walking slowly across the courtyard, wiping his honest old eyes with the cuff of his drab coat, and hanging his grizzled head dejectedly.

Vixen ran to him with her cheeks aflame, divining mischief. The captain had been wreaking his spite upon this lowly head.

"What's the matter, Bates?"

"I've lived in this house, Miss Voylet, man and boy, forty year come Michaelmas, and I've never wronged my master by so much as the worth of a handful o' wuts or a carriage candle. I was stable-boy in your grandfeyther's time, miss, as is well-beknown to you; and I remember your feyther when he was the finest and handsomest young squire within fifty mile. I've loved you and yours better than I ever loved my own flesh and blood: and to go and pluck me up by the roots, and chuk me out amongst strangers in my old age, is crueller than it would be to tear up the old cedar on the lawn, which I've heard Joe the gardener say be as old as the days when such-like trees was fast beknown in England. It's crueller, Miss Voylet, for the cedar ain't got no feelings—but I feel it down to the deepest fibres in me. The lawn 'ud look ugly and empty without the cedar, and mayhap nobody'll miss me—but I've got the heart of a man, miss, and it bleeds."

Poor Bates relieved his wounded feelings with this burst of eloquence. He was a man who, although silent in his normal condition, had a great deal to say when he felt aggrieved. In his present state of mind his only solace was in many words.

"I don't know what you mean, Bates," cried Vixen, very pale now, divining the truth in part, if not wholly. "Don't cry, dear old fellow, it's too dreadful to see you. You don't mean—you can't mean—that—my mother has sent you away?"

"Not your ma, miss, bless her heart.

She wouldn't sack the servant that saddled her husband's horse, fair weather and foul, for twenty year. No, Miss Voylet, it's Captain Winstanley that's given me the sack. He's master here now, you know, miss."

"But for what reason? What have you done to offend him?"

"Ah, miss, there's the hardship of it! He's turned me off at a minute's notice, and without a character too. That's hard, ain't it, miss? Forty year in one service, and to leave without a character at last! That do cat a old feller to the quick."

"Why don't you tell me the reason, Bates? Captain Winstanley must have given you his reason for such a cruel act."

"He did, miss; but I ain't going to tell you."

"Why not, in goodness' name?"

"Because it's an insult to you, Miss Voylet; and I'm not going to insult my old master's grand-daughter. If I didn't love you for your own sake—and I do dearly love you, miss, if you'll excuse the liberty—I'm bound to love you for the sake of your grandfeyther. He was my first master, and a kind one. He gave me my first pair o' tops. Lor, miss, I can call to mind the day as well as if it was yesterday. Didn't I fancy myself a buck in 'em!"

Bates grinned and sparkled at the thought of those first top-boots. His poor old eyes, dim with years of long service, twinkled with the memory of those departed vanities.

"Bates," cried Vixen, looking at him resolutely, "I insist upon knowing what reason Captain Winstanley alleged for sending you away."

"He didn't allage nothing, miss; and I ain't a-going to tell you what he said."

"But you must. I order you to tell me. You are still my servant, remember. You have always been a faithful servant, and I am sure you won't disobey me at the last. I insist upon knowing what Captain Winstanley said. However insulting his words may have been to me, they will not surprise me or wound me much. There is no love lost between him and me. I think everybody knows that. Don't be afraid of giving me pain, Bates. Nothing the captain could say would do that. I despise him too much."

"I'm right down glad o' that, miss. Go on a-despising of him. You can't give it him as thick as he deserves."

"Now, Bates, what did he say?"

"He said I was a old fool, miss, or a old

rogue, he weren't quite clear in his mind which. I'd been actin' as go-between with you and Mr. Vawdrey, encouragin' of you to meet the young gentleman in your rides, and never givin' the cap'en warnin', as your step-feyther, of what was goin' on behind his back. He said it was shameful, and you was makin' yourself the talk of the county, and I was no better than I should be for aidin' and abettin' of you in disgracin' yourself. And then I blazed up a bit, miss, and maybe I cheeked him: and then he turned upon me sharp and short, and told me to get out of the house this night, bag and baggage, and never to apply to him for a character; and then he counted out my wages on the table, miss, up to this evening, exact to a halfpenny, by way of showing me that he meant business, perhaps. But I came away, and left his brass upon the table staring him in the face. I ain't no pauper, praise be to God! I've had a good place, and I've saved money, and I needn't lower myself by taking his dirty halfpence."

"And you're going away, Bates, to-night?" exclaimed Vixen, hardly able to realise this calamity.

That Captain Winstanley should have spoken insultingly of her and of Rorie touched her but lightly. She had spoken truly just now when she said that she scorned him too much to be easily wounded by his insolence. But that he should dismiss her father's old servant as he had sold her father's old horse; that this good old man, who had grown from boyhood to age under her ancestral roof, who remembered her father in the bloom and glory of early youth; that this faithful servant should be thrust out at the bidding of an interloper—a paltry schemer, who, in Vixen's estimation, had been actuated by the basest and most mercenary motives when he married her mother—that these things should be, moved Violet Tempest with an overwhelming anger.

She kept her passion under, so far as to speak very calmly to Bates. Her face was white with suppressed rage, her great brown eyes shone with angry fire, her lips quivered as she spoke, and the rings on one clenched hand were ground into the flesh of the slender fingers.

"Never mind, Bates," she said very gently. "I'll get you a good place before ten o'clock to-night. Pack up your clothes, and be ready to go where I tell you two hours hence. But first saddle Arion."

"Bless yer heart, Miss Voylet, you're

not going out riding this evening? Arion's done a long day's work."

"I know that; but he's fresh enough to do as much more—I've just been looking at him. Saddle him at once, and keep him ready in his stable till I come for him. Don't argue, Bates. If I knew that I were going to ride him to death I should ride him to-night all the same. You are dismissed without a character, are you?" cried Vixen, laughing bitterly. "Never mind, Bates; I'll give you a character, and I'll get you a place."

She ran lightly off and was gone, while Bates stood stock still wondering at her. There never was such a young lady. What was there in life that he would not have done for her, were it to the shedding of blood? And to think that he was no more to serve and follow her; no longer to jog contentedly through the pine-scented Forest—watching the meteoric course of that graceful figure in front of him, the lively young horse curbed by the light and dexterous hand, the ruddy brown hair glittering in the sunlight, the flexible form moving in unison with every motion of the horse that carried it! There could be no deeper image of desolation in Bates's mind than the idea that this rider and this horse were to be henceforth severed from his existence. What had he in life, save the familiar things and faces among which he had grown from youth to age? Separate him from these beloved surroundings, and he had no standpoint in the universe. The reason of his being would be gone. Bates was as strictly local in his ideas as the zoophyte which has clung all its life to one rock.

He went to the harness-room for Miss Tempest's well-worn saddle, and brought Arion out of his snug box, and wiped him, and combed him, and blacked his shoes, and made him altogether lovely—a process to which the intelligent animal was inclined to take objection, the hour being unseemly and unusual. Poor Bates sighed over his task, and brushed away more than one silent tear with the back of the dandy-brush. It was kind of Miss Violet to think about getting him a place, but he had no heart for going into a new service. He would rather have taken a room in one of the Beechdale cottages, and have dragged out the remnant of his days within sight of the chimney-stacks beneath which he had slept for forty years. He had money in the bank that would last until his lees of life were spilt, and then he would be buried in the churchyard he

had crossed every Sunday of his life on his way to morning service. His kindred were all dead or distant; the nearest, a married niece, settled at Romsey, which good old humdrum market-town was—except once a week or so by carrier's cart—almost as unapproachable as the Bermudas. He was not going to migrate to Romsey for the sake of a married niece; when he could stop at Beechdale, and see the gables and chimneys of the home from which stern fate had banished him.

He had scarcely finished Arion's toilet when Miss Tempest opened the stable-door and looked in, ready to mount. She had her hunting-crop, with the strong horn hook for opening gates, her short habit, and looked altogether ready for business.

"Hadn't I better come with you, miss?" Bates asked, as he lifted her into her saddle.

"No, Bates. You are dismissed, you know. It wouldn't do for you to take one of Captain Winstanley's horses. He might have you sent to prison for horse-stealing."

"Lord, miss, so he might!" said Bates, grinning. "I reckon he's capable of it. But I checked him pretty strong, Miss Voylet. The thought o' that'll always be a comfort to me. You wouldn't ha' knowed me for your feyther's old sarvant if you'd heard me. I felt as if Satan had got hold o' my tongue, and was wagging it for me, the words came so pat. It seemed as if I'd got all the dictionary at the tip of my poor old tongue."

"Open the gate," said Vixen. "I am going out by the wilderness."

Bates opened the gate under the old brick archway, and Vixen rode slowly away, by unfrequented thickets of rhododendron and arbutus, holly and laurel, with a tall mountain-ash, or a stately deodara, rising up among them here and there dark against the opal evening sky.

"ADAPTED FROM THE FRENCH."

THE great civil war in England put an end to many things—the Elizabethan drama being among them. In time the theatres opened, but with a new stage, so to speak. Indeed, it was absolutely necessary to start afresh, for both players and playwrights had vanished. With the exception of Davenant no dramatist who had written before the war wrote after the Restoration. Scarce an actor of repute who had played in the presence of Charles

the First survived to appear before Charles the Second. The traditions of the theatre were preserved chiefly by the "boy actresses." These performers had personated heroines before the closing of the play-houses; upon their reopening the boys had grown to be men; they figured now as heroes upon the scene.

The drama had been pretty well starved to death. It was a thirty years' war, so far as the theatres were concerned. No new dramatist of note arose between 1630 and 1660. Industry and intellect were turned into other channels. From 1647 the theatres were strictly closed for something like fourteen years. Before, the oppression had been of an intermittent sort—the closing had been only occasional. Thus in 1636 the theatres were shut up for ten months, and again in 1642 for eighteen months. The drama could scarcely exist upon such terms; the actor's profession had been already more than sufficiently precarious. He seemed now to be playing with a rope round his neck; an Order of Council or of Parliament might at any moment suspend him.

When at the Restoration King Charles enjoyed his own again—he can hardly be said to have enjoyed it before—the drama was disinterred, as it were. It was like digging up the buried trunk of a tree. There was judged to be little life in it. Evelyn sadly noted in 1662: "The old plays begin to disgust this refined age, since his majesty's being so long abroad." The king did not conceal his preference for the foreign drama. The Earl of Orrery wrote to a friend: "I have now finished a play in the French manner, because I heard the king declare himself more in favour of their way of writing than of ours." His lordship's example was followed by Dryden, Settle, Lee, Otway, Crown, and others. Rhyming, ranting tragedies became the vogue. In a preface to his Spanish Friar, Dryden confesses: "I am sensible, perhaps too late, that I have gone too far, for I remember some verses of my own which cry vengeance upon me for their extravagance, and which I wish heartily in the fire; all that I can say for those passages is, that I knew they were bad enough to please even when I wrote them." But the king liked comedy even better than tragedy, and was fond of suggesting subjects and furnishing hints to the dramatists. He handed Mr. Crown a Spanish play which formed the groundwork of his comedy of Sir Courtly Nice. Sir Samuel Take's

play, *The Adventures of Five Hours*, which so much amused Mr. Pepys, had also a Spanish original, to which the king had drawn the attention of the English playwright. And now our authors began to adapt from the French very industriously. Dryden, in one of his prologues writes :

French farces worn out at home is sent abroad,
And patched up here is made our English mode.

For his own sins as an adapter, the poet urges in excuse the demands made upon his muse; he was, in fact, for some time under a contract to produce four plays in each year. He says of himself :

He still must write, and banquier-like each day
Accept new bills, and he must break or pay.
When through his hands such sums must yearly run
You cannot think the stock is all his own.
His haste his other errors might excuse,
But there's no mercy for a guilty muse.

Further, on behalf of his adaptations from the French, he pleaded that

He used the French like enemies,
And did not steal their plots, but made them prize.

"Bill was an adapter," observes the literary gentleman in *Nicholas Nickleby*; "certainly, he was; and very well he adapted too—considering." In his *History of the Stage*, the Rev. Mr. Genest calmly writes: "Shakespeare was a considerable plagiarist." But the state of literature and of public culture in Shakespeare's time has to be taken into account. The Elizabethan drama was largely founded upon history and the chronicles, upon novels, and narrative poems of home and foreign origin contained in various collections and compilations, and upon older, poorer, and ruder plays that had seen much service at the hands of the itinerant actors, in booths, at fairs, and in inn-yards. Nor did our great poets merely impress the guinea's stamp upon precious metal the property of other people; they rather possessed the philosopher's stone of true genius, and turned all they touched into gold. It is not clear, however, that they ever operated upon foreign plays; while it may be urged that they simply did not adapt from the French drama for the same reason that prevented *Tilburina* from really seeing the Spanish fleet—it was not yet in sight.

A French drama existed, however, albeit it remained without the range of vision of our poets and playwrights, and escaped for the present their manipulation. It has been described as "a demi-Greek, demi-Spanish" drama in form and theme; it dealt chiefly in tragedies of the classical pattern; it was not racy of the soil. The

French drama, indeed, was hardly a national drama until the advent of Molière. But while the doors of our theatres were closed, and our players dispersed almost to disappearance, the French stage had been growing and thriving. It may be that no very great actors had occupied the scene; but Molière had been preceded by such dramatists as Hardy, Scuderi, Mairet, Tristan, Rotrou, and Pierre Corneille. A vigorous French branch was forthwith grafted upon the trunk of the British drama, which many had judged to be in a sadly decayed condition. Thenceforward our comedy possessed a Molière leaven. The system of borrowing from the French had now commenced; but there seemed nothing mischievous about it in the first instance. The drama had been accustomed to recruit its strength from various sources, as a patient for curative purposes might resort to the herbs and simples of foreign countries without thereby risking any loss of nationality. And in the beginning the borrowing was not excessive; it co-existed with lending and exporting; it interfered in no degree with home production.

In his comedy of *Sir Barnaby Whig*, produced in 1681, D'Urfey has introduced a song beginning, "Molière is quite rified, then how should I write?" At this time there had indeed been much rifting of Molière on the part of our playwrights. Nearly all his productions had been in turn presented either wholly, or in part, upon the English stage; some of them had repeatedly undergone adaptation. Translations of his works had been published here in 1717, in 1739, and again in 1755—the English and French being presented occasionally upon opposite pages; these were found to be very convenient editions by the English dramatists who did not know French. The comedy of *L'Etourdi* was of considerable assistance to Dryden in contriving his *Sir Martin Marral*, and, a century later, to Arthur Murphy in writing his *School for Guardians*, which is also compounded of scenes from *L'Ecole des Femmes*. Dryden borrowed two scenes from *Le Dépit Amoureux* for his *Evening's Love*; the same comedy also supplied Sir John Vanbrugh with the materials of his *Mistake*. *L'Avare* was adapted by Shadwell in 1671, and again by Fielding in 1733. Wycherley borrowed from *L'Ecole des Maris* in his *Country Wife*, and from *Le Misanthrope* in his *Plain Dealer*. To *Le Médecin Malgré Lui*, we owe not only Fielding's *Mock Doctor* but Lacy's *Dumb*

Lady, and certain scenes of Mrs. Centlivre's *Love's Contrivance*. *Tartuffe* became known here as *The Non-Juror of Cibber* and the *Hypocrite of Bickerstaffe*. From *Don Juan on Le Festin de Pierre*, issued *Shadwell's Libertine*. *M. de Pourceaugnac* figured on the English stage as *Squire Trelooby*, and as *The Cornish Squire*; portions of the comedy may also be traced in the English plays called *The Careless Lover*, *The Canterbury Guests*, and the *Brave Irishman*. *Amphitryon* was adapted by *Dryden*, the musical accompaniments being supplied by *Purcell*. *Dryden's* version was subsequently rearranged by *Dr. Hawksworth*. Of *Sganarelle*, six or seven adaptations were brought upon the English stage. *Betterton's* comedy, *The Amorous Widow*, afterwards condensed into the farce of *Barnaby Brittle*, had its origin in *George Dandin*; upon this work was also founded a musical after-piece called *May and December*. *Les Femmes Savantes* was adapted by *Ravenscroft* as *The Female Virtuoso*; *Cibber* in his *Refusal* had recourse to the same play. *Les Fourberies de Scapin* was adapted by *Otway*, and again by *Ravenscroft*. *Shadwell's Psycho* is a version of *Molière's* play bearing the same name. The little comedy called *The Ladies à la Mode*, which *Mr. Pepys* saw in 1668 and attributed to *Dryden*, was no doubt an adaptation of *Les Precieuses Ridicules*. Occasionally an English play was constructed of scenes derived from two of *Molière's* comedies. Thus, *Ravenscroft's Mamamouchi*, or the *Citizen turned Gentleman*, seems to have laid under contribution both *M. de Pourceaugnac* and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. And much irrelevant matter was often added to the adaptations. A comedy contrived by one *James Miller*, and called *The Universal Passion*, is a curious amalgam of *Shakespeare's Much Ado about Nothing* and *Molière's La Princesse d'Elide*. In a prologue *Mr. Miller* confesses his debt to *Shakespeare*, but carefully suppresses all mention of his obligations to *Molière*. As a rule, indeed, the adapters did not acknowledge themselves borrowers. *Cibber*, dedicating his *Non-Juror* to the king, withholds all reference to *Molière*, and attributes the success of the play to his happy choice of subject, asserting that his duty and his concern in the interests of truth and loyalty had made him more careful in the conduct of this than of any of his former endeavours. The

epilogue to the tragedy of *Sir Walter Raleigh*, produced while the *Non-Juror* was in the full enjoyment of its popularity, contains the following lines:

Yet to write plays is easy, faith, enough,
As you have seen by *Cibber* in *Tartuffe*.
With how much wit he did your hearts engage;
He only stole the play; he writ the title-page.

The dramatic works of *Cornille*, *Racine*, and *Voltaire* were also subjected to adaptation, and presented from time to time in various forms upon the English stage.

Few objected to the proceedings of the adapters. Now and then a dissentient voice was raised, but it was soon silenced. A certain *Mr. Joseph Reed*, however, a ropemaker and a playwright of inferior fame, registered a protest against the plagiarism of his time. In the preface to his mock-tragedy of *Madrigal and Trulletta*, 1758, he writes: "When I reflect on the prevalency of this iniquitous practice—i.e. plagiarism—I am ready to fall down on my marrow-bones to return my humble and hearty thanks to Goddess Nature for so kindly disqualifying me for the perpetration of such offence by giving me the knowledge of one language only!" It is certainly strange to find a man proposing to kneel down and thank Nature for his ignorance of French. *Mr. Reed* continues: "The filching of plays under cover of translation, Heaven knows, is a crime of no short standing; nay, some of our countrymen have carried their villainy to a yet greater height, and stolen plays with little or no alteration at all. Among these abandoned plagiarists, I am told, was *Aaron Hill, Esq.*, of turgid, altering, and translating memory." *Mr. Hill* is then charged with appropriating and producing as his own a translation of *Voltaire's* tragedy of *Zaire*, which a *Mr. Thomas Hudson*, an usher in a grammar-school at *Durham*, had adapted for representation upon the English stage. The translation, sent up to London "for the perusal and examination of some connoisseur in the drama," had reached the hands of *Aaron Hill*, who had, it is alleged, "pilfered the copy, and, the better to conceal the theft, given out that the piece was absolutely unfit for the stage." *Hill's Zara*, produced at *Drury Lane* in 1736, became a popular acting play. Probably his version of *Voltaire* had been prepared quite independently of *Hudson's* translation.

But if in the eighteenth century France was considerably filched of its drama by England, there was much following of suit on the part of France. If we robbed, we

were robbed in turn. M. Ducis began to adapt Shakespeare to the classic stage of the Théâtre Français. The plays of Faguhar, Congreve, Lillo, Moore, Thomson, Sheridan, and others, were translated into French. The novels of Richardson and Fielding were converted into French dramas. The success of Beverley, tragédie bourgeoise, founded on the English play of The Gamester, and produced in Paris in 1768, was most remarkable. The audience, we learn, returned to the performance again and again, notwithstanding "les frémissements convulsifs" they experienced by reason of the distresses of the story. Great success likewise attended the production in Paris of a version of the Tancred and Sigismunda of Thomson, the names of the hero and heroine being changed in the French version to Blanche and De Guiscard. In 1765, Tom Jones, a comedy by M. Poinset, with music by M. Philidor, was received with extraordinary applause. Of Tom Jones à Londres, another comedy written by M. Desforges, dealing with the same subject, and presented at the Théâtre des Italiens, Paris, the Baron de Grimm writes, that having been in danger of condemnation before the end of the first act, almost indeed in the first scene, it was afterwards very favourably received. "The author has followed as faithfully as he could the fable of Fielding's charming novel; he has only retrenched certain of the characters which do not concern the main intrigue, and could hardly have been brought upon the stage without overcharging the drama and in some degree offending decorum. . . . The dialogue, though it cannot be called brilliant, is vivacious and easy; if the style sometimes fails in regard to elegance, it is almost always easy and natural. The characters are varied and well-supported; perhaps sufficient credit has hardly been given to the author for preserving the local touch which renders them so spirited in Fielding's work. If the character of Western appear too rustic, the fault is rather to be charged upon the actor, who, being unable to seize the true genius of it, put more caricature into his action than properly belonged to it." *L'Homme Sentimental*, a version by M. Pluteau of *The School for Scandal*, produced in 1789, proved less successful. The comedy was found to be unsuited to the French stage. "The great liberty of the English theatre may permit these bold attempts; they are revolting to our sense of dramatic propriety." In short,

Sheridan was pronounced to be too immoral for the French stage. The conduct of *Lady Teazle* was judged to be "too scandalous for representation." The Anglo-mania prevailing in France at this time, and invading even the sacred precincts of its theatre, was strongly condemned by the Baron de Grimm. It would be fatal, he maintained, to the gallantry of the French, their taste in dress, and talent for society. Marshal Biron and other noblemen of the ancient court were of a like opinion. Visiting London in 1790, the Baron de Grimm writes: "Of twelve or fifteen pieces that I have seen performed in London, more than half were translated, or at least imitated, from our theatre. On this and other accounts should we not say that the two nations which have so long been rivals in glory and interest have at this time consented to ape each other to the utmost?" Upon this subject the Baroness d'Oberkirch, a lady of Alsatian origin, writes: "It looks as if we were willing to forget our noble past in laying the foundation of an inglorious future, and that we would exchange our ancient fashions and customs for those of neighbours that we detest." On our side of the Channel, Horace Walpole was complaining in 1769: "There is a total extinction of all taste: the theatre swarms with wretched translations and ballad operas," &c.

The system of mutual adaptation, if it may be so-called, led to much confusion touching the paternity of plays. Many works acquired thus a complicated sort of pedigree. Dramas crossed and recrossed the Channel, until a grave doubt arose as to their proper nationality. Were they French, were they English? They had appeared upon the stages of both countries. Now and then a play underwent translation, and then was translated back again into its original language. M. Dutens, a Swiss Protestant clergyman, resident many years in this country, in his *Memoirs of a Traveller*, published in 1806, relates how he translated certain English comedies, not merely for the sake of improving himself in the language, but with a view also of trying what impression they would make upon a French audience when he returned to Paris. Accordingly, he translated Congreve's comedy, *The Way of the World*, entitling it *Le Monde comme il va*. But with this work the French actors would have nothing to do; they were amazed, they said, that any man could ever have imagined anything "so extrava-

gant, silly, and unnatural." M. Dutens then applied himself to the farce of the *Lying Valet*, written by Garrick, and first produced at the Goodman's Fields Theatre in 1741. It occurred to him, however, that the author had probably derived the farce from a French source: the humour of the dialogue, the nature of the story, and the characters all seemed essentially French. Before undertaking the translation, therefore, he wrote to Garrick, enquiring whether such was the fact. "He returned a very polite answer," writes M. Dutens, "assuring me, not only that he had not taken his piece from the French, but that he did not know any piece in which the plot, the character, or the subject had any resemblance to his. Notwithstanding this assurance, when I presented it to the French theatre in Paris as a new piece, they returned it to me, saying that it was *Le Souper Mal apprêté* of Haute-Roche, with some slight alterations, which, upon examination, I found to be the fact." Garrick seems to have been deficient in candour; the *Lying Valet* was in truth founded upon *All without Money*, being the second act of a compound-sort of a comedy called *Novelty, or Every Act a Play*, written by Motteux, the translator of *Don Quixote*, and produced at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in 1697; and *All without Money* was certainly derived from the French. The old English comedy of *The Devil to Pay*, the plot of which is borrowed from the story of *Mopsa* in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, has travelled to France, and then in various forms been reimported to this country. So, in latter times, the late Mr. Oxenford's farce of *Twice Killed*, which is believed to have a German original, has appeared in France as *Bon Soir, Signor Pantalón*, to be brought back to this country as a translated operetta, *Good Night and Pleasant Dreams*. While a piece founded upon the novel of Jack Sheppard has furnished Paris with a melodrama, which, in its turn, has been adapted from the French and made to do duty again as an English play. Among other adaptations it is curious to find the *Beggar's Opera* translated into French by one Adam Hallam, an English actor, and successfully played at the Haymarket Theatre by a French company about 1780.

It is to be said for the older adaptations from the French, that they were freely executed, and often contained much original matter; they are rather fair imitations

than absolute translations. They rarely suggest that the adapter was borrowing because of his own deficient inventiveness or barrenness of wit. Perhaps Fielding, in his versions of Molière, ventured nearer to simple translation than did any other dramatist of the eighteenth century. But there came to be more and more borrowing from the French; our stage seemed so occupied at last with adaptations, that room could not be found upon it for works of native production. It is hard to distinguish the exact moment when the system of adapting was found to be exercising an injurious influence upon the English drama. That the literature of the stage had declined in worth, and that the taste of the public for theatrical exhibitions had gravely deteriorated, became at last so manifest that, in 1835, the House of Commons appointed a select committee to enquire into the subject. The committee found that the drama had been subjected to depressing influences, due to "the uncertain administration of the laws; the slender encouragement afforded to literary talent to devote its labours to the stage; and the want of better regulations as to the number and distribution of theatres. The committee reported further, that the privileges enjoyed by the patent theatres had neither preserved the dignity of the drama nor been of much advantage to their proprietors; and that dramatic authors were subjected to indefensible hardship and injustice; the inadequate protection afforded to their labours being alone "sufficient to divert the ambition of eminent and successful writers from that department of intellectual exertion." No word was said, however, as to the important effect upon our drama and dramatists brought about by the wholesale importation of French plays.

In a letter Mr. Boucicault has lately published in the *North American Review*, touching the decline of the drama, he ascribes this misfortune to the appearance upon the scene of "the commercial manager," educated on the far side of the bar-room counter, with no more spelling and grammar than are possessed by urchins of ten, and by accident ruling the destinies of first-class theatres, exercising literary and artistic functions, selecting actors, reading and determining the merit of dramatic works, and presiding generally over the highest and noblest efforts of the human mind. "To the commercial manager," writes Mr. Boucicault, "we owe the in-

roduction of the burlesque, opera bouffe, and the reign of buffoonery. We owe him also the deluge of French plays that set in with 1842 and swamped the English drama of that period. The usual price received by Sheridan Knowles, Bulwer, and Talfourd, at that time for their plays, was five hundred pounds. I was a beginner in 1841, and received for my comedy, *London Assurance*, three hundred pounds. Three years later I offered a new play to a principal London theatre; the manager offered me a hundred pounds for it." This is a considerable fall in price. Mr. Boucicault omits to notice that in the interval he had met with some discomfiture as a dramatist; his second comedy had failed completely—had been withdrawn after two representations. However, this hardly justified the offer of a third of the sum paid for *London Assurance* as the price of his new work. Naturally, he objected. The manager observed in reply: "I can go to Paris and select a first-class comedy; having seen it performed, I feel certain of its effect. To get this comedy translated will cost me twenty-five pounds. Why should I give you three hundred or five hundred pounds for your comedy, of the success of which I cannot feel so assured?" The argument was unanswerable," continues Mr. Boucicault, "and the result inevitable. I sold a work for one hundred pounds that took me six months' hard work to compose, and accepted a commission to translate three French plays at fifty pounds apiece."

The commercial manager was simply buying in the cheapest market; that it happened also to be the nastiest did not signify much to him. The public was as patient as could be wished; émeutes, because of the badness of theatrical entertainments, had become things of the past. No doubt judicious playgoers absented themselves more and more; but London is a populous place, and there are always people who will attend the theatre, no matter what may be the entertainment offered. The manager did very fairly. There was even a fall in the price of adaptations from the French. They were presently advertised in the *Era*, that authentic organ of the histrionic profession, as for sale to the first comer at the price of a few pounds, even a few shillings. For the system had its drawbacks. The commercial manager bought cheaply, but he could not hinder other managers, his rivals, from purchasing upon the same terms,

or lower, if that were possible. It was thus brought about that the play of Don Cæsar de Bazan was represented at about seventeen London theatres at once; such drama as *Les Bohémiens de Paris*, *Les Frères Corses*, and *Pailleasse (Belphegor)*, sharing the same fate. But of course there were, as there are, adaptations and adaptations, not to mention mere translations. Certain adapters gave themselves airs, took credit for much ingenuity and originality, protested that adaptation was an art requiring dramatic talent. Pretence and assumption of this sort are not lacking even in the present day. Mr. Charles Reade, as an expert, has given evidence in the matter. He says of the adapters' claim to dramatic talent: "This is the pipe of vanity and ignorance; they have never invented, or they would know the difference. Now, I have done both. I have adapted French pieces, with invariable success, and I have invented. I am, therefore, a better authority; and I pledge you my honour, that to invent good pieces is very hard, and to adapt them is quite as easy as shelling peas. . . . I can lay my hand on a dozen adapters of French pieces to the English stage, who know neither French nor English, nor the stage. So much for the class 'adapter,' in which talent of any kind is notoriously the exception, not the rule. Out of every twenty adapters how many are ever heard of in letters except when they bray in a Frenchman's skin? Three? Certainly not. Two at the very outside."

That the question had an ethical side, that the French inventor had some moral right to share in the profits arising from his own invention, seems to have occurred to the adapter only rarely or in quite recent times. The plea of custom was admissible in answer to the charge of absolute literary dishonesty on the part of the adapter, although the custom had originated, as we have shown, at a remote period and in a harmless sort of way. Molière—there is irreverence in mentioning him in connection with the modern adapter—had proclaimed wit to be his available property wherever found. This is hardly a sufficient excuse, however, for the offender whose fingers are too frequently discovered in other people's pockets. Times change, and morals and manners with them. What is valorous enterprise and exploit in one year is sheer buccaneering in another. Let it be granted that there has been amendment in this matter during late years. Our legislature has made a

mild effort or two to benefit and protect the French author; and here and there adapters have been found willing to pay for what they were wont to pillage. But the system of adaptation has weighed heavily and for many years upon the national drama, dwarfing, cramping, and degrading it. Even now when M. Chose produces in Paris a successful melodrama, entitled *Le Voleur*, let us say, that famous playwright Jones—possessing himself of it, lawfully or otherwise—does not scruple to produce it here as *The Thief*, a new drama by Barabbas Jones, Esquire, without a word of mention of the original author. And when the curtain falls upon the English version, it is Jones who steps in front of the footlights to receive the thanks of the audience for the entertainment they ascribe to his unaided exertions and great creative intellect; and in time Jones persuades himself, and even persuades others, that he is a dramatist and a genius. In truth, the deeds done by adapters from the French to the English stage, the pretensions they advance, and the assumption they permit themselves, would not be tolerated in any other department of literature, would indeed be denounced and censured in the severest fashion if put in practice outside the theatre. The sad defence is left to the adapters, however, that the literature of our stage has almost ceased to be literature in the ordinary acceptance of the term.

ON THE TRAMP, FROM THE PACIFIC TO THE ATLANTIC.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

A. BLOWING upon a bullock's horn awakened Jim and me next morning from one of the most refreshing sleeps I ever enjoyed. Into the grey streak of dawn which was still struggling with the darkness of the night we found the same crowd tumbling which had thronged the platform of the station on our arrival the previous night. Our toilet not having been much disturbed, a good shake and a step or two along the platform put us all to rights, and made us ready for the road, but we loitered about to see which way the crowd went. On to the line they tramped, a motley gang of Negroes, Hindoos, Chinamen, and native Americans; and under the charge of a huge mulatto started off eastward, gabbling as if they had graduated at Babel. We were about to follow in the wake of a few stragglers

who hung upon the rear of the main body, and had actually got a little distance from the station, when we heard a voice shouting after us. Looking round we saw a little man, who seemed clothed with some authority and a very good suit. He signed for us to come back, and as he could do us no harm, and might do us much good, we obeyed his summons. He looked at us curiously for a minute or so, and then said: "Should you like some coffee and meat?" Our interrogator was evidently a man of much penetration, and we gave him the satisfaction of knowing that his guess was correct. The result was that in five minutes we were seated in a cool room discussing as substantial a repast of smoking coffee, cold meat, and capital bread, as it was possible to desire. Our host was a little man, evidently the station-master, though he wore no uniform. His speech proclaimed him a Yankee, apart from his great love of guessing and calculating. His age it was impossible to surmise, for years spent in the Isthmus had robbed him of every atom of flesh, and left only a framework of bones, over which a covering of tough yellow skin was tightly drawn. But the vigour and energy of youth seemed to have retired from the outworks of flesh as they were sapped by the enemy, and to have entrenched themselves securely in the citadel of bones, where they still defied the fever and all its auxiliaries. With true tact he left us to ourselves while we were doing justice to his hospitality, that our appetites might not be restricted by his presence. When he returned to the room Jim and I had finished, and after he had enquired whether we had had enough food he conducted us to the door.

"Where are you going?" he asked abruptly.

"To Aspinwall," we replied.

"On foot?"

"On foot."

"What are you going to do when you get there?" was his next query.

"Try to work our passage to the States."

"Umph!" and he stuck his hands in his breeches pockets and seemed to meditate; while we stood a little awkwardly beside him, not knowing very well whether to bid him good-bye and move on, or to await a more pronounced dismissal from him. He appeared to be turning something over in his mind, and not to be quite sure which way to decide. At length he gave the coppers in his pocket an extra hard jingle

and said: "Does either of you know how to set a house to rights?" I looked at Jim, who only shook his head solemnly, and then I replied with a laugh: "I know how to set a ship to rights; would that do?" I thought, perhaps, he wanted a little job done in return for his kindness, and a day spent at the station by my partner and myself was neither here nor there, as we were not pressed for time. "Fact is," resumed the station-master, "I could give eighty cents a day and found to a man who would act as major-domo, and look after the station in my absence. I've a cook and a scullion, but I'd like some white fellow to boss round when I'm at the quarries and at Aspinwall. Will you stay?"

I did not reply at once to this sudden offer, but looked at Jim, who, in turn, looked away along the line eastward towards Philadelphia and the other great cities of the rising sun. Then I spoke: "Much obliged to you for your kind offer," I said, "but I agreed to tramp to Aspinwall with this man, and I can't leave him."

"Why now, look here," said the station-master; "you don't know of work in Colon, do ye? No, I thought not. Nor you don't know of a berth aboard ship, do ye? No, I thought not. Now don't ye see, one is more likely to get a berth nor two, don't ye see? That's rizzon. An' can't ye give yer pardner some o' yer clothes o' which he seems to stand in some need, and I'll give him a lift along the line on my hand car. You can share any spare dimes you may have, and it'll be better for him as well as for yourself."

Jim was impressed by the station-master's eloquence, and he had acquired a love for the topcoat. The idea of entering at once into sole possession of that desirable garment, together with seventy-five cents in hard cash, and a cast of a few miles towards Colon, fairly overcame him, and he joined his persuasions to those of the station-master to induce me to stay. The sun had by this time risen upon the earth, and was revealing as tempting a scene of repose as any poor wanderer could desire. Cooling lemons, appetising chilis, succulent pine-apples, were all displaying their charms within reach of my hand. Aspinwall was, no doubt, at the other end of the line, but the probability was that we should reach it worn and penniless, if I refused this offer. Common-sense seemed to urge the course suggested by

my partner and our new acquaintance, so I consented to make a trial of it. While we made the necessary division of stock, the station-master got out his hand-car, and, I think, before either of us had fairly realised what we had done, I had shaken hands with Jim, and he and the topcoat were whirling away eastward in the company of the station-master.

Since that day I have neither seen nor heard of Jim again. The station-master, upon his return, told me he had given him a cast of three miles on his hand-car, and had then left him poling his way along the rail towards Philadelphia. It would vex me to think that he and the topcoat came to grief.

The establishment at Paraiso station, where I now found myself installed as major-domo, consisted of the station-master, a Spanish-American cook, and a Heathen Chinese scullion. It was the nearest station to some quarries owned and worked by the railway company, and the nondescript crowd, who had set the station in a stir the previous evening, consisted of the labourers in these quarries, who lodged at Paraiso. Besides his purely railway duties, the station-master was overseer of the workings at the quarries, which necessitated his being a good deal away from the station; and this was, no doubt, his reason for desiring to have a person like myself to leave in charge of the station during his absence. He would have been quite safe to leave the most dishonest mean white who ever knooked about the world in a promiscuous fashion in charge of that station; for there was nothing to run away with, and there was nowhere to run. A very good rifle and a beautiful repeating revolver might, indeed, have been stolen; but as good a rifle and as good a revolver must have been left behind, and the chances were that the station-master would get upon the runaway's tracks, and prove himself a better pot-shot than the thief. It will thus be seen, that the constant respectability secured by the presence of a white face at the station was an advantage which far outweighed any risk by which it might be accompanied.

The Heathen Chinese was a tall fellow, whose ideas of dress were satisfied with a pair of sandals, a loin-cloth, and a Panama hat. He tendered his submission to my government at once, and with the most engaging frankness; though in a mixture of languages, the minute niceties of which no mortal under the sun, save himself,

could come within a long distance of comprehending. I afterwards discovered that he was somewhat of a natural, having a habit of awaking through the night, during full moon, and addressing wonderful orations to that luminary.

The Spanish-American, who made cigars and smoked them in a detached back kitchen where he cooked, looked upon me somewhat in the light of a supplanter; having nourished hopes in the direction of the major-domo's proud position, which my advent effectually demolished. He did not succumb so readily as Charlie, the Heathen Chinee; but in a day or two he also capitulated.

The station-master himself did not give me much trouble. He had the true American republican notions of his day, which led him to believe that all whites are pretty much free and equal, and that the rest of creation consists of coloured cusses. The quarrymen were fed in the simplest possible fashion. Each morning they deployed before me, man by man, in the store, which, with the station-master's dining-room, occupied the entire ground floor of the building, and received a certain number of biscuits out of a barrel, and this formed their entire supply of bread for the day. The Spanish-American cooked a supply of rice, which Charlie carried in two large pails, by means of a yoke over his neck, to the workings at the breakfast and dinner hours. The whole gang slept upon beds not unlike great camp-stools, made of a sheet of canvas stretched upon cross sticks at top and bottom.

My charge as major-domo included the care of the provisions; but these, with the exception of the sugar, gave me no trouble. I have already recorded how my twenty-four hours' partner and myself were interested, during the first stage of our tramp, watching a company of ants marching home in orderly fashion with a supply of vegetables. Had they confined themselves to green herbs they might still have retained my best wishes for their welfare. But a wanton appetite which they indulged for sugar ruined their reputation for ever with me. A barrel, a large barrel, of sugar, which, instead of being insulated by means of brick props, stood upon its own bottom upon the earthen floor of the store, tempted them to wander from honest into thievish courses; and when I first became aware of their presence, the ants bulked quite as largely in

the barrel as the sugar, and were so intimately mixed up with it that any idea of effecting a separation was at once banished. A few half bricks sufficed to place the remainder of the stock in safety, which was all that was to be done under the circumstances.

The station-master kept a large flock of hens, which supplied his table with eggs and an occasional roast or boiled fowl. They also helped to keep him in rifle practice; for when a fowl was to be cooked for dinner, it was his habit to go out with his rifle and blow the head off a fat chuckie. A small supply of butcher's meat was left at the station by the train twice a week, for the station-master's own use; and a wild, unkempt garden, at the sides and to the rear of the station-house, kept him well supplied with pine-apples and limes.

Barring the ants and great numbers of small harmless lizards, we were troubled with no vermin. I was given to understand that deadly snakes of various kinds, including the cobra, were plentiful in the neighbourhood; and the station-master had some preserved in clear bottles of spirits which were said to have been killed in the vicinity; but during my stay at Paraiso, which extended to three weeks, I did not come across a live snake. This was not owing to my remaining indoors, or very close to the clearing; for every morning I pushed my way through grass and bushes to a small stream, which had capital pools here and there along its course, for my morning plunge. I did not take my bath at the same point each morning, for I did a little exploring in the way of looking for new pools, and yet I never came across a serpent of any description.

The supply of literature at the station was confined to the New York Herald, Harper's Weekly, and Frank Leslie's Illustrated Journal, which were sent regularly from New York. But even with these valuable aids to cheerfulness, supplemented with the opportunity afforded each evening of gambling in one of the huts in the cane village, by the light of a candle stuck in a black bottle, life at Paraiso was undoubtedly slow. Though there was much gambling among the quarrymen, there was not a single row all the time I was there to impart a throb of liveliness to the proceedings. Probably this was owing to the circumstance that the gambling was unaccompanied by drinking. A single visit to the cane village

was quite sufficient to satisfy the liveliest curiosity. There was no regular clearing, the huts being set down in twos and threes in promiscuous fashion among the bushes and trees. Picturesque as they might appear from a distance, a closer inspection revealed no hidden charms, while it discovered many secret shortcomings, which certainly did not charm the stranger, however they might be regarded by the natives. The trains did not all stop at Paraiso—only the leisurely ones. One of them now and again pulled up for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, giving the station-master the chance of a short yarn with the conductor; but even this was not great intercourse with the world. There was one young man who came out from Panama once a week, and stayed a night with us. I forget whether he was English or American, but he was clerk in a store in Panama. His object in coming was purely religious, being to hold a prayer meeting in one of the larger cane shanties for the villagers and quarrymen. He came entirely of his own accord, prompted solely by a disinterested desire to supply, as far as he could, an opportunity for worship, which would otherwise have been entirely wanting. In a community which included a number of negroes, he could never be without a congregation of some sort; and I think his success was quite as great as his modest expectations, though not so great as his unselfish labours merited.

For two days we had the company of an Aspinwall gentleman—an invalid. To me he seemed in the last stage of consumption, being fearfully emaciated, and scarcely able to crawl. Indeed, I was afraid he would die on our hands. Why of all places on earth he had been sent for change of air to the airless oven yeleft Paraiso, from the fresh Atlantic breezes of Aspinwall, still remains a mystery to me; but there he was, walking slowly about in the broiling sun, closely buttoned up in a top-coat. After being examined by two young doctors, who came out from Panama to visit him, he returned to Aspinwall, comforted (or the reverse) by their assurance that his lungs were scarcely what they should be. For the two days that he remained his presence lent a variety to the life at the station, and the place seemed emptier and lonelier when he had gone away. White tramps occasionally went past like shadows, taking a look at the station-house, but seldom venturing within.

Indeed, only one of these asked for assistance during my incumbency, and remembering the station-master's kindness to myself, I had no hesitation in giving him a ration from the company's biscuit-barrel. These men were mostly clad in dilapidated seamen's attire, and some of them were even officers of merchantmen, who had been tempted to cut and run from their vessels at Aspinwall by the illusive dream of the fortunes awaiting them should they manage, by hook or crook, to reach California. When I thought of the well-stocked chests and hard-earned wages they had left behind, and remembered the struggles of my partner Jim to get back from California to the Eastern States, I felt strongly inclined to doubt the wisdom of the step they had taken. But that was their affair and not mine.

One night, after I had retired to rest, I was roused out by the station-master, who told me he required my assistance. On reaching the dining-room I found that it had been invaded by a party of about a dozen white men, all armed in a formidable manner with rifles, revolvers, and other weapons, who were making themselves quite at home, and clamouring for refreshment. It was to assist him in satisfying their demands upon his hospitality that my chief had awakened me. They gave themselves out to be a prospecting party that had been up one of the tributaries of the Chagres River looking for indications of gold, but that was merely their own story. They were all English-speaking, but they were a rough lot. Possibly their rifles were only carried for the purpose of supplying the commissariat with turkeys and other wild game, but the moral influence of these weapons must have added powerfully to the persuasions of the party in seeking assistance of various descriptions from the natives. I know that it would have been madness for us to have resisted any demand which they had thought fit to make upon us. Fortunately they were in a reasonable frame of mind that night, and after I had helped the station-master to place an abundant supply of refreshment before them I retired, leaving them laughing uproariously over coarse stories which they were relating to each other, with the garniture of many oaths. The echoes of their mirth were sounding in my ears when I fell asleep; but when the braying of Charlie's horn awoke me next morning, I

found, to my great comfort, that they had gone off, and I saw them not again. Such men are born vagabonds. The discovery of any quantity of gold would not have tied them to a particular spot for any length of time. To wander about at the freedom of their own will, restrained by no law except camp law, which is as short and summary as that of Judge Lynch, is essential to their existence. The happiest end they can contemplate is to be assisted out of the world by a bullet from a comrade's rifle; a liberal death-bed meaning to them a lonely struggle with fever and starvation in a rickety hut far from friends or kindred. With most of them it is what they themselves would call a short life and a merry one, though where the mirth comes in is not very apparent.

It was still the dry season when I entered upon my duties at Paraiso, though it was nearing the end of it. The first indication I had that the sickly season was coming on was finding a young quarryman lying groaning on the platform of the station one forenoon. He had been seized with fever while at his work, and had managed to walk back to the house; but, when I found him, he could only murmur the word "calientura" in reply to my question as to what was the matter with him. Though he was very ill for a day, a strong dose of quinine set him to rights; but a day or two afterwards I had a sharp attack of fever myself. Only some heavy afternoon showers had as yet indicated the approach of the rainy season, and here was the fever already. Even eighty cents a day, and found, was not sufficient inducement to tempt me to stay. The showers daily became heavier and more prolonged; and the morning malaria grew denser and more sickly; so at last I made up my mind that it was time for me to leave Paraiso if I did not wish to be relegated to the society of the Chinese on the hillside.

I parted on friendly terms with the Spanish American cook, whose hopes of the major-domo's position were restored by my retirement.

Poor Charlie, the Heathen Chinese, made me a present of a needle and a thimble, a very strong expression of regard on his part. With Mr. Wickman, the station-master, I had got on famously, and he urged me strongly to remain. But when he saw that I had made up my mind to go, he ceased to object, and kindly furnished me with a free passage by train to Aspinwall. When I saw the sparkling waves

of the blue Atlantic dancing beyond the flat beach of Aspinwall, and knew that the Isthmus, dreadful to a penniless tramp, was behind me, I almost shouted for joy. No doubt the passage-money, by any means of transit, to England, far exceeded the Mexican ounce I drew from the railway cashier at Aspinwall as wages for the time I had served them at Paraiso. But the idea of paying my passage home was one that never entered my mind. Remembering the run-aways from ships who had passed Paraiso during my stay there, I had no fears of getting a berth in a vessel long before my few dollars were expended.

And so it turned out. I entered Aspinwall on Saturday afternoon, a mere tramp, a perfect stranger, and wholly without influence, and by Monday at mid-day I had shipped as a hand on board an American barque, bound for Europe, via Mexico.

ELECTIONEERING EXTRAORDINARY.

WE can form no adequate conception, from the course of public proceedings since the commencement of what may be called the Reform era, of the manner in which parliamentary elections were carried on during the first quarter of the present century, and, indeed, throughout the reigns of the four Georges. Bribery and corruption we have seen; intimidation and violence have been frequent enough; but not the reckless and almost incredible squandering of money on what are (or rather used to be) considered legitimate expenses. The primary motive which often led to this lavish outlay was one which is not likely, so far as we can judge, to operate largely again in England. Self-seeking for the sake of office, or of some personal advantage, was of course an active impulse in those times as in the present; but it was something else which is here under consideration. It was the rivalry between different county families, or different owners of great estates. No local grandee could bear the idea of yielding precedence or predominant influence to his equally grand neighbour; rather than submit to this, he would dip into the proceeds of his rent-roll to an extent not easy of belief, were it not authenticated by unimpeachable evidence.

The famous Yorkshire election of 1807 presented these facts in a striking light. It has gone out of memory now, but the

materials are obtainable for sketching the principal incidents.

Parliament was dissolved in the spring of that year, after a change of ministry, and under circumstances of much public interest. Yorkshire—a county which was not then, as now, divided into five parliamentary constituencies—was first addressed by the Honorable Henry Lascelles, son of the Earl of Harewood, of Harewood House; next by Lord Milton, son of Earl Fitzwilliam, of Wentworth House; and lastly by William Wilberforce, who was so well known for his laudable exertions in favour of Negro freedom, and who had been one of the representatives of the county during a period of nearly twenty years. All the candidates travelled, each at his own time, to York, Leeds, Wakefield, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, and other principal towns, to address “the worthy and independent electors” at public meetings; and all issued electioneering manifestoes in abundant quantity and variety. At the nomination, Lascelles and Wilberforce had the predominant show of hands; whereupon Milton demanded a poll; and then the battle began in earnest. The polling, in accordance with the electioneering law then in operation, lasted fifteen days—one of the main causes of the vast expenditure of money.

It was admitted on all hands that seldom, if ever, had an equal amount of expenditure been incurred at any former election; and it is pretty certain that nothing has since equalled it. The intensity of exertion and the amount of travelling were, in like manner, remarkable. Yorkshire was (as we have said) not then divided for electoral purposes; it formed one vast constituency, and the distances to be travelled by the candidates were very considerable—enormous in the days before railways. The city of York, being the only polling-place, was at high pressure indeed. Every freeholder in the county, above the value of forty shillings a year rental, had a voting power for two members; and many of them resided, permanently or temporarily, in other parts of the kingdom. If the outlying electors had been called upon to defray their own travelling-expenses, very few of them would have taken the journey to York for the mere purpose of recording their votes, especially in those days of slow and costly travel. But the candidates, eager to poll every possible vote in their favour, shrank from no outlay in ensuring this result.

The wealthy family at Wentworth House took the lead in the enormous prodigality of money for the election. Quite early in the proceedings, before the actual polling began, the Times thus summarised the mode of conducting the campaign on the part of the representative of Wentworth House: “We have heard that Lord Milton’s first act was to send his circulars to nearly every professional gentleman in the county. The French attorneys, it has been said by Mr. Burke, produced the French Revolution. Think what the activity of two or three hundred English attorneys, in every city, town, and village of Yorkshire, receiving five guineas per day for twenty or thirty consecutive days, must have done for their noble candidate! Think of the horses, chaises, coaches, which they had constantly on hire, and of the number of their clerks who would be employed as sub-agents. Think of the whispering, scribbling, squibbing, fibbing, advertising, riding, which would take place. Go where you will, you run against one of his lordship’s agents. He seems not only to have an agent or two in every village, but one in every coach.”

Mr. Wilberforce had not wealth enough to squander in this way, even if inclination had prompted him so to do; he relied more on his moral position as a philanthropist. When matters seemed to be going against him, at one time during the period of polling, his committee expostulated with the constituency in rather energetic terms: “Freeholders of the county of York, what are you doing? Is Wilberforce last upon the poll? That friend of humanity; that enemy of the slave-trade; that tried, faithful, upright senator—is he last upon the poll? Shame, where is thy blush? Are you willing to desert him? Forbid it, every principle of gratitude! Exert yourselves without delay! Rouse from your apathy! Come forward like men!” We shall see that they did come forward, in sufficient force to place Mr. Wilberforce in the winning list.

Ordinary political professions and declarations, Whig and Tory (Liberal and Conservative had not been introduced as party designations in those days), we will not touch upon; they were what might reasonably be expected, and were neither better nor worse than those of modern concoction. But there were other matters which gave piquancy to the struggle. The Earl of Harewood was deeply interested in Negro sugar-plantations, and was in

this direction no admirer of Mr. Wilberforce's Emancipation advocacy. Moreover, he had given offence to the Yorkshire woollen-manufacturers (at that time known as clothiers), by going against them in a parliamentary enquiry concerning a Bill in which the Leeds cloth-merchants were at issue with the clothiers. A sinister report was even disseminated that the earl had been heard to say he "did not care a— for the Yorkshire clothiers"; this was indignantly denied, but, nevertheless, the imputed oath caused him the loss of many hundreds of votes. The Earl Fitzwilliam, on the other hand, was known to favour the Catholic claims, and to oppose the ministers whom King George liked best. Lord Milton, moreover, was so juvenile, both in years and in appearance, as to give occasion for many a squib and sarcasm. Readers of our own day would be astonished at the extent to which this kind of battling was carried, and the personal directness of the language employed. For fear of getting entangled within the meshes of the law of libel, asterisks and dashes were plentifully used, to avoid giving surnames and titles in full; but the veil was too transparent to really deceive anyone.

Some of the squibs fired off by Harewood House at Wentworth House comprised an accumulated assemblage of all the wickednesses and shortcomings that could well be attributed to the rival family: "No imbecile infant of a factious aristocracy: no trampling on kings: no popery: no Milton!" One was evidently intended as a stab at the rival house on the score of disloyalty—whether well or ill founded we are, of course, not called upon to decide: "Lost, a dun-coloured spaniel that answers to the name of Fitz. He will fetch and carry, and do anything he is bid, except jumping over a stick for King George; but will readily do it for the Pope." The juvenility of Lord Milton is added to a number of little cannon-balls in the following delectable effusion: "Wanted immediately, a number of workmen to construct a machine of an immense size, to convey from London to York four thousand and five plumpers for a certain young lord. A plan of this stupendous vehicle may be seen, and mechanical workmen treated with, at his lordship's plumper manufactory, at the sign of the Baby in the Cradle, Lendall, York. N.B. This plan is formed upon the principle of that great nautical undertaking, the French raft, lately intended for the in-

vasion of this country, and highly approved of by his lordship's party."

Imitative horse-racing announcements were among the whimsical forms of squib: "York Spring Meeting, 1807. A list of the horses and the riders entered to run for the Parliament Stakes during the present month. His Majesty's bay horse Loyalty, by Patriot, out of Constitution; rider, Honest Harry. Mr. Africa's horse Perseverance, by Humanity; rider, Will Steady. Lord F—z—m's chestnut colt Whig Club, by Discontent, out of Anarchy, sister to Sedition; rider, Old Jumper. Ten to one on Loyalty."

As already stated, the youth and boyish appearance of Lord Milton constituted favourite missiles in the electioneering artillery of Harewood House. He was little more than the minimum age permitted in a member of parliament; the name of the Baby was given to him; and his youthfulness was linked to the Irish vote, to free trade, to the clothiers, to revolutionism, or to anything that seemed likely to hit a hard rap—such as the following: "Wanted, a young woman to superintend the care of a poor Baby. Apply at W—ntw—th House.—If Irish and Roman Catholic, will be preferred."

Imitative playbills were another form of missile employed, greatly to the profit of the printers of placards and advertisements: "By desire of the Right Honourable the Earl F—tz—m. On Wednesday next, May the 13th, at the Theatre, Castle Yard, York, his Majesty's (late) servants will perform a grand melodrama (never acted here before), called, Of age tomorrow. The principal character by the Anti-Roscius, his first appearance on this stage—and positively the last."

The Harewood party contended that Lord Milton was as juvenile in all good qualities as in years and appearance: "Is not Lord Milton old in virtue as Mr. Lascelles? No; but more decrepit. Which is older in talents? Lascelles, the man of our hearts. Which is the better orator? Lascelles, the man who speaks the truth. Is not his printed address to the freeholders unintelligible? So is Reading made Easy, to nine out of ten of Lord M—lt—n's Committee."

Lord Milton had previously failed in electioneering contests at York and Malton; this, and other matters, formed the pabulum for an imitative auction advertisement, put forth by the Harewood party: "Oranges; to be sold by auction by Old

Jumper [an appellation given to Earl Fitzwilliam] at a great hotel in Lendall, York, the sign of The Cradle, to-morrow morning, the remainder of the cargo of the ship Whig, direct from Spain, on account of the Inquisition; consisting of a few chests of damaged oranges. They were first consigned to Malton and York, but being rejected at those places, are now offered for sale on account of M—It—n and Co.—N.B. The above will be sold without reserve, as they will not keep, being decayed at the heart."

Was Wentworth House likely to be abashed or intimidated by this artillery of personality, sarcasm, and joking? We shall see.

The short kind of catechism put forth by the one side was retaliated by the other: "Is not Lord Milton as old in virtue as Mr. Lascelles? Yes. Which is older in talents? Milton. Which is the better orator? Milton, beyond comparison. Is not Lascelles's printed address to the freeholders unintelligible? Yes." Nor was the counter-battery less vigorous: "No tyranny! No enemy to the clothiers! No juggling union of candidates! No defender of Malville! No Trotter! No plunder! No slave-dealing lord! No Yorkshire vote purchased with African blood! No Lascelles: no, never! Milton for ever! God save the king."

If imitative horse-racing advertisements were adopted by Harewood House, Wentworth House had a natural right to make use of the same kind of missile: "A list of the horses and their riders entered to run for the county plates. Earl F—tz—m's chestnut colt Rockingham; rider, a Yorkshire clothier, in white and gold. Lord H—w—d's black horse Barbadoes, by Slavery; led to the starting chair by Peculation; rider, a Leeds merchant in mourning. Humanity's aged horse Abolitionist; rider, unknown. Five to one on the chestnut colt against the black horse. Abolitionist is sure to win one of the plates if mounted by Independence; but if the jockey Coalition should ride him, as is already strongly suspected, Plumper will then mount the chestnut colt." This horsey lingo means that although Lord Milton did not wish to oppose Mr. Wilberforce, he would be driven to do so if the latter formed a coalition with Mr. Lascelles.

Wentworth House did not forget to make capital out of the delinquencies (real or unreal) of the Harewood family

as West India planters: "Wanted, a hundred negro-drivers, to be employed in the island of Barbadoes. Apply at H—w—d House. No Yorkshire clothiers need apply, as they have been found too refractory to be insulted and trampled upon by the son of the proprietor." Coined at the same mint was the following: "Sugar-cane. To be sold by auction, by Messrs Slavery and Juggle, a large quantity of damaged sugar-cane, of a blue colour, tintured with a few red spots resembling African blood; recently imported from Barbadoes, and brought to the hammer to pay the expenses of a monster coalition formed between a saint and a sinner; which expenses it was originally intended to pay out of the H—w—d poor-box. Samples may be seen at Messrs W. and L.'s committee-rooms, which have been united for the convenience of sale."

The imitative play-bills of Harewood House, like the imitative horse-racing and sale-by-auction announcements, met with prompt rejoinders: "By desire of the worshipful company of merchants trading to Africa, on Wednesday, the 13th of May instant, his majesty's present ministers will present a new tragedy, called The West Indian, or Slavery Revels. The principal character by Old Harry [the Earl of Harewood]; supported by his son, Orator Mam, who, in point of elocution, may justly be considered Anti-Miltonic. The manager being disappointed of the assistance of the Yorkshire clothiers, their place will be supplied by a company of negro-drivers, whom the manager has lately engaged at a great expense.—N.B. Tickets may be had at H—ew—d House."

The great delight of Wentworth House when its rival—notwithstanding the support of the fox-hunting farmers and the Leeds merchants—was finally defeated, took the form (one among many) of a song to the tune of The Jolly Young Waterman. One verse of this poetic effusion must suffice here:

The merchants and farmers all bow at his levée,
And sycophants hail him the joy of their eye;
While the sons of Diana are heading the bevy,
And clubbing each ev'ning the poll to supply.
But since the poor African's chains are all broken,
Old Dagon has fallen, and Milton bears sway;
With laurels we'll crown him, and wear as a token
The orange—and triumph of honour display.

Encouraged by this lofty flight, Lord Milton's friends determined to take in hand the 'Baby' taunt, by making verse and fun out of the victory of the 'young un' or 'little un.' The tune of Robinson

Crusoe was selected for a song, two stanzas of which ran as follows :

Mr. Lascelles,
And a legion of yells,
Did formerly fight with—a Baby.
They called him a pitiful Baby,
A white-looking red-headed Baby ;
But he laugh'd at their tattle,
And offer'd them battle,
And manfully fought, though—a Baby.
Now like travelling quacks,
With humbugs on their backs,
They rail as they strut at the Baby ;
And make their poor jokes
About Milton and Fawkes,
Since they found manhood's power in—the Baby.
Britain's foes know that strong is the Baby,
The Yorkshireman's friend is the Baby ;
Fitzwilliam, rejoice,
In the man of our choice ;
England's champion believed in—her Baby.

In an earlier paragraph we have quoted from the Times an account of the almost incredible lavishness of scale on which the contest was commenced ; and now we may fittingly give, from a York newspaper of the day, the sequel of the story, a little more at length : "Nothing since the days of the Revolution has ever presented to the world such a scene as has been, for fifteen days and nights, passing within this great county. Repose or rest has been unknown in it, except it was seen in a messenger totally worn out, asleep upon his post-horse or upon his carriage. Every day the roads in every direction, and to and from every remote corner of the county, have been covered with vehicles laden with voters ; barouches, curricles, gigs, flying coaches, military waggons (with eight horses to each, and crowded sometimes with forty voters), have been scouring the country : leaving not the smallest chance for the quiet traveller to urge his humble journey, or find a chair in an inn to sit down upon. It is reckoned that, one day with another, about eight horses a day were found dead upon the different roads, literally killed by high speed and continuous work. Every house, every room, every bed at York, by an incessant change of voters at the rate of two thousand a day, created a consumption of provisions that might have served the whole city for twelve months. So eagerly was every vote sought for, that Mr. Denison, who was canvassing in York with a party of Lord Milton's friends, having heard by accident of a freeholder who was actually on board a vessel in the river sailing for the Straits, went after him in a boat and brought him back ; the man voted at York the day before the poll closed." What this single vote cost Lord Milton we are not informed.

And so this extraordinary struggle came to an end. It was a neck-and-neck race on the part of the three candidates. Each in turn took the lead in the polling ; each in turn occupied the second place ; and it was not until very near the close of the poll that a guess could be made as to the loser—two out of the three being sure to get in, as the county returned two representatives. The final numbers came out thus : Wilberforce, eleven thousand eight hundred and eight ; Milton, eleven thousand one hundred and seventy-seven ; and Lascelles, ten thousand nine hundred and ninety. The final accounts were, as may well be supposed, never made public ; but it was estimated by those behind the scenes that the total outlay could not have been much less than half a million sterling, of which the Miltonites provided by far the largest share. Mr. Wilberforce did not lavish money so profusely as his competitors ; but even his more moderate expenditure was greater than his private means could support ; and munificent subscriptions were raised in his behalf all over England, especially from the friends of Negro freedom. Two of the leading agents of the rival families managed to quarrel and to fight a duel, resulting in an amputated arm as one of the consequences.

WILHELMINA'S GRAND COUP.

SPIELBAD-SUPER-MARE was wondering what had become of Wilhelmina. Of course, when I say Spielbad, I do not now refer to that gorgeous polyglot crowd which for three or four months of every year rustles about the marble terrace, or buzzes, ten deep, round the tables in the salles des jeux. You must be a very great personage indeed—in some way or other—to be missed in that brilliant and very mixed assemblage ; and neither Wilhelmina nor Mrs. Brown-Shakylton, her mother, are personages at all. But the Spielbad of which I am speaking does not trouble itself about personages. It has been surfeited with them for many years past. Everybody who is, or would be, anybody, makes a point of going once, at least, to Spielbad-super-Mare. The score or two of somebodies, and the thousand or so of nobodies, who may happen to be carrying their obolo to the shrine of "old Blong" on any particular day or week of the season take interest, more or less, in each other, no doubt. But beyond, of

course, the necessary and proper interest in the obolo itself, the obolo-bringers, duchesses or drapers, bishops or ballet-girls, philosophers, preachers, princes, or pickpockets, interest Spielbad-super-Mare not at all.

But in Wilhelmina Brown-Shakylton, Spielbad does take considerable interest; for it has known her now a long long time. It must be eight or nine years, at least, since Madame Ayaletout—de Paris—took possession of that exquisitely-fitted magazine in the Place de l'Établissement, and took over with it that little arrangement as to the exchange of Wilhelmina's surplus winnings in the way of gloves, which had figured so conspicuously in the schedule of her predecessor as of value, not merely for its direct, but for its collateral advantages. The "belle chocolatière" next door was equally her debtor. Not that either the belle chocolatière or Madame Ayaletout had ever seen, or were ever likely to see, the "colour" of Wilhelmina's money. They knew their world, these two worthy and not unprosperous dames, and would have shrugged a placidly contemptuous shoulder at the bare suggestion of such an improbable contingency. Yet had Wilhelmina probably worn more bonnets from the one establishment, and consumed more coffee and chocolate in the other, than any young lady of her age in the principality.

The staff of the establishment, too, from the grave chef de parti to the junior employé of the roulette, all felt a paternal interest in Wilhelmina. They had known her—i.e. the seniors among them—for the last dozen years at least; had raked in one by one all the long long line of five-franc pieces which Wilhelmina had managed to cajole, on the piteous plea of "nothing to wear," from friends and acquaintances of high and low degree, or even sometimes from her fond but somewhat impecunious papa. They had watched her bloom rapidly from eighteen into nineteen, and from nineteen into twenty. Then more slowly to twenty-one, and so with ever increasing deliberateness till she had now reached the ripe age of twenty-three. There were those among them who looked boldly forward to congratulating her on her thirtieth birthday; but it was, of course, only quite the juniors who could calculate with any probability upon living to do that.

And in all these years not more than three or four occasions could be recalled on which a week had gone by—except, of course, when Wilhelmina was absent altogether on a

visit to some of her numerous foreign friends—without the afternoon train from Babgasville having brought Wilhelmina over once, at least, to try her fortune at the black and red. And these periods of absence had always been when she was engaged to be married. Young Perry Sharpers, the son of the well-known millionaire, was staying with his father and mother at the villa on the Promenade, and you may be quite sure that old Sharpers, who had no belief in any sort of gambling except that of the Stock Exchange, would have put a speedy stop to his young hopeful's marriage, even with a young lady of such high connections as Miss Wilhelmina Brown-Shakylton, had there been the slightest hint of any such propensity on her part. The Reverend Softeley Comfit—who consoled the fair Wilhelmina when Sharpers did at last come to the conclusion that from any practical point of view Wilhelmina's high connections were, as he coarsely phrased it, "all gammon"—would have been horrified beyond measure at the bare idea of such iniquity. Every one of course knows how, as ill-luck would have it, old Lady Strettlase, the reverend gentleman's chief supporter and patron, happened to turn up at the Hotel de l'Ecorcheur just at the wrong moment, and, taking a violent dislike to the future Mrs. Comfit, ferreted out what she somewhat vaguely described as "all about that odious young woman," and "put the screw on" her pet preacher in such a way as soon brought that unfortunate affair to as abrupt a termination as that of young Perry Sharpers. Every one of course knows too how, after this, Wilhelmina conceived a supreme contempt for everything English, especially for English husbands, and proclaimed her intention of marrying a foreigner: an Italian by preference, like her dear old friend the Duca di Castel-Udolfo, with whose darling duchess she had spent, on her own urgent invitation, so charming a week last year.

This was good news to Spielbad, which had been much exercised by these two periods of the fair devotee's temporary alienation from its shrine, and which joyfully assumed that any future arrangement of the kind would be conducted under more satisfactory auspices. And, indeed, during the two or three months when she was so universally looked upon as about to become the Marchesa Manotremante, she was a more assiduous frequenter of M. Blong's saloon than ever. The gay old marchese had no scruples on the score of

play, and took pleasure rather than otherwise in the gambling exploits of his fair fiancée. Unfortunately, it turned out that the title of fiancée had been somewhat too hastily assumed. The gay old marchese, it appeared, was "not a marrying man;" was, indeed, very genuinely astonished to find himself suspected in the present instance of any intention of the kind, and shrugged his lean old shoulders at this new proof of English incomprehensibility until they nearly met over his polished old scalp.

That was a terrible business, and was very near occasioning a public esclandre. Papa Shakyton was furious, and for the first hour or two would hear of nothing but instant "satisfaction" of the old-fashioned type from the impertinent, who had so grossly misapprehended the social position of his daughter. And had the Marchese Manotremante been a bat or a will o' the wisp, there is no doubt but that "Old Shakey," as he is affectionately termed by his more intimate friends, would have had some chance of winging him. It was pointed out, however, that unsteady as the gay marchese certainly was on his venerable legs, he was hardly likely to wobble about enough to give anything like a chance to Old Shakey's pistol; and as, even were he by some miracle to hit him while stationary, the result of such an encounter could only be additional injury to the reputation of the fair subject of dispute, the angry old gentleman was at length induced to forego his own views on the subject, and leave Wilhelmina to settle matters for herself.

"You had much better leave it alone, papa," that young lady had remarked with the frankness which, rather perhaps than any excess of reverence, commonly characterised her manner towards her father. "If you would go about with me a little, instead of muddling yourself all day with your horrid wine and tobacco, I shouldn't be exposed to this sort of thing. But you'll only make it worse now."

To which poor Old Shakey, who always imbibed fresh majesty of deportment with each glass of his favourite heady Provençal wine, and who had on this occasion absorbed no doubt at least a bottle or two beyond his usual allowance, made a dignified but slightly incoherent reply, and the affair remained in Wilhelmina's hands.

Within an hour the marchese had received a brief grave note from Wilhelmina's own hand releasing him from his engagement, and being an old gentleman

with some appreciation of a joke, had returned an equally grave reply, accepting his dismissal without, as he delicately put it, any attempt at reversing a decree which none knew better than himself to be irrevocable. Wilhelmina got a great deal of credit among the Browns, Smiths, and Thompsons just then congregated at Rabagasville, for the promptitude with which she had broken off her engagement to that gay and wealthy but most improper old marchese.

Since then she had only been once publicly engaged, and so far from the tables being any difficulty in the way of her acquaintance with M. le Vicomte de Lansquenet, it was there that she first met him. Poor Wilhelmina! She was really desperately éprise of M. de Lansquenet, and fought so hard a fight over him with the roulette and trente-et-quarante that she almost grew to hate those friends of her youth. I verily believe that if De Lansquenet would only have forsworn the black and red, and consented to leave Spielbad and return to what was left of his heavily-mortgaged estate, Wilhelmina would not only have accompanied him, very nearly penniless as he was, but would have turned her back upon the familiar invitation to "faire le jeu" almost without a sigh.

All this, however, was at least half-a-dozen years ago, when Wilhelmina was not much more than one-and-twenty; and during all these years she has never been seriously engaged again. She is now, as I have said, twenty-three; indeed, but for a circumstance which at one time seemed to threaten results very different from those which actually followed, would in all probability have been twenty-four at least.

The circumstance in question was nothing less than the marriage of De Lansquenet, who, after a considerably longer respite than had seemed possible at the time when he first engaged the affections of poor Wilhelmina, had at last found that the only possible means of preserving any remnant of his property was by ranging himself immediately. So the good-looking young vicomte, almost as good-looking, if not quite as young, as half-a-dozen years before, had ranged himself accordingly, exchanging what was left of his good looks and his youth, and what was redeemable of his terres, with the whole of his title, which, as he used to observe, was perfectly useless for any purpose of hypothecation, against the fifty years and five hundred thousand francs of good old Madame Chose, the worthy relict of the

whilom principal charcutier of the good town of Toulouse.

It would really seem as though to the very last poor Wilhelmina had cherished some fond hope of even yet achieving her beloved vicomte. At all events, from the day on which the approaching marriage was announced she played harder than ever, growing every day more haggard in the face, and more hollow about the eyes, under the combined influences of late hours, tainted atmosphere, unwholesome excitement, and disappointed love. Spielbad-super-Mare shook its head mournfully over the change, but placed itself under no illusion on her account. Spielbad had seen too many of its most favoured children follow the same course. Wilhelmina would be thirty yet, before they knew where they were.

But, to Spielbad's astonishment, six months had passed away and Wilhelmina, so far from being thirty, was not yet twenty-four. That terrible illness which followed the actual consummation of the cruel event, and which had been expected to prove the finishing stroke to her beauty and her youth, had after all turned out instead an absolute revivifier. Thinner than of yore was Wilhelmina, with dresses made more closely to the throat, and with discreeter sleeves than in the days when the old marchese used to fix such admiring glances on the round white arm, that stretched so boldly forward to place its little stake on the black or red. But the eyes were as large and as bright as ever. Indeed, if anything, brighter; for that unfortunate illness had had the effect, among others, of very slightly darkening the roots of the eyelashes, and the result, especially at night, was really very good. Her colour, too, delicate as ever, was fuller and more fixed, no longer fading, as of old, into a rather sallow paleness under the influence of a long run of zeroes or refaits. But the greatest change of all was in her hair. It had been growing terribly thin and dull-looking during the last few years, and as it had once been her chief point, the loss had told upon her good looks sadly. But in the fever that followed the marriage of that too fascinating vicomte it had become necessary to shave it off altogether, and the effect of this renovating operation had been miraculous. Not more than three months had passed since it had been allowed to grow again, and already it was richer and more abundant than even at eighteen.

And now Wilhelmina had disappeared again, and Spielbad was wondering what

had become of her. Could she have had a relapse? or was she again "engaged?" One or the other must surely be the case to have kept her, as she had been kept, nearly a whole month from her beloved roulette. Spielbad was really getting quite anxious about her.

And, in truth, Spielbad was quite right in its surmise. Nothing but sickness or an "engagement" could have kept Wilhelmina all this weary while in that stifling little rabbit-hutch au quatrieme in a back street of Rabagasville. But Wilhelmina was not sick, except of the rabbit-hutch, and of her managing mamma, and affectionate but slightly bibulous papa, and perhaps just a little of herself and life in general. Wilhelmina was engaged.

This time, too, to an Englishman again, and what is more, to an English clergyman. Not of the Softeley Comfit type, however, by any means, or in the least likely—as his Wilhelmina thought to herself with some satisfaction—to submit to dictation from any old woman of either sex. The Honourable and Reverend Augustine Channell was a young priest of pronounced Ritualistic proclivities, decidedly more inclined to take his own way, when it might perhaps have been as well to yield it, than to depart from it with any undue facility even at the most authoritative command. He had come to Rabagasville in charge of his nephew, boy-heir to the earldom of Mullyon, fast dying, as the Channells were too apt to die, of consumption. It was three weeks now since the long foreseen end had actually come; but the Reverend Augustine had not yet gone back to England, where an exquisite little Gothic church was fast rising in one of the worst and most neglected parts of his brother's estate against his return.

He was quite satisfied, however, with the delay, for the architect could be thoroughly trusted in his absence, and when he did return he would now be accompanied by that most useful helpmeet which, according to the Reverend Augustine, who if Ritualistic, was by no means Roman, a parish priest can have—a thoroughly good and religious wife.

For that was another of the remarkable changes which had been wrought in Wilhelmina by that most admirable illness. Not, of course, that I mean to say she had been naughty or irreligious before. But now she had become almost devotee.

There seemed every prospect, too, if what we are always told of the greater permanence of slowly ripened work be

true, of this new phase of Wilhelmina's moral development being lasting. The physical results of the late illness had, as I have said, been evident from the first. But this psychic change had been on the whole rather slow of manifestation. Indeed, up to the day when her smelling-bottle had fortunately been of such service to the poor young invalid, exhausted by too long a walk in the "renovating" atmosphere of clayey Rabagasville, one would have been on the whole inclined to fancy that the moral effect of Wilhelmina's illness had been rather the other way. When the change did declare itself, however, it developed with immense rapidity. The Reverend Augustine had been, as may be imagined, a good deal scandalised by the very limited spiritual accommodation provided for the British colony of Rabagasville, in return for the thousand pounds or so per annum paid by that wealthy body for the four or five months' annual services of their recognised pastor. The income of the Reverend Augustine's future benefice was to be a hundred and fifty pounds; and in lieu of the five services a fortnight, that energetic young priest proposed to indulge on an average in about thirty or so per week. That there should not be at least one daily was a thing not to be endured; and as the soundly evangelical chaplain turned up the whites of his reverend eyes in genuine horror at the young Ritualist's audacious request for the use of the regular chapel for "Early Celebration" on his own account on week-day mornings, the Reverend Augustine soon decided upon hiring and fitting up a room for himself. And in this room, converted with perfect taste and by no means stinted expenditure into as pretty a little chapel as the great Mr. Clerestory himself could desire to see, the moral results of Wilhelmina's illness developed themselves rapidly.

For three weeks or more I don't think she missed a single function. The little chapel, indeed, was along way from the rabbit-hutch au quatrieme, and seven o'clock was a parlous early hour by which to have risen and dressed and made one's way to the far end of the Promenade. But whoever might be absent, Wilhelmina was sure to be there. Sometimes, it is true—indeed, on the whole, perhaps more often than not, especially on "confession" mornings—she would not even have time to complete her toilet, but would come gliding in with all her glorious brown hair waving loose about her shoulders, and looking, as her young confessor thought, like an innocent Magdalen.

Truly a model wife for an energetic young parish priest! The Reverend Augustine grew quite eager for the day which was to make such manifold perfection his own; was very near giving way to an impatience much more lover-like than saintly when, just three weeks before that happy event, it suddenly became necessary for his lady-love to absent herself for at least one whole day from his side, in obedience to the urgent duty which summoned her to the bedside of a sick friend at M——, about half an hour beyond Spielbad.

Nor was it to the Reverend Augustine alone that this expedition was objectionable. There had been something very like a "row" over it in the little rabbit-hutch; and perhaps had the young confessor been present, his views regarding the saintliness of his fair penitent might have been enlarged, if not modified. But the Reverend Augustine was not present, and the whole brunt of the discussion fell upon papa and mamma, both of whom seemed to regard this purely charitable expedition with feelings of really remarkable aversion.

"You are doing a very foolish thing, Wilhelmina, and a very wrong thing, and I will not aid or abet you in doing it," papa had said in his stateliest and most gentlemanly tones.

Mamma, who was plainer spoken and less refined—indeed, when under the influence of wine, Mr. Brown-Shakylton would sometimes confide to you that Mrs. Shakylton was of very common origin indeed—had plainly told her daughter that she was an idiot and a fool, and would deserve to lose the man altogether.

"And if you do drive him away, Willy," she concluded, "as you certainly will, if he finds you out, you'll get no more chances at your age, you may depend upon it."

"I must and will do it!" she cried vehemently. "This life is killing me. If I go on any longer without some respite, I shall go mad. And as for being found out, I'm sure I'm very much obliged to you, mamma, for your amiable anticipation; but if papa will only do his duty by me, as he ought, there's no fear of that—at all events till—till it's too late to matter."

And so, of course, it ended as usual, in the young lady's will being done. Mamma consented, not without misgivings, to accompany her on her expedition; on which—no doubt, with the charitable design of providing any little luxury of which the sick friend might prove to be in need—they carried with them every fathing on

which they could lay their hands, even down to the fifty pounds received that morning from a rich aunt in England, in reply to a letter pointing out that a little aid now towards the outfit necessary for the marriage, would go far towards placing her affectionate grand-niece in a position to dispense with further assistance. Papa, too, was to do his duty—his duty, in this instance, consisting in occupying the Reverend Augustine's attention all day by one device or another, on no account suffering him to leave Rabagasville for a moment till their return.

But, alas for Wilhelmina and paternal duty! A good-tempered old fellow enough was poor Shakey in his way, and though hopelessly and constitutionally incapable, at the best of times, of appreciating a joke, always prompt enough in his soberer moments to meet it with that courteous semblance of appreciation which really answered all practical purposes of conversation quite as well. But when in his cups, a joke of any kind was a dangerous venture. At such times old Shakey was almost certain to imagine that his dignity was being trampled upon. And it will readily be imagined that, under the circumstances of his career for the last forty years or so, old Shakey stood a good deal upon his dignity.

On this unlucky day poor old Shakey reached his limit very early indeed. It was not merely that he had been ruffled by the little altercation already referred to. There was something about the mission assigned to him, that grated strongly upon the honourable instincts still strong in his padded old breast. And to overcome his repugnance was an affair calling imperatively for the consumption of more than one bottle of the strong Provençal wine. By the time that the Reverend Augustine arrived a catastrophe was imminent. Before they had been half an hour in conversation poor old Shakey had taken dire offence.

"I—think—you—are—very—rude," he had observed in his most measured and stately manner, apropos of some remark of his companion's, with which he himself had about as much to do as the Pope of Rome or the Sultan of Turkey. And thereupon had balanced himself with as much steadiness as he could command upon his tottering old pins and stalked incontinently away, leaving his charge to his own devices.

Whereupon, what must some mischievous sprite put into the head of the Reverend

Augustine, considerably taken aback by this unexpected turn of affairs, but to pay a visit of inspection to the famous gaming-house at Spielbad-super-Mare?

As he entered I was standing just behind Wilhelmina's chair, and saw the look of puzzled astonishment which came over his face as he lounged up to the opposite side of the table and recognised the familiar bonnet and dress. The features he could not at first see; for Wilhelmina, whose star was not that day in the ascendant, had pretty well got to the end of her great aunt's fifty pounds, and was sitting with her head bowed down, and clenched hands pressed tightly against her temples, thinking deeply of her next—but too probably her final—coup.

For a moment he stood watching in mingled doubt and consternation. The next, the flushed and haggard face was lifted up, and doubt and consternation changed swiftly into absolute horror. Another yet, and he was gone; and Wilhelmina, catching a fleeting glimpse of his form as it hurried from the room, caught wildly at her mother's hand and gasped for breath.

"Well, Willy, you have done it now," replied that sympathising matron. "I begged and prayed of you to come away; but you will get so excited when you lose, and now— But, gracious heaven! child—!" And Mrs. Shakyton, in her turn, seized Wilhelmina's wrist, and dragged her to the mirror. "In the name of all that's idiotic, what have you been doing to yourself? Why, your wig is half off your head!"

There is not much more to tell. Indeed, into the scene which followed the return of the discomfited couple, and the retribution which, you may be very sure, fell upon the unfortunate old Shakey, I would rather not even enquire. Before that scene had even commenced the Honourable and Reverend Augustine had already quitted Rabagasville, not even waiting to dismantle the pretty chapel where his innocent Magdalen had so prettily confessed her innocent sins. I have not myself met him since, but I am told that he has considerably "advanced," and, with respect to the celibacy of the priesthood, at all events, now holds the fullest Roman doctrine.

Wilhelmina loses and plays more regularly than ever. I have reason to believe that she is by this time quite twenty-five. But I don't think she is married yet.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXIII. A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

It was a lovely evening. The crescent moon rose high above the tree-tops; the sunset was still red in the west. The secret depths of the wood gave forth their subtle perfume in the cool calm air. The birds were singing in suppressed tones among the low branches. Now and then a bat skimmed across the open glade, and melted into the woodland darkness, or a rabbit flitted past grey and ghostlike. It was an hour when the woods assumed an awful beauty. Not to meet ghosts seemed stranger than to meet them. The shadows of the dead would have been in harmony with the mystic loveliness of this green solitude—a world remote from the track of men.

Even to-night, though her heart was swelling with indignant pain, Violet felt all the beauty of these familiar scenes. They were a part of her life, and so long as she lived she must love and rejoice in them. To-night as she rode quietly along, careful not to hurry Arion after his long day's work, she looked around her with eyes full of deep love and melancholy yearning. It seemed to her to-night that, out of all that had been sweet and lovely in her life, only these forest scenes remained. The dear father had been snatched away: just when she had grown to the height of his stout heart, and had fullest comprehension of his love, and greatest need of his protection. Her mother was a gentle smiling puppet, to whom it were vain to appeal in her necessities. Her mother's husband was an implacable enemy. Rorie,

the friend of her childhood—who might have been so much—had given himself to another. She was quite alone.

"The charcoal-burner in Mark Ash is not so solitary as I am," thought Vixen bitterly. "Charcoal-burning is only part of his life. He has his wife and children in his cottage at home."

By-and-by she came out of the winding forest ways into the straight high-road that led to Briarwood, and now she put her horse at a smart trot, for it was growing dark already, and she calculated that it must be nearly eleven o'clock before she could accomplish what she had to do and get back to the Abbey House. And at eleven doors were locked for the night, and Captain Winstanley made a circuit of inspection, as severely as the keeper of a prison. What would be said if she should not get home till after the gates were locked, and the keys delivered over to that stern janitor?

At last Briarwood came in sight above the dark clumps of beech and oak, a white portico, shining lamp-lit windows. The lodge-gate stood hospitably open, and Violet rode in without question, and up to the pillared porch.

Roderick Vawdrey was standing in the porch smoking. He threw away his cigar as Vixen rode up, and ran down the steps to receive her.

"Why, Violet, what has happened?" he asked, with an alarmed look.

It seemed to him that only sudden death or dire calamity could bring her to him thus, in the late gloaming, pale, and deeply moved. Her lips trembled faintly as she looked at him, and for the moment she could find no words to tell her trouble.

"What is it, Violet?" he asked again,

holding her hand in his, and looking up at her full of sympathy and concern.

"Not very much, perhaps, in your idea of things; but it seems a great deal to me. And it has put me into a tremendous passion. I have come to ask you to do me a favour."

"A thousand favours if you like; and when they are all granted the obligation shall be still on my side. But come into the drawing-room and rest—and let me get you some tea—lemonade—wine—something to refresh you after your long ride."

"Nothing, thanks. I am not going to get off my horse. I must not lose a moment. Why it must be long after nine already, and Captain Winstanley locks up the house at eleven."

Rorie did not care to tell her that it was on the stroke of ten. He called for a servant, and told the man to get Blue Peter saddled that instant.

"Where's your groom, Violet?" he asked, wondering to see her unattended.

"I have no groom. That's just what I came to tell you. Captain Winstanley has dismissed Bates, at a minute's warning, without a character."

"Dismissed old Bates, your father's faithful servant! But in Heaven's name what for?"

"I would rather not tell you that. The alleged reason is an insult to me. I can tell you that it is not for dishonesty, or lying, or drunkenness, or insolence, or any act that a good servant need be ashamed of. The poor old man is cast off for a fault of mine; or for an act of mine, which Captain Winstanley pleases to condemn. He is thrust out of doors, homeless, without a character, after forty years of faithful service. He was with my grandfather, you know. Now, Rorie, I want you to take Bates into your service. He is not so ornamental as a young man, perhaps; but he is ever so much more useful. He is faithful and industrious, honest and true. He is a capital nurse for sick horses; and I have heard my dear father say that he knows more than the common run of veterinary surgeons. I don't think you would find him an encumbrance. Now, dear Rorie," she concluded coaxingly, with innocent childish entreaty, almost as if they had still been children and play-fellows, "I want you to do this for me—I want you to take Bates."

"Why, you dear simple-minded baby, I would take a regiment of Bateses for your sake. Why this is not a favour——"

"It is as if I should entreat you

wear your gloves,'" cried Vixen, quoting Desdemona's speech to her general.

Rorie's ready promise had revived her spirits. She felt that, after all, there was such a thing as friendship in the world. Life was not altogether blank. She forgot that her old friend had given himself away to another woman. She had a knack of forgetting that little fact when she and Rorie were together. It was only in her hours of solitude that the circumstance presented itself distinctly to her mind.

"I am so grateful to you for this, Rorie," she cried. "I cannot tell you what a load you have taken off my mind. I felt sure you would do me this favour. And yet, if you had said No——! It would have been too dreadful to think of. Poor old Bates loafing about Beechdale, living upon his savings! I shall be able to pension him by-and-by, when I am of age; but now I have only a few pounds in the world, the remains of a quarter's pocket-money, according to the view and allowance of the forester," added Vixen, quoting the Forest Law, with a little mocking laugh. "And now good-night; I must go home as fast as I can."

"So you must, but I am coming with you," answered Rorie; and then he roared again in the direction of the stables: "Where's that Blue Peter?"

"Indeed, there is no reason for you to come," cried Vixen. "I know every inch of the Forest."

"Very likely; but I am coming with you, all the same."

A groom led out Blue Peter, a strong useful-looking hack, which Mr. Vawdrey kept to do his dirty work, hunting in bad weather, night-work, and extra journeys of all kinds. Rorie was in the saddle and by Vixen's side without a minute's lost time, and they were riding out of the grounds into the straight road.

They rode for a considerable time in silence. Violet had seldom seen her old friend so thoughtful. The night deepened, the stars shone out of the clear heaven, at first one by one, and then, suddenly, in a multitude that no tongue could number. The leaves whispered and rustled with faint mysterious noises, as Violet and her companion rode slowly down the long steep hill.

"What a beast that Winstanley is!" said Rorie, when they got to the bottom of the hill, as if he had been all this time arriving at an opinion about Violet's step-

father. "I'm afraid he must make your life miserable."

"He doesn't make it particularly happy," answered Vixen quietly; "but I never expected to be happy after mamma married. I did not think there was much happiness left for me after my father's death; but there was at least peace. Captain Winstanley has made an end of that."

"He is a wretch, and I should like to shoot him," said Rorie vindictively. "Dear little Vixen—yes, I must call you by the old pet name—to think that you should be miserable, you whom I remember so bright and happy, you who were born for happiness! But you are not always wretched, dear," he said, leaning over to speak to her in closer, more confidential tones, as if the sleepy birds and the whispering forest leaves could hear and betray him. "You were happy—we were happy—this morning."

He had laid his hand on hers. That useful Blue Peter needed no guidance. They were just leaving the road, and entering a long glade that led through a newly-opened fir plantation, a straight ride of a mile and a half or so. The young moon was gleaming cool and clear above the feathering points of the firs.

"Yes," she answered recklessly, involuntarily, with a stifled sob, "I am always happy with you. You are all that remains to me of my old life."

"My dearest, my loveliest, then be happy for ever!" he cried, winding his arm round her slim waist, and leaning over till his head almost rested on her shoulder. Their horses were close together, walking at a foot-pace, Blue Peter in no wise disconcerted by this extraordinary behaviour of his rider.

"My love, if you can be happy at so small a price, be happy always!" said Rorie, his lips close to the girl's pale cheek, his arm feeling every beat of the passionate heart. "I will break the toils that bind me. I will be yours, and yours only. I have never truly loved anyone but you, and I have loved you all my life—I never knew how dearly till of late. No, dearest love, never did I know how utterly I loved you till these last summer days which we have lived together, alone and supremely happy, in the Forest that is our native land. My Violet, I will break with Mabel to-morrow. She and I were never made for one another. You and I were. Yes, love, yes; we have grown up together side by side, like the primroses and

violets in the woods. It is my second nature to love you. Why should we be parted? Why should I go on acting a dismal farce, pretending love to Mabel, pretending friendship for you—alike false to both? There is no reason, Violet, none—except——"

"Except your promise to your dying mother," said Violet, escaping from his arm, and looking at him steadily, bravely, through the dim light. "You shall not break that for my sake—you ought not, were I ten times a better woman than I am. No, Rorie, you are to do your duty, and keep your word. You are to marry Lady Mabel, and be happy ever after, like the prince in a fairy tale. Depend upon it, happiness always comes in the long run to the man who does his duty."

"I don't believe it," cried Roderick passionately; "I have seen men who have done right all through life—men who have sacrificed feeling to honour, and been miserable. Why should I imitate them? I love you. I loved you always; but my mother worried and teased me, vaunting Mabel's perfections, trying to lessen you in my esteem. And then, when she was dying, and it seemed a hard thing to oppose her wishes, or to refuse her anything, I was weak, and let myself be persuaded, and sold myself into bondage. But it is not too late, Violet. I will write Mabel an honest letter to-morrow, and tell her the truth for the first time in my life."

"You will do nothing of the kind!" cried Violet resolutely. "What, do you think I have no pride—no sense of honour? Do you think I would let it be said of me, that I, knowing you to be engaged to your cousin, set myself to lure you away from her; that we rode together, and were seen together, as careless of slander as if we had been brother and sister; and that the end of all was that you broke your faith to your promised wife in order to marry me? No, Rorie, that shall never be said. If I could stoop so low I should be worthy of the worst word my mother's husband could say of me."

"What does it matter what people say—your mother's husband above all? Malice can always find something evil to say of us, let us shape our lives how we may. What really matters is that we should be happy; and I can be happy with no one but you, Violet. I know that now. I will never marry Mabel Ashbourne."

"And you will never marry me," answered Vixen, giving Arion a light

touch of her whip which sent him flying along the shadowy ride.

Blue Peter followed as swiftly. Rorie was by Violet's side again in a minute, with his hand grasping hers.

"You mean that you don't love me?" he exclaimed angrily. "Why could you not have said so at the first; why have you let me live in a fool's paradise?"

"The paradise was of your own making," she answered. "I love you a little for the past, because my father loved you—because you are all that remains to me of my happy childhood. Yes, if it were not for you, I might look back and think those dear old days were only a dream. But I hear your voice, I look at you, and know that you are real, and that I once was very happy. Yes, Rorie, I do love you—love you—yes, with all my heart, dearer, better than I have ever loved anyone upon this earth, since my father was laid in the ground. Yes, dear." Their horses were walking slowly now; and her hand was locked in his as they rode side by side. "Yes, dear, I love you too well, and you and I must part. I had schooled myself to believe that I loved you only as I might have loved a brother; and you could be Lady Mabel's husband and my true friend. But that was a delusion—that can never be. You and I must part, Rorie. Never any more, by sun or moon, must you and I ride together. It is all over, Rorie, the old childish friendship. I mean to do my duty, and you must do yours."

"I will never marry a woman I do not love."

"You will keep your promise to your mother; you will act as a man of honour should. Think, Rorie, what a shameful thing it would be to do, to break off an engagement which has been so long publicly known, to wound and grieve your good aunt and uncle."

"They have been very kind to me," sighed Rorie. "It would hurt me to give them pain."

His conscience told him she was right, but he was angry with her for being so much wiser than himself.

Then, in a moment, love—that had slumbered long, idly happy in the company of the beloved, and had suddenly awakened to know that this summer-day idleness meant a passion stronger than death—love got the better of conscience, and he cried vehemently:

"What need I care for the duke and duchess! They can have their choice of

husbands for their daughter; an heiress like Mabel has only to smile, and a man is at her feet. Why should I sacrifice myself, love, truth, all that makes life worth having? Do you think I would do it for the sake of Ashbourne, and the honour of being a duke's son-in-law?"

"No, Rorie, but for the sake of your promise. And now look, there is Lyndhurst steeple above the woods. I am near home, and we must say good-night."

"Not till you are at your own gate."

"No one must see you. I want to ride in quietly by the stables. Don't think I am ashamed of my errand to-night. I am not; but I want to save my mother trouble, and if Captain Winstanley and I were to discuss the matter there would be a disturbance."

Roderick Vawdrey seized Arion by the bridle.

"I shall not let you go so easily," he said resolutely. "Vixen, I have loved you ever since I can remember you. Will you be my wife?"

"No."

"Why did you say that you love me?"

"Because I cannot tell a lie. Yes, I love you, Rorie; but I love your honour, and my own, better than the chance of a happiness that might fade and wither before we could grasp it. You will marry Lady Mabel Ashbourne, Rorie: and ten years hence, when we are sober middle-aged people, we shall be firm friends once again, and you will thank and praise me for having counselled you to cleave to the right. Let go the bridle, Rorie, there's no time to lose. There's a glorious gallop from Queen's Bower to the Christchurch Road."

It was a long grassy ride, safe only for those who knew the country well, for it was bordered on each side by treacherous bogs. Violet knew every inch of the way. Arion scented his stable afar off, and went like the wind; Blue Peter stretched his muscular limbs in pursuit. It was a wild ride along the grassy track, beside watery marshes and reedy pools that gleamed in the dim light of a new moon. The distant woods showed black against the sky. There was no light to mark a human habitation within ken. There was nothing but night and loneliness, and the solemn beauty of an unpeopled waste. A forest pony stood here and there—pastern-deep in the sedges—and gazed at those two wild riders, grave and grey, like a ghost. A silvery snake glided across the track; a water-rat plunged,

with a heavy splash, into a black pool as the horses galloped by. It was a glorious ride. Miserable as both riders were, they could not but enjoy that wild rush through the sweet soft air, under the silent stars.

Vixen gave a long sigh presently, when they pulled up their horses on the hard road.

"I think I am 'fey' now," she said. "I wonder what is going to happen to me?"

"Whatever misfortunes come to you henceforth will be your own fault," protested Rorie savagely. "You won't be happy, or make me so."

"Don't be angry with me, Rorie," she answered quite meekly. "I would rather be miserable in my own way than happy in yours."

Arion, having galloped for his own pleasure, would now have liked to crawl. He was beginning to feel the effects of unusual toil, and hung his head despondently; but Vixen urged him into a sharp trot, feeling that matters were growing desperate.

Ten minutes later they were at the lodge leading to the stables. The gate was locked, the cottage wrapped in darkness.

"I must go in by the carriage-drive," said Vixen. "It's rather a bore, as I am pretty sure to meet Captain Winstanley. But it can't be helped."

"Let me go in with you."

"No, Rorie; that would do no good. If he insulted me before you, his insolence would pain me."

"And I believe I should pain him," said Rorie. "I should give him the sweetest horsewhipping he ever had in his life."

"That is to say, you would bring disgrace upon me, and make my mother miserable. That's a man's idea of kindness. No, Rorie, we part here. Good-night, and—good-bye."

"Fiddlesticks!" cried Rorie. "I shall wait for you all to-morrow morning at the kennels."

Vixen had ridden past the open gate. The lodge-keeper stood at his door waiting for her. Roderick respected her wishes and stayed outside.

"Good-night," she cried again, looking back at him; "Bates shall come to you to-morrow morning."

The hall-door was wide open, and Captain Winstanley stood on the threshold, waiting for his step-daughter. One of the underlings from the stable was ready to take her horse. She dismounted unaided,

flung the reins to the groom, and walked up to the captain with her firmest step. When she was in the hall he shut the door, and bolted and locked it with a somewhat ostentatious care. She seemed to breathe less freely when that great door had shut out the cool night. She felt as if she were in a jail.

"I should like half-a-dozen words with you in the drawing-room before you go upstairs," Captain Winstanley said stiffly.

"A hundred, if you choose," answered Vixen, with supreme coolness.

She was utterly fearless. What risks or hazards had life that she need dread? She hoped nothing—feared nothing. She had just made the greatest sacrifice that fate could require of her: she had rejected the man she fondly loved. What were the slings and arrows of her step-father's petty malice compared with such a wrench as that?

She followed Captain Winstanley to the drawing-room. Here there was more air; one long window was open, and the lace curtains were faintly stirred by the night winds. A large lamp burned upon Mrs. Winstanley's favourite table—her books and basket of crewels were there, but the lady of the house had retired.

"My mother has gone to bed, I suppose?" enquired Vixen.

"She has gone to her room, but I fear she is too much agitated to get any rest. I would not allow her to wait here any longer for you."

"Is it so very late?" asked Vixen, with the most innocent air.

Her heart was beating violently, and her temper was not at its best. She stood looking at the captain, with a mischievous sparkle in her eyes, and her whip tightly clenched.

She was thinking of that speech of Rorie's about the "sweetest horsewhipping." She wondered whether Captain Winstanley had ever been horsewhipped. She opined not. The captain was too astute a man to bring himself in the way of such punishment. He would do things that deserved horsewhipping, and get off scot free.

"It is a quarter-past eleven. I don't know whether you think that a respectable hour for a young lady's evening ride. May I ask the motive of this nocturnal expedition?"

"Certainly. You deprived Bates of a comfortable place—he has only been in the situation forty years—and I went to

get him another. I am happy to say that succeeded."

"And pray who is the chivalrous employer willing to receive my dismissed servant without a character?"

"A very old friend of my father's—Mr. Vawdrey."

"I thought as much," retorted the captain. "And it is to Mr. Vawdrey you have been, late at night, unattended?"

"It is your fault that I went unattended. You have taken upon yourself to dismiss my groom—the man who broke my first pony, the man my father gave me for an attendant and protector, just as he gave me my horse. You will take upon yourself to sell my horse next, I suppose?"

"I shall take a great deal more upon myself before you and I have done with each other, Miss Tempest," answered the captain, pale with passion.

Never had Vixen seen him so strongly moved. The purple veins stood out darkly upon his pale forehead, his eyes had a raggard look; he was like a man consumed inwardly by some evil passion that was stronger than himself, like a man possessed by devils. Vixen looked at him with wonder. They stood facing each other, with the lamplit table between them, the light shining on both their faces.

"Why do you look at me with that provoking smile?" he asked. "Do you want to exasperate me? You must know that I hate you."

"I do," answered Vixen; "but God only knows why you should do so."

"Do you know no reason?"

"No."

"Can't you guess one?"

"No; unless it is because my father's fortune will belong to me by-and-by, if I live to be five-and-twenty, and your position here will be lessened."

"That is not the reason; no, I am not so base as that. That is not why I hate you, Violet. If you had been some dumpy, comely, country lass, you and I might have got on decently enough. I would have made you obey me; but I would have been kind to you. But you are something very different. You are the girl I would have perilled my soul to win—the girl who rejected me with careless scorn. Have you forgotten that night in the Pavilion Garden at Brighton? I have not. I never look up at the stars without remembering it; and I can never forgive you while that memory lives in my mind. If you had been my wife, Violet, I would

have been your slave. You forced me to make myself your step-father; and I will be master instead of slave. I will make your life bitter to you if you thwart me. I will put a stop to your running after another woman's sweetheart. I will come between you and your lover, Roderick Vawdrey. Your secret meetings, your clandestine love-making, shall be stopped. Such conduct as you have been carrying on of late is a shame and disgrace to your sex."

"How dare you say that?" cried Vixen, beside herself with anger.

She grasped the lamp with both her hands, as if she would have hurled it at her foe. It was a large moon-shaped globe upon a bronze pedestal—a fearful thing to fling at one's adversary. A great wave of blood surged up into the girl's brain. What she was going to do she knew not; but her whole being was convulsed by the passion of that moment. The room reeled before her eyes, the heavy pedestal swayed in her hands, and then she saw the big moonlike globe roll on to the carpet, and after it, and darting beyond it, a stream of liquid fire, that ran, and ran, quicker than thought, towards the open window.

Before she could speak or move, the flame had ran up the lace curtain, like a living thing, swift as the flight of a bird or the gliding motion of a lizard. The wide casement was wreathed with light. They two—Vixen and her foe—seemed to be standing in an atmosphere of fire.

Captain Winstanley was confounded by the suddenness of the catastrophe. While he stood dumb, bewildered, Vixen sprang through the narrow space between the flaming curtains, as if she had plunged into a gulf of fire. He heard her strong clear voice calling to the stablemen and gardeners. It rang like a clarion in the still summer night.

There was not a moment lost. The stablemen rushed with pails of water, and directly after them the Scotch gardener with his garden-engine, which held several gallons. His hose did some damage to the drawing-room carpet and upholstery, but the strong jet of water speedily quenched the flames. In ten minutes the window stood blank, and black, and bare, with Vixen standing on the lawn outside, contemplating the damage she had done.

Mrs. Winstanley rushed in at the drawing-room door, ghostlike, in her white peignoir, pale and scared.

"Oh, Conrad, what has happened?" she cried distractedly, just able to distinguish

her husband's figure standing in the midst of the disordered room.

"Your beautiful daughter has been trying to set the house on fire," he answered. "That is all."

CHAPTER XXXIV. "THAT MUST END AT ONCE."

A QUARTER of an hour later, when all the confusion was over, Violet was kneeling by her mother's chair, trying to restore tranquillity to Mrs. Winstanley's fluttered spirits. Mother and daughter were alone together in the elder lady's dressing-room, the disconsolate Pamela sitting like Niobe amidst her scattered fineries, her pomade-pots and powder-boxes, fan-cases and jewel-caskets, and all the arsenal of waning beauty.

"Dear mother," pleaded Violet, with unusual gentleness, "pray don't give way to this unnecessary grief. You cannot surely believe that I tried to set this dear old house on fire—that I could be so foolish—granting even that I were wicked enough to do it—as to destroy a place I love—the house in which my father was born! You can't believe such a thing, mother."

"I know that you are making my life miserable," sobbed Mrs. Winstanley, feebly dabbing her forehead with a handkerchief steeped in eau-de-cologne, "and I am sure Conrad would not tell a falsehood."

"Perhaps not," said Vixen with a gloomy look. "We will take it for granted that he is perfection, and could not do wrong. But in this case he is mistaken. I felt quite capable of killing him, but not of setting fire to this house."

"Oh," wailed Pamela distractedly, "this is too dreadful! To think that I should have a daughter who confesses herself at heart a murderess."

"Unhappily it is true, mother," said Vixen, moodily contrite. "For just that one moment of my life I felt a murderous impulse—and from the impulse to the execution is a very short step. I don't feel myself very superior to the people who are hanged at Newgate, I assure you."

"What is to become of me?" enquired Mrs. Winstanley in abject lamentation. "It is too hard that my own daughters should be a source of misery in my married life, that she should harden her heart against the best of step-fathers, and try, yes, actually try, to bring discord between me and the husband I love. I don't know what I have done that I should be so miserable."

"Dear mother, only be calm and listen to me," urged Violet, who was very calm herself, with a coldly resolute air which

presently obtained ascendancy over her agitated parent. "If I have been the source of misery, that misery cannot too soon come to an end. I have long felt that I have no place in this house—that I am one too many in our small family. I feel now—yes, mamma, I feel and know that the same roof cannot cover me and Captain Winstanley. He and I can no longer sit at the same board, or live in the same house. That must end at once."

"What complaint can you have to make against him, Violet?" cried her mother hysterically, and with a good deal more dabbing of the perfumed handkerchief upon her fevered brow. "I am sure no father could be kinder than Conrad would be to you, if you would only let him. But you have set yourself against him from the very first. It seems as if you grudged me my happiness."

"It shall seem so no longer, mamma. I will cease to be a thorn in your garland of roses," replied Vixen, with exceeding bitterness. "I will leave the Abbey House directly any other home can be found for me. If dear old McCroke would take care of me I should like to go abroad, somewhere very far, to some strange place, where all things would be different and new to me," continued Vixen, unconsciously betraying that aching desire for forgetfulness natural to a wounded heart. "Sweden, or Norway, for instance. I think I should like to spend a year in one of those cold strange lands, with good old McCroke for my companion. There would be nothing to remind me of the Forest," she concluded with a stifled sob.

"My dear Violet, you have such wild ideas," exclaimed her mother with an injured air. "It is just as Conrad says. You have no notion of the proprieties. Sweden or Norway, indeed! What would people say, I wonder?"

"Ah, what indeed, mamma? Perhaps they might for once say what is true: that I could not get on with Captain Winstanley, and so was forced to find another home."

"And what a reproach that would be to me," cried her mother. "You are so selfish, Violet; you think of no one but yourself."

"Perhaps that is because nobody else thinks of me, mother."

"How can you say such abominable things, Violet? Am I not thinking of you this moment? I am sure I have thought of you this evening until my head aches. You force one to think about you, when you behave in such a disgraceful manner."

"What have I done that is disgraceful, mamma? I have ridden out at an unusual hour to get a place for an old servant—a man who has served in this house faithfully for forty years. That is what I have done, and I should not be ashamed if it were known to everybody in Hampshire. Yes, even to Lady Mabel Ashbourne, that pattern of chilly propriety. The disgrace is Captain Winstanley's. It is he who ought to be ashamed of turning off my father and grandfather's old servant. What you have to be sorry for, mamma, is that you have married a man capable of such an action."

"How dare you speak against him?" cried the offended wife. "He has done everything for the best. It was your own foolish conduct that obliged him to dismiss Bates. To think that a daughter of mine should have so little self-respect as to go roaming about the Forest with an engaged man! It is too dreadful."

"You need not make yourself unhappy about the engaged man, mamma," said Vixen scornfully. "He is out of danger. Rorie and I need never see each other again. I should be more than content that it should be so. Only arrange with Captain Winstanley for some allowance to be made me—just money enough to enable me to live abroad with dear old McCroke. I want no gaities, I want no fine dresses. The simplest mode of life, in a strange country, will suit me best."

"I can't bear the idea of your going away," whimpered Mrs. Winstanley. "People will talk so. A step-father's is such a delicate position. People are sure to say cruel things about Conrad. And it is all your fault, Violet. We might have lived so happily together if you had liked."

"We might, perhaps, mamma; but I don't think any of us knew the way. Captain Winstanley could hardly expect that to sell my father's favourite horse was the shortest way to my liking; and that's how he began his reign in this house. Don't let us talk any more, my dear mother. Words are useless to heal such wounds as ours. Good-night. Sleep well, and forget all about me. To-morrow you and the captain can give me my liberty."

"I thought you were so fond of the Abbey House," moaned her mother.

"So I was when it was home. It has ceased to be my home, and I shall be glad to leave it."

"Oh, Violet, you have a hard heart."

"Good-night, mamma."

She was gone, leaving Mrs. Winstanley

feebly moaning, and vaguely dabbing her forehead, feeling that the Fates had not been kind to her. Life seemed to have gone all askew. Nothing was smooth or pleasant in an existence whose halcyon calm had once been undisturbed by so much as a crumpled rose-leaf.

Vixen went straight to her room, accompanied by Argus, who had followed her from the hall to the door of her mother's dressing-room, and had waited patiently for her in the corridor, with his head leaning against the closed door, as if he scented trouble within.

When girl and dog were alone together, Violet flung herself on the ground, threw her arms round the mastiff's thick neck, and let her tears flow freely against that faithful head.

"Oh, Argus," she cried piteously, "you are the only friend left me in this wide world!"

ABOUT TEETH.

TEETH have been both a source of trouble and vanity to their possessors from all time, as they still continue to be. Dentists were common among the Egyptians, on the authority of Herodotus, and the extraction of teeth was known to the ancient Greeks. Sprengel, in his History of Medicine, says: "Even surgical instruments were bequeathed by the inventors to these sacred shrines of medicine. Thus, Erasistratus presented to the Delphic Temple of Apollo an instrument for extracting teeth." The Romans were acquainted with the use of false teeth, and they are mentioned both by Horace and Martial. Among the ancient Jews it was a violation of the Sabbath to wear a false tooth on that day. Teeth which have been found at Pompeii were very sound, a discovery which led to the supposition that the people of that ancient city did not indulge in the luxuries which have attended the progressive march of civilisation.

Artificial teeth became known in England, it is supposed, about the fifteenth or sixteenth century. They are mentioned in the Mathematical Jewel, 1585; and Ben Jonson, in the Silent Woman, refers to them:

"OTTER (speaking of his wife): A most vile face! and yet she spends me forty pound a year in mercury and hog's bones. All her teeth were made in the Black Friars."

Among the lower races of mankind the defacing of teeth has always been universally prevalent. There are various reasons given for the practice, two of which are cited in Tylor's *Primitive Culture*. The Penongs of Burmah, and the Batoka of East Africa, both break their front teeth, one saying that it is not to look like apes, the other that it is to be like oxen and not like zebras. But among a people who cannot by any perversion of language be called a "lower race," to wit, the Japanese, the defacing of teeth is also practised; the brides in Japan having theirs blackened by some corrosive liquid which is effective for lifetime, and is intended to show that they are married or in the estate of widowhood. This custom may have become obsolete to some extent since the recent advance of the Japanese in western civilisation.

It is generally supposed that teeth are not cut more than twice in a lifetime, once during babyhood, and again in youth. Several instances, however, of tooth-cutting in old age have, at various times, been brought to notice. In a *Commonplace*, written by Thomas Rawlins, of Pophills, between 1724 and 1734, some wonderful cases are related. He mentions the case of one lady, of the mature age of one hundred and twelve, who cut a new set, and another of a mere boy of one hundred and nine, who similarly distinguished himself. An instance of tooth-cutting in advanced age, and its effect upon the person who experienced it, is given by a correspondent in an early number of *Notes and Queries*, who, after referring to the case, says: "A remarkable circumstance in this case is that she has cut an incisive tooth in the lower jaw within the last few weeks, and is now cutting another, which fact confirms her in the strange belief that she is leading a post-mortem existence, and has commenced at infancy again; for upon one of her daughters asking me if I thought it probable she would die, she exclaimed angrily: 'How can I die twice? I am only a child; see, I have not cut all my teeth yet.'" This post-youthful tooth-cutting is accompanied with much pain, as would indeed seem probable from its very strangeness, and has even resulted in the death of the individual. Dr. Samuel Croxall, the translator of *Æsop's Fables*, is said to have died of a fever occasioned by the pain of cutting a new set of teeth at the age of ninety-three.

There was a custom in olden time of sealing with the tooth, upon which, how-

ever, some doubt has been cast by several learned in antiquarian matters. Deeds used to be sealed with the Royal Eye Tooth; as a writer in *Notes and Queries* says:

Ancient deed-writers to confirm the truth,
Would seal their weighty parchments with a tooth.

A deed (believed by some to be Apocryphal) quoted in Blount's *Ancient Tenures*, anno 1679, is said to have been given by William the Conqueror to an ancestor of the Hopton family, conveying to him a manor, and the grant is confirmed by the king thus:

To witness that this is sooth,
I bite the white wax with my tooth.

Miss Strickland alludes to this charter in her celebrated work, and says: "Biting the white wax was supposed to give particular authenticity to conveyances from the Crown, which were formerly only furnished with a proof impression of the royal eye-tooth, familiarly called the 'fang-tooth.' This custom, arising in remote antiquity, was needlessly adopted by the Norman line of sovereigns." Others suppose the custom to have been adopted only by people of inferior rank, who did not possess a seal.

The folk-lore of teeth forms no small division of the rather considerable subject of teeth-lore, and may be divided into two parts: folk-lore affecting teeth to come, and folk-lore affecting teeth that exist.

The lower orders and the Negroes in New Brunswick commonly believe that if a person can refrain from putting the tongue into the cavity caused by the extraction of a tooth, the successor will be a golden one. The same belief is prevalent in Yorkshire and the south of Ireland. In the west of Scotland it is believed that if the tongue is put into the cavity, another tooth will not grow in its place. In Rutland, says Cuthbert Bede, there is a belief that if a baby's first tooth be cut in the upper jaw, the child will not live. Dr. Livingstone, in his *Missionary Travels in South Africa*, mentions a similar belief which prevails there: "In several tribes a child which is said to 'tlola,' transgress, is put to death. 'Tlolo,' or transgression, is ascribed to several curious causes. A child who cut the upper front teeth before the under was always put to death among the Bakaa, and, I believe, also among the Bakwains."

In Norfolk and Antrim an extracted tooth is thrown away, in order that a dog's tooth may not grow in its place. If a dog

got hold of the extracted tooth, and swallowed it, there would be great danger. In the Lowlands of Scotland the custom is to burn the tooth to prevent the possibility, or perhaps we should say certainty, of having a successor projecting forward. In other parts of Scotland the charm consists in throwing the tooth over the left shoulder, and the charm is only successful should the person not be able to find the tooth again.

There is a belief among some people that if the upper incisors are large, one will live to be rich. And that if teeth are wide apart, one will be lucky, and have a propensity for travel. Others, again, say this latter peculiarity denotes good singers.

To be born with teeth is unfortunate, and is alluded to by Shakespeare among the evil omens attending the birth of Gloucester.

There is a very general custom prevalent throughout England of burning extracted teeth. The reasons given are various. By some it is averred that general ill-luck will follow, and that one's ghost will be put to the inconvenience of visiting the earth to look after the teeth should they not be burnt. Another piece of Lancashire folk-lore says that if an extracted tooth is thrown into the fire, the thrower will not have to look for it when he or she dies. In many parts of England and Scotland it is customary to burn an old tooth with a pinch of salt thrown into the fire with it, and the Swiss women have this custom too. The teeth of children when they cut their second set are thrown into the fire in Sweden as a sort of offering. In Anatolia they say that an extracted tooth should be buried in the ground, and then money will be found or obtained.

Wolves' teeth were considered lucky, as will appear from the following letter from Lady Wentworth to her son, Lord Strafford, written in 1713:

"I have made your daughter a present of a wolf's tooth. I sent to Ireland for it, and I set it hear in gold. They ar very Luckey things; for my twoe ferst one did dye, the other bred his very ill, and none of ye Best did, for I had one for al the rest."

Of the many ills the flesh is heir to, none is, perhaps, more general than toothache—we speak feelingly—commonly called in Norfolk, for some occult reason, the "love-pain." Shakespeare well says:

There was never yet philosopher
That could endure the toothache patiently.

Many are the remedies which have been

devised for the cure of this foe to peaceful sleep and contented wakefulness, and sufferers may be glad to note a few of those which follow. The writer, be it understood, declines either to vouch for the efficacy of any, or to hold himself responsible for any consequences which may follow their application.

In the Roman Calendar the patron saint of those afflicted with toothache is found in St. Apollonia. She is specially invoked by racked sufferers, according to Bishop Jewel; and the *Fantassie of Idolatrie*, printed in Foxe's Acts and Monuments, has:

To Saynt Syth for my purse;
Saynt Loye saue my horse;
For my teth to Saynt Apolyne.

In the Royal Library at Stockholm is preserved a MS. charm for toothache, consisting of a Latin prayer to this saint. At Bonn-on-the-Rhine a tooth, said to have been one of hers, is shown in a glass case in the church on the saint's day, and is devoutly kissed—i.e. the case containing the tooth, not the precious relic itself—by people of both sexes, as a preventive against toothache.

One of the most popular charms against the complaint consists in carrying the following form of words somewhere about the person: "Ass Sant Petter sat at the gates of Jerusalem our Blessed Lord and Seavour Jesus Crist passed by and sead, What Eleth thee hee sead Lord my Teeth ecketh hee sead arise and follow me and thy Teeth shall never Eake Eney moor. Fiat+Fiat+Fiat." This is a transcript of a Lancashire version, and should be worn inside the vest or stays over the left breast.

Under slightly differing forms this charm is very common throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland. Two copies are preserved in the Edinburgh Museum which were worn as late as 1855 and 1869. Another form of written charm was given up by a young woman at Chelsea to the late Cardinal Weld. It was carefully sealed, the penalty for opening it being a return of the toothache, and consisted of the words:

Good devil cure her,
And take her for your pains.

A cure the girl would probably dislike at the cost. Bishop Hall, in his character of Vertues and Vices, says of the superstitious man: "He wears Paracelsian characters for the toothache."

Henderson, in his Folk-lore of the Northern Counties of England, has the

following: "For toothache there is a remedy also. The inhabitants of Stamfordham, the Northumbrian village named above, have been accustomed to walk to Winter's gibbet, on Elsdon Moor, some ten or twelve miles off, for a splinter of wood to cure the toothache. How the wood was to be applied, we are not told, but the remedy sounds almost as ghastly as that resorted to for the same purpose at Tavistock, in Devonshire—biting a tooth out of a skull in the churchyard, and keeping it always in the pocket." This last belief is also current in Durham. In Hampshire it is believed that if a molar tooth be taken from some grave in the churchyard, and carried, hung round the neck, the toothache will be effectually kept away. In the Netherlands it is said that rubbing a tooth with a bone from the churchyard is an infallible cure. An instance is known of a person in Dublin who went to a graveyard with a sharp-pointed piece of wood, and, with the aching tooth, pushed it into a newly-covered grave, in the belief that by so doing the pain would cease. Drinking water from a skull is, in some parts of Ireland, supposed to be an infallible cure. We may here quote an extract from an American (Iowa) newspaper, which is in keeping with the nature of the foregoing pleasant cures:

"Chatting with an aged lady, we noticed the wonderful preservation and beauty of her teeth, and could not refrain from mentioning it. 'Yes,' she said, 'I never had a toothache or lost a tooth, because I bit the snake.' On enquiry she stated that, when children at home, their father had made them bite a rattlesnake, he holding the reptile by the head and tail. Each child bit along the entire length of the backbone, not violently, but just so as to indent the skin; and this was considered an infallible recipe against toothache and decay, and which the old lady believes up to the present hour."

In Sussex they say that if one always clothes the right leg first—i.e. put the right stocking on before the left, put the right leg into the trowsers first, foot into boot, &c.—one will never have the toothache.

In Wiltshire one of the forelegs of a mole, and one of its hind legs, placed in a bag, and hung round the neck, is considered a certain preventive. In Staffordshire and Shropshire two paws of a live mole must be cut off and worn, a dexter-paw being cut off if the toothache is on

the right side, and vice versa. A gypsy cure, unlike the last in its barbarity, but similar in one way, consists in placing a poultice of finely scraped horse-radish on the wrist of the right hand if the aching tooth be on the left side of the mouth, and vice versa, and the pain will at once cease. In a MS. preserved at Stockholm, the following charm is found: "Take an erbe yt is clepyd bursa pastoris, and if ye ache of ye teeth in ye ryth syde of yi mowth, putte ye forseide erbe in ye lefte scho be ye bare plante of ye foths."

The parings of finger and toe nails wrapped in a piece of paper, and slipped into the trunk of an ash-tree through an incision under the bark, closed up afterwards as much as possible, is believed in Rossendale as a sure preventive. In Gloucestershire, if all the nails are cut on the hands and feet before sunrise on Good Friday, and put into a piece of paper and kept in the pocket, it is believed the charm will be effectual. Another Gloucestershire belief should be mentioned. At Churcham the parish monthly nurse was in the habit of washing out the mouth of a newly baptised infant with what remained of the water of baptism, assuring the vicar that it was a safeguard against toothache.

Aubrey, in his *Miscellanies*, says: "To cure the toothache, take a new nail and make the gum bleed with it, and then drive it into an oak;" and naively adds: "This did cure William Neal, Sir William Neal's son, a very stout gentleman, when he was almost mad with the pain, and had a mind to have pistolled himself." Sir Kenelm Digby mentions the same cure, slightly different in process, and a proof of the belief as still existing was not many years ago given in Wiltshire. Aubrey also quotes from Ashmole's MSS. the following charm, to be written three times, and as the words are said, one paper is to be burnt, then another, and then the last:

Mars, hurs, abursa, aburse,
Jesu Christ, for Mary's sake,
Take away this toothache.

To eat no flesh on Easter Day is good for the toothache, according to Netherlands belief. In Denmark it is considered that an evil spirit dwells in the afflicted tooth, and a Danish remedy therefore consists in taking an elder twig, first putting it into the mouth, then sticking it in the wall, saying: "Depart, thou evil spirit." A double nut carried in the pocket is used as a charm in some parts of England.

Among the Jews a person with the toothache was not allowed to rinse his mouth with vinegar on the Sabbath day, but might hold it in his mouth and swallow it.

There is a wide-spread belief, in many parts of the world, that a worm in the tooth or jawbone is the cause of toothache. Shakespeare, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, makes Don Pedro say :

What sigh for the toothache ?

LEON : Where is but a humour or a worm.

In Orkney, and other parts of Scotland, this belief is prevalent, and in Orkney the charm anent St. Peter is used. In Lancashire and Derbyshire the belief is also common, and those in the latter county who wish to be cured should mix a little dry powdered herbs, and place them in a teacup, into which a live coal from the fire should be dropped. Then hold the mouth over the cup and inhale the smoke as long as possible. After this the cup should be taken away and a fresh one, or a glass containing water, brought in, into which one should breathe hard for a few seconds, when lo! the worm will be seen in the water, and the cure is complete. The country people in Germany favour this belief, and in North Germany, according to Thorpe, "when a person has the toothache, let him go and complain to a tree, by preference to a pear-tree. This is to be done by taking hold of the tree, going thrice round it, and saying :

'Pear-tree, I complain to thee,

Three worms sting me ;

The one is grey, the second is blue, the third is red,
I would wish they were all three dead.

In the name, &c.' "

In New Zealand the superstition is also believed, and a charm for the occasion is thus translated by Shortland :

An eel, a spiny back,

True indeed, indeed : true in sooth, in sooth.

You must eat the head

Of said spiny back.

The dentists in China pretend to cure the toothache by showing a small worm which they manage to palm off upon their patients.

Rural dentists in France, the writer has been told, are in the habit of extracting a tooth from the jaw of one person, and placing it straightway into the vacant cavity waiting for it in another person's jaw. It is supposed that the transplanted tooth will flourish in its new ground.

The people of Carnarvonshire and other parts of Wales recommend the following cure for the toothache: Let the patient fill his mouth with cold water, and sit on

a griddle placed over the fire for the purpose, and remain seated there until the water boils in his mouth. Which is, of course, impossible, and therefore intended to show the impossibility of attempting to cure the complaint which never yet philosopher—and how much less an ordinary unthinking mortal—could endure patiently.

SOMETHING NEW AT SEA.

If there is nothing new under the sun, as to which we are sceptical, it is consolatory to know there will soon be something new under water.

Some half-a-dozen years ago, an imaginative writer, not, we think, altogether unknown to the readers of *ALL THE YEAR ROUND*, recounted the extraordinary achievements of a certain Captain Grimsby and his good ship the *Anti-Torpedo*, when combatting single-handed against the fleets of England's foes. So rapidly does invention march that the very Munchausenisms of yesterday rank among the realities of to-day. According to late advices from the other side of the Atlantic, the wondrous exploits of the mythical Grimsby are destined to be rivalled, if not outdone, as soon as an occasion offers, by the officer fortunate enough to be put in command of a novel war-ship, designed by Captain Ericsson of Monitor fame, and by him dubbed "The Destroyer," in modest anticipation of its possible performances.

At the time we write, this outcome of destructive ingenuity lies made fast to a pier at New York, receiving the final touches of the workmen's hands, but so near actual completion as to be pronounced by its sponsor exactly what he expected it would be ; that is to say, an invulnerable craft, capable of darting through the water at a hitherto unheard of rate of speed, approach an ironclad near enough to touch her and discharge a torpedo, exploding at the instant of contact with sufficient force to blow open her sides, and send her to the bottom in less than a minute.

The Destroyer is an iron torpedo-boat, measuring a hundred and thirty feet from stem to stern, with twelve feet beam in the broadest part; the last dozen feet of the stern ranging from two feet to a few inches in width. In shape, the vessel is very like a shark—if one can imagine a flat-backed species of that ocean terror—the bow

bulging out suddenly at one point, just as the shark's head broadens behind the eyes. "But the curves," says our authority, "are scientifically developed, so that the resistance of the water, even here, will be comparatively slight. It was necessary to build the Destroyer after this model, because from a point near the bows the torpedo will be discharged. Thence back to the stern the curve is extremely slight proportionately to the length, and the stern itself is as delicately lengthened and pointed as the terminal fin of the shark."

The vessel's hold, ten feet in depth, is covered with an iron deck. Here are two enormous boilers, seemingly out of all proportion for the engine, which is a small one of a peculiar construction, with a capacity equal to a thousand horse-power, and equal, it is hoped, to easily driving the boat along at a rate of twenty-five miles an hour. Save that the blades are rather more curved than usual, there is nothing uncommon in the screw.

The projectiles to be employed are ordinary cigar-shaped torpedoes, sixteen feet long by two deep, charged with dynamite, to be impelled through tubes issuing from openings in the bulging part of the bow, at a rate of sixty miles an hour for the first eighty or a hundred yards, as soon as the compressed air-engine is set to work.

That we may thoroughly understand what is expected of the Destroyer, we are asked to imagine that a fleet of ironclads, led by the Devastation, has passed the Narrows, intent upon capturing the empire city. The Destroyer is cruising in the upper bay, and her captain descries the coming enemy. The lower deck is instantly closed; the officers and crew of twelve retire into the hold. The look-out officer goes to his post in the ship's bow, and directs the steering. Water is let in between the main and lower decks, and the Destroyer gradually sinks until nothing of her is above water but her smoke-stack, bow, and officers' quarters. The engineer brings up the pressure of his giant boilers, and the Destroyer is turned head on towards the advancing fleet.

Suspicious of the strange thing, the captain of the leading ironclad might fire a shot or two, and then, if the moving smoke-stack did not stop, might send in a broadside. After the smoke cleared away, probably all that could be seen would be the black bow, a broken smoke-stack, and shattered officers' quarters, but the bow

would be seen to be moving along at a frightful speed. Down in the hold a torpedo, charged with dynamite, is being placed in the pneumatic tube, and the air-compressing engines are charging the tube. The officer, with his eyes at the look-out, steers the Destroyer straight towards the ironclad, and directs the torpedo-firers just where to aim the missile. When a hundred yards, more or less, away, he will give the order, the torpedo is released, and with a pressure of two hundred and fifty pounds an inch at its flat back, it shoots six or eight feet under water at cannon-ball velocity towards the ironclad, and strikes it somewhere on the hull. There will be little noise, but the water will be churned some, and the ironclad will lurch and quiver, settle and sink, probably before anyone has the slightest chance to escape. But the Destroyer, with another torpedo in the tube, passes on to the next ironclad, and in a few minutes that disappears, and so on through the fleet. In a short time they are all gone. Then the Destroyer will pump out the water between her decks, and the two feet of black sides will rise, and the officers and men come to the deck and get a breath of air. They are not grimy with powder, and have not been suffocated with smoke. How they have contrived to live in the heated hold without a breath of air, our informant does not condescend to explain.

Battles are easily won upon paper. Of course, Captain Ericsson believes that such a feat as that so glibly described is quite within the powers of his grimly-named craft. He goes farther, and predicts that it is the Destroyer's mission to practically put an end to naval warfare altogether, by rendering ironclad war-ships useless, and removing any necessity for erecting coast fortifications, "while it, and others like it, do the humane work of keeping the sea free for peaceful commerce."

We have heard too many such prophecies to believe in the sanguine Swede's expectations being realised. Nations are none the less ready to fight out their quarrels with big guns, rifles, and torpedoes, than they were eager to try conclusions with lance, sword, and bow. The Destroyer may prove as potent a fighting ship as its inventor hopes, but what then? Those who improved upon the Monitor will improve upon the Destroyer, and still hold the supremacy of the seas. Just as a squadron of line-of-battle ships used to have its complement of frigates, so a fleet

of heavily-armed ironclads would be provided with a due number of Destroyers, and the naval battles of the future will be fought under, as well as above, water.

As soon as the success of the Destroyer is assured beyond doubt, Captain Ericsson intends "to crown a life devoted to invention, by the production of an engine, where motive power is supplied by solar heat." Seeing he has nearly reached threescore-and-ten, it is to be lamented such a would-be benefactor of his species should have set the crowning work of his life aside for the sake of making war more murderous than it is, and risked his chance of accomplishing something really deserving the world's gratitude.

A NIGHT WITH THE SARDINES.

"SARDINA, sardina—Sardi-i-i-na fresca-a-a-a!"

"Sardines, sardines—fresh sardines!"

Such was the shrill cry that roused me at dawn on the first morning of my presence in Lequeitio.

Lequeitio is an ancient and not much frequented seaport on the coast of Vizcaya, almost impracticable to the stranger even in fine weather, owing to its numerous outlying rocks, just awash, and utterly unapproachable in half a gale. It is charmingly situated on the inner bend of a small gulf, and is protected from the full force of the Biscayan waves by an island, which stands in the centre of the curve forming the miniature bay of golden sand. Legend tells us that in times gone by its mariners and galleys were renowned in the crasading fleets; and there are brasses in the crumbling cathedral-like church of cross-legged knights, who, weary of smiting the Moor within their own realm of Spain, had sailed from the Vizcaino port to strike the Infidel on Syrian shores. From here, too, were furnished six caravels, with their sailors, bombardiers, and men-at-arms, for service with the Great Armada. More recently, vessels sailed regularly for the Greenland whale-fisheries, but this enterprise has long ceased to exist.

The Basque seamen retain their reputation as being the best in Spain, and I can vouch that the fishermen of Lequeitio are as fine and handy a set of fellows as a skipper need choose from. In their long, undecked, light-built galleys, manned by a patron and fourteen oarsmen, rowing double-banked, when not under sail, they put to

sea, sometimes never to return. The Bay of Biscay is not the safest crasading ground for fishing craft, and despite the weather wisdom of old salts, a fleet will creep out in a dead calm, the men pulling sturdily at their long sweeps to make a good offing; at times striving madly, boat against boat, when a shoal of fish is sighted, for the first cast of the net is everything. I have often, from the rocky cliffs, watched the galleys darting from point to point until lost beyond the vapoury horizon line; and then, perhaps, later on, a narrow dark belt is seen in the north-west, faint and indistinct at first, but coming up, as seamen say, hand over hand. The oily swell that has lazily heaved in the sunlight loses its glassy glimmer, both sky and sea darken, and away, on the verge of sight, white crests are seen beneath the leaden cloud. They are the sea-horses racing madly in, to dash themselves against the rocky shore, scattering foam to the very summit of the cliff. Well do I remember such a scene, when, crouching behind a mass of sheltering granite, I glanced anxiously seawards. At first I could scarcely see through the watery mist, with which the howling blast filled my eyes. Where were the boats? And soon the mental question was echoed in agonised tones close by, for mothers and wives had climbed to where I stood.

"Holy Mary! where are they?" "Mother of God! be merciful to them." "Here, Petra, take the glass, your sight is stronger than mine." "Tell us, senor, can you see anything?"

Suddenly the girl who held the glass cried, "A sail, a sail!" and one after the other eagerly scanned the storm-lashed distance; and finally the telescope was handed to me, and all were silent while I carefully got the range and swept the crested waves.

"Yes, there is a sail—wait, do not crowd me or I shall lose the line—yes, and another, and another, and still another."

Here there was a wild burst of feeling, many of the women sinking to their knees to pray, and laugh, and cry hysterically.

Now rising, now lost to sight, I counted six; at first uncertain specks, but nearing rapidly under a single sail, reefed to nothing; and there could be no further doubt that six galleys were holding their own, and if they could wind their course through the rocky channel between the island and the mainland, they were safe. The little canvas they had spread was wanted to steady them, and they were

coming on to the narrow entrance at a tearing pace, with the storm-rush nearly aft. He must be a good man at the steering-oar, for to miscalculate a yard would mean a crash and an end to further hope.

"But there should be seven; look again, senior, the other cannot be far behind."

I swept and re-swept the horizon, besides carefully going over the intervening space to the rear of the galleys, that now were almost home. The missing boat was so far behind that it would never make Lequeitio again. Turning to the women, who anxiously waited my answer, I shook my head.

They stared at me for an instant, then advanced to the very verge of the cliff, some pressing their hands tightly over the throbbing heart, some counting, again and again, the rising and falling boats, until at last there could be no earthly doubt but that a galley was wanting to complete the number. There was a terrible wailing shriek when it was realised that one might be lost, and down the steep path they rushed with uplifted arms, each praying that the missing boat might not be that which held husband or son.

But I am wandering from the occasion of my first visit to Lequeitio, and will go back, if you please, to the point from which I started. I must tell you that I am now writing of May, 1875, a period when the Carlist War was desolating the north of Spain. I had been following, as correspondent, the movements of the Legitimist forces, and being weary and worn, had made for Lequeitio in search of renovating sea-breezes and a few days of peace and quiet. The shrill cry of the fishwomen reminded me that I was no longer in the trenches about Valmaseda and Orduna, and that to see the boats come in from their night's work would be worth the rising an hour or two earlier than usual. It may be as well to mention that the fishing, at the time I speak of, was mostly carried on between darkness and daylight, to avoid attracting the attention of the government cruisers, which were in the habit of prowling along the coast; and it frequently happened that they dropped, when least expected, on the unfortunate galleys, making a prize of boat, crew, and fish. As Lequeitio, besides other Vizcaino and Guipuzcaino ports, was in possession of the Carlists, such captures were considered perfectly legitimate, and it sometimes chanced that a galley, trying to escape, would be cut in two by a shot

and all hands drowned. So under these circumstances the patrons and men preferred night work, and generally managed to run in safely with their take at dawn. A very few minutes after hearing the awakening cry of "Sardi-i-i-i-na, fres-cua-a-a-a," I was standing on the end of the mole, amidst a throng of women and girls, who waited for the boats that were pulling through the gut between the island and mainland.

The men in the leading galley had begun to unship oars, and in the bow, with one bare foot on thwart and the other lightly resting on gunwale, stood a linesman, about to give a cast to the two or three old salts ready to haul in and make fast. Whiz came the spinning coil, and in a second or so the boat was alongside the mole, the bowman still occupying his position, and scanning eagerly the crowd of women. He was a fine, handsome, clean-built fellow, his well-shaped athletic form being seen to advantage in his seaman's dress of red shirt, open at throat and chest, violet-coloured waist scarf, white linen trowsers rolled to above the knee, showing the bronzed muscular leg, and a blue boina or bonnet jauntily poised on side of head.

As luck would have it, the comandante de armas, or town major, to whom I had delivered a strong letter of introduction on the previous evening, sauntered at this moment down the mole, followed by his orderly carrying a basket. The old gentleman was evidently intent on levying a contribution in kind, and when the patron of the galley caught sight of him he stepped ashore, shook hands with the veteran of previous Carlist struggles, and himself chose at least a couple of hundred of the choicest fish. The comandante then passed the compliments of the day with me, accepted a cigarette, and suggested that I should buy a dozen or two of sardines, and have them cooked for breakfast at the seamen's tavern close by. To this I assented, but on condition that something beyond sardines should form the fare, and that he and the patron of the galley should be my guests.

"Hola, Clementi Orué!" shouted the comandante; "here is a friend of mine, a senior Ingles, who asks us to breakfast with him. What say you? I am willing, and I should think that an appetite is not what you'll be wanting."

"Where, and at what hour?"

"At the tavern of the Widow Martinez at eight."

"I accept, and will send the fish."

I looked upon the advent of the comandante, just at the moment, as very fortunate, I was very desirous of making a night trip in one of the galleys, but hardly seeing how to work the project. Now matters appeared more promising, and I felt pretty certain to pull through before Clementi Orué and I parted.

The comandante then took me to a shed close at hand, to which the women and girls were bearing the catch made by Clementi Orné's and other boats. This was the store of a wholesale buyer, who that morning, thanks to the good supply, was purchasing sardines at the rate of ten reals the thousand, or twopence-halfpenny per hundred. Sometimes, owing to the presence of cruisers or an unusual scarcity of fish, the price would rise to thirty reals the thousand, or sevenpence-halfpenny per hundred; and if many boats went out, and met with a glut, four reals the thousand, or one penny per hundred, was considered a fair remuneration. Men and women were hard at work packing the sardines in baskets shaped something like a nautilus shell, and holding each five thousand. The fish were placed in layers, separated by leaves and salt, and in this state were to be despatched on mule back over the mountains, to supply the interior of Navarra and Alava, and even through the government lines into Castile. Asking what they would be likely to realise in the inland towns, I was told tenpence per hundred at the very least. Thus the buyer who had his outlet was purchasing at twopence-halfpenny, and even adding an additional twopence-halfpenny for packing expenses and transport, the profit would be fivepence on the hundred, or four shillings and twopence on the thousand; so that if, as I was informed, one hundred thousand would be sent off by this one dealer, he stood to clear twenty pounds, even allowing something for losses. Well, this gave me a tolerable notion of what the buyers were making in a fair season, but I felt more interested as to the gains of the men who risked their lives, and this is the information the comandante gave me. He said that if the patron made for himself, boat and net, two pounds the trip, the return would be considered good, and the crew would be well satisfied with twelve shillings each. Thus, supposing four voyages a week to be made during a good season, giving two days off for repairs of gear, and no serious

accident met with, the patron might pocket something like ninety pounds in three months—it being impossible to count on a longer period owing to weather and various obstacles—and the men possibly twenty-eight pounds. Of course there are the tunny, anchovy, mackerel and other seasons, but it is to be doubted, even with the best of luck, such as being able to put to sea nine months in the year, whether the patron ever gets beyond two hundred and fifty pounds, out of which he has to keep his boat, spars, sails, ropes, and above all his nets, in serviceable condition. Probably the men may realise in a good year eighty pounds. But, as the comandante observed, these calculations were made under the most favourable circumstances; and it was more than likely that, one year with another, neither patron or crew ever reached these respective amounts.

We found Clementi Orué awaiting us at the tavern, and if savoury odour meant anything, but little appetite would be needed to relish the meal. It is true there was but one common, bare-walled, smoke-encrusted, raftered room, with seamen eating, drinking, and smoking—a hearty frank set of fellows, who held their glasses towards us as we entered. A side table had been prepared for our party; and, certainly, not even in the best of fondas, would be found a whiter cloth or napkins, brighter knives, forks, and spoons, or cleaner plates. As to the breakfast, the Widow Martinez had excelled herself, and contentment settled on the faces of the comandante and the patron as the last glass of chacoli (a local wine made from Vizcayan grapes) was emptied prior to coffee. Then over the steaming aromatic beverage, flavoured by some genuine Jamaica rum, and under cover of vapoury clouds from the soothing cigarette, I made my proposition to Clementi Orné.

"Take you on a trip—well, I don't know what to say. There is no room in a galley for idlers, and if it came on a breeze of wind, or the net got fouled, or a dozen other things, you would be in everybody's way. Besides, the men might not like it, and you might get sick; and, after all, there isn't much to see; and I know, that so far as I am concerned, if I was not forced to it, I would sooner be tucked up comfortable in bed than getting wet."

"Well, but look here, senor patron, this kind of thing is not altogether new to me, though I have never been after the sardine. The fact is, I was brought up in a

fishing village, and could steer and row when only eight years old. In addition, I have knocked about at sea considerably, have crossed the Atlantic four times, have run through blockades on the American coast, and might perhaps be able to bear a hand if you were pushed."

"Hola, caballero," exclaimed the patron with beaming face; "hola, so you are a bit of a salt yourself; touch there," holding out his hand. "You shall make a trip, never fear, and it just happens that I am one short of my complement."

Having noticed half-a-dozen of the crew at the centre table, I suggested to Clementi Orné that he should call them over to drink the health of the new hand. This was done, and I saw the arrangement met with their entire approval, more especially that part in which was mentioned a keg of aguardiente and two or three bundles of cigars. Then it was agreed that the patron should take his evening meal with me in the same place, and that, wind and weather permitting, the galley would cast off at nightfall.

Well, at the time appointed, I found Clementi Orné awaiting me, and on a chair by his side rested a formidable looking bundle.

"Here I am, senor, and here's your kit. There's just a steady cap-full from the north-west, which will be dead against us working out, but fair for running in. As it is more than probable we shall get a wetting, I have brought you a stout flannel guernsey and a pair of oilskin overalls, so leave your coat with the Widow Martinez. I see you wear the boina, like the rest of us, and alpargatas (canvas shoes with hemp soles), but slip off the socks—that's so—now then for the guernsey and overalls—bravo, and I'd like to see the fellow to you. Hola, Widow Martinez; hola, chicas; come and look at the caballero Ingles; here's a novio (sweetheart) for the best among you."

Our supper was soon disposed of, and the patron slinging the keg of aguardiente over his shoulder, and tucking the cigars under his arm, we made down the mole for the galley. All hands were in readiness to start, and amidst hearty wishes of good luck from a cluster of women and girls, we cast loose and paddled towards the mouth of the bay—it appeared that two other galleys were to put to sea that night, and had already worked out. As we reached the opening between island and mainland the masts had been stepped,

and at the word "Hoist" from the patron, the two leg-of-mutton sails went up. There was a list to port, followed by a sougning rushing sound, three or four smacks against the bows, a succession of clouds of spray which soaked everything and everybody fore and aft, and then the men settling into their places to starboard, and a tightening pull being got at the sheets, away we went on a westerly course, running diagonally outward from the coast. Clementi Orné had suggested the coiled net on the stern board as a good seat for me, and against this he leaned and worked the steering-oar. The night was rather dark, the sky being patched with clouds, and there would be no moon for an hour or more; still, as the patron said, if there were fish he'd manage to catch them without candles.

"By-the-way, it never occurred to me to ask the name of your boat—what is it?"

"La Santisima Trinidad." Here Clementi Orné crossed himself, as did most of the crew, so far as I could distinguish in the gloom, "Si, senor, La Santisima Trinidad. She belonged to three of us—three brothers; two have been drowned, I am the last. You see, senor, we were caught four years ago come San Pedro, off Cape Machichaco—that light away yonder on the port bow—in a tearing hurricane. It struck us almost without warning, and before we could either get sail in, or head on to it, we were bottom up. I never saw my brothers from the moment the boat capsized, and with them were lost six others. It was a wonderful business altogether; a few minutes before the sea was like a looking-glass, and a quarter of an hour afterwards there wasn't a ripple. The six saved, including myself, were taken off the keel by a Bermeo galley, and the Santisima Trinidad was towed in and righted. The oars, spars, sails and nets were, however, missing. But she's a good stiff boat; and will carry on, going free or close hauled, with any other, won't she, lads?"

"Ay, ay, patron; there's no better out of Lequeitio, or for that matter out of any of the ports on the coast; see how she flies, and well up in the wind too."

She certainly was moving along, though heading considerably to windward, and on the course we were going made capital weather and was remarkably steady.

"Well, patron, let us hope you have seen your last accident in the Santisima Trinidad; come, serve out a cigar and a glass

of aguardiente all round, and we'll drink good fortune to the boat and long life to her owner."

This was done, the steering-oar, meantime, being confided to me, and then after about an hour and a half of the same course, to just abreast the Machichaco light, we went about, and made due north for an offing. Our speed was nearly doubled, and as the moon had risen, and now and again broke through the clouds, we caught an occasional glimpse of the two other boats, about a mile to windward. Suddenly Joaquin, one of the men, who was standing on a thwart and leaning against the foremast, sang out:

"Sardina, sardina, sardina — yonder away, dead in the wind."

Yes; there was the shoal, a luminous phosphorescent streak, some hundreds of yards in length.

In an instant the galley's head was brought round, the canvas shook and flapped, and in another moment down went the sails. Then the oars were got out, and away we went, thudding through the seas which came stem on. Joaquin, in the bows, had a boom with block at end ready, and a coiled line, made fast to the outgoing extremity of the net, was passed forward, and this he rove through the block, and then rigged the boom firmly, so as to project from six to eight feet. All this had been done in the twinkling of an eye, the men, the while, bending to their oars with a will.

"Stand clear of the net, senior, and lend me a hand when the moment comes to pay out. Give way, my lads, give way, or we shall have Pédro Artégui and José Echevarria down on the shoal before we get a cast; the wind will blow them clean on to it. Pull, chicos, pull, for sardines at twenty reals the thousand. They'll be well worth every farthing of it to-morrow, and only three boats out. Pull, boys, pull; Pédro and José have got a sight and are bound for the fish under full canvas. Give way—will you let a hundred reals each slip through your fingers? Pull, by all the saints in heaven, pull. Give way, chicos, give way, the sea's alive with them, and one cast will be a fortune for all of us——"

"Pay out, pay out!" shouted Joaquin, as the galley seemed to cleave in to a liquid phosphorescent fire, flakes of which, in the shape of sardines, flew sparkling from the oar-blades.

Whilst I rapidly cleared coil after coil

of the net, the patron cast it adrift, Joaquin, meanwhile, slacking out the messenger-line through the block at the end of the boom. As the last coil went over, the line with it was only allowed to run a dozen yards or so, and then made fast. The oars were now tossed inboard, and the men commenced lifting the false flooring which fitted to about two feet above the keel, and wooden scoops were placed handy.

"Haul in fore and aft," cried the patron, and half-a-dozen men clapped on to each line, bringing the net inwards, to bow and stern, in a semicircle, the form of which could be traced by the myriads of glistening fish that sought to escape over the floating corks.

But it seemed, despite these signs, that we had been too hasty and had made a false cast, for it soon became apparent we were only on the edge of the shoal, which was making away to windward, and right on to the galleys of Pédro Artégui and José Echevarria.

"Now may the saints have you in their holy keeping, Senor Joaquin, for the good you have done us. See, there go the fish, my lads, but haul in smartly, or the few we have will manage to get away. What say you, chicos, shall we make a present of this take to buy spectacles for Joaquin?"

Joaquin muttered something, to the effect that he was not the only one in the boat wanting eyes, and that he had given the word at the right time, that the galley's head was allowed to pay off, and what further observations he made were lost in a grumble. When the whole of the net had been gathered in, the scoops barely succeeded in getting a couple of bushels.

In anything but a good humour the patron gave the word to hoist sails, and as we turned again seawards the moon rose from a bank of clouds, and in its light we could see the galleys of Pédro Artégui and José Echevarria laying over to the weight of fish they were taking. One thing was positive, that we had left them behind, and that whatever we fell in with now we should have to ourselves. Well, for hours we tacked and re-tacked, making for wherever there appeared indications, and at dawn, greatly discouraged, Clementi Orué suggested putting about and steering homewards. At this moment Joaquin, who had been perched moodyly in his usual place, turned to the patron, and asked him to look in the direction to

which he pointed—the north-east. There was a line of light on the water and a broadening streak of morning in the sky. Scores of sea-gulls were eddying in circles, now poising for an instant, and then swooping down to the surface.

"If that doesn't mean fish," said Joaquin in rather a sulky manner, "may I never catch another sardine as long as I live."

"Right, my lad," replied the patron cheerily; "there are sardines there by millions, and as they are to leeward we can strike them where we choose. Now then, my lads, have everything in readiness, and stand by to down sail when I give the word."

In about a quarter of an hour we were right on to, and apparently near the centre of, the shoal, which must have been a mile in length. Every rising wave was literally alive with fish, and as we struck in they leaped from the water in every direction round the galley.

"Down sail," shouted the patron, and with good way still on the boat the net was cast. Then came the hauling in, and by the dead weight there could be no doubt as to the take; indeed, as the net neared, the whole of the surface confined became solid with sardines. Half-a-dozen men with scoops leaped on to thwart and gunwale, and commenced lading the fish in, while those hauling had to keep easing to give them time to work at the dense mass; and when at last the remnants were shaken out of the strands of the net, the patron said, turning to me:

"There, senor, you have brought us luck. I never saw a finer take, and if there were millions more, we haven't room for another hundred."

And so it seemed, for we were pretty deep, and as for the flooring, the boards were just cast loosely over the fish. Then, in the exuberance of his spirits, Clementi Orné served out a glass of aguardiente and a cigar all round. As he passed me the cup, he indicated with the hand holding the bottle the land.

"And now for Lequeitio with as many sardines on board as Pédro Artégui and José Echevarria have between them. There, abreast of us, lies Ekanchove, and," turning slightly, "there is Cape Machichaco, where——"

His eyes and jaw became fixed, the fingers opened, and the bottle fell into the water. Following the direction of his gaze, I saw a steamer rounding the headland, and apparently pointing directly for us.

"Holy Mary! yonder is the government cruiser Ferrolano—up sails, lads, and pray for the breeze to freshen, or we're likely to see Cuba or the Philippines on board a man-of-war."

We had a good ten miles to run, with the wind, which was increasing, on our beam. The steamer, to cut us off, would have to do the whole of fourteen, though when we sighted her she was not more than seven distant. We would both be going on diagonal lines, and ours was the shorter. It may readily be imagined that the chicos needed no recommendation to bestir themselves. The sails were hoisted in a jiffey, the galley trimmed to bear the strain, the course laid, and as the boat felt the "draw" she seemed to leap forward. Pédro Artégui and José Echevarria were already under the land, so they, at any rate, were safe. For some few minutes no one spoke, the whole attention being concentrated on the Ferrolano; and it soon became evident, from the increased volume of smoke, that she had caught sight of us and was firing up. We were well ballasted with fish, and stood the spread of canvas admirably, though the list to port, now and again, brought the gunwale level with the seething water. The wind freshened considerably, and under other circumstances it might have been a question of taking in a reef, but we held on, banking sardines and men well over to starboard. I should think we must have been going eight or nine knots, but for all that the Ferrolano rose perceptibly every few minutes, and when we were within five miles of the entrance to Lequeitio I could distinctly see the group of officers on her bridge. At four miles she was not more than fifteen hundred yards off, and she soon let us know it; for following a white puff from her bows, came a shrieking howl across our stern, which made all hands duck like a lot of salaaming mandarins. The Ferrolano gunner was trying his hand, and it was pretty certain that each succeeding shot would come closer, and so it proved, for the next struck the water on our starboard quarter, completely drenching the patron and myself.

"What do you think about it, senor; we have no chance, have we?" asked Clementi Orné of me in a low voice.

With a tolerably decent attempt at a smile, considering the awkward position in which we found ourselves, I suggested

that while there was life there was hope, that I did not think we should be hit, and that every minute we drew nearer home. I had scarcely given expression to these comforting observations, when a flat contradiction came to the supposition that we were not likely to be touched. Vrrrowwww—vrrriish—boom! and a shell struck our main-mast about three feet from the peak, bursting and sending the particles humming to port. The spar was shattered completely, and the canvas came down with a crash, partially falling on to the gunwale, and partially into the water, and as the men slid over to port at the same time, I thought we should capsize. The foresheet had also been cut, and the sail was banging and flopping terribly.

"Holy Mary! it's all over with us," gasped the patron; "we'd better luff up and give in; another shot will cut us in two."

I hardly know how to explain it, but somehow or other I found myself in command. I presume it was that I had kept my head, having, during campaigning experiences of fifteen years, been considerably under fire both at sea and on land; besides, I felt convinced that the chances were not altogether hopeless.

"Now, chicos," I shouted, "down with that foresail—unstep both masts—get that wreckage and dragging canvas in-board, and out with the oars; that's it, don't be flurried, he has not half the mark to shoot at now, besides which our jumping will puzzle him. I beg your pardon, patron, but as you are one hand short you had better take your place on the after thwart to make up the number. I will steer, only tell me if I can keep a straight course for mid entrance, without fear of rocks?"

Clementi Orué looked at me curiously and steadily for a moment, then grasping an oar and seating himself, he answered:

"Yes, direct for the entrance; it's about high water, and there isn't enough sea on to make going over the rocks very risky."

"Well, then, give way all of you, and let him shoot his best; why he'd have to be able to hit a fly to strike us now. That's it, my lads, pull your hardest and pull together; you are bound for Lequeitio, and not for Cuba or the Philippines."

Another shell flew over us but at a considerable height, and then one ducked and draked across the bows; and though I told the men, who could not see where the

water was struck, that it was at least a quarter of a mile off, I began to have serious misgivings. The Ferrolano was overhauling us rapidly, and, in addition to her gunning, would probably soon sprinkle us with rifle shots. I had my eyes firmly fixed on the entrance, so as not to lose an inch by yawing, if I could help it, when to my utter astonishment a long puff of white smoke leaped over the wall of the platform in front of the hermitage, near the summit of the mainland point. Turning my head quickly in the direction of the steamer, I saw a flash right on her bows—she had been struck by a shell.

"Don't stop to look, lads, but give way; every minute is worth an hour just now. Someone is helping us, and no mistake, and if the second shot is an improvement on the first, we shall not have much more to fear from the Ferrolano."

"The gun must have dropped from heaven," cried the patron, with an expression of blank amazement on his face, "and Santa Barbara is working it."

Again the white cloud leaped out from the hermitage terrace, and this time the shell burst on the steamer's bridge; and when the smoke cleared there could be seen great scattering and confusion among the figures that had hitherto formed a dark group. But that was not all. The helm had been put hard-a-starboard, and the Ferrolano, under full steam, headed seawards, checked and driven off by a single gun, where she thought to have everything her own way and meet with no resistance. Delighted beyond measure at our lucky escape, I suggested to Clementi Orué and the crew, that by way of a parting salute we should toss oars and give her a round of cheers, though the last might not probably be heard.

"And now, senior patron, as there are quite enough hands to pull I resign to you your post—"

"No, by Our Lady! that shall not be. You have brought us through the difficulty, and you shall take us in. When we were struck, had you not have acted as you did, I should have put about and surrendered. We owe our escape to you first, and then to the miraculous gun; isn't that so, chicos?"

"Si, si, viva el capitan Inglese!"

As the patron and chicos insisted that I should maintain my place at the steering-oar, there was nothing for it but to obey, and splendidly they pulled in. No sooner did we round the point and come in sight

of the mole than cheer after cheer went up, for it was seen we were rowing full-handed, and that consequently no one had been killed or hurt. Each of the crew had someone near and dear to him crying and laughing with joy; and the patron's wife, a portly dame, hugged and kissed her husband as he had probably not been hugged and kissed for many a year. My welcome came from the comandante de armas, and from him I got the following explanation of the "miraculous" gun.

"Just after you had put out last night, a lieutenant of artillery, with ten men, arrived in charge of a Whitworth cannon, which had been ordered here for the protection of the port—it is to be mounted on an earthwork on the island yonder. Well, when Pédro Artégui and José Echevarria came in with the news that the Ferrolano was trying to cut off the Santísima Trinidad, I roused up the lieutenant, and, obtaining any number of volunteers from among the boatmen, the gun was dismounted, and, with the carriage, was lifted and hauled up the precipitous and narrow path to the Hermitage terrace. The first shot, as you must have noticed, was good, the second excellent, and with my glasses I saw that some of those on the bridge had been hurt by the bursting shell."

It was a very lucky accident that brought that gun to Lequeitio just in the nick of time. Without it I should probably have had but little taste for sardines after that night's adventure.

THE VILLA POTTIER.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

"As for that," said our notary with a shrug, "there are times in all men's lives of which they do not care to talk—periods of failure and depression—and in the same way we French are not too fond of talking about the late war; so let us pass to something else."

We had been dining with our notary, and were now taking our dessert in the garden, a rough unkempt kind of place, but picturesque too in its wealth of roses and of wild tangled creepers. Through the heavy wooden gates you caught a glimpse of the Seine, calm and placid in the golden light of a summer's evening. Beyond the broad expanse of river tall poplars caught the last rays of the setting sun, and between these a hazy band of purple suggested a distant landscape and

far away hills. The last glass of the old Bordeaux, rivalling in colour the glowing tints of the sky, was about to disappear. Rosalie, the ancient *bonne*, stood behind us hugging the big black coffee-pot, one man was rolling up a cigarette, another lighting a cigar, while the notary's hand instinctively sought his pocket for his pipe.

"Rosalie," said one of the guests, turning to the *bonne*, "we have been talking of the war. You could tell these gentlemen a few things about that, eh?"

"Ah, ah! Have you told monsieur of the havoc the Prussians made with our master's best *faïence* and the holes they burnt in the curtains?"

"Such are the impressions that great events make on ordinary minds," cried the notary, "and is it not the same with all of us? In my own mind the great tragedies of the war occupy less space than the insignificant part played by myself."

It was quite clear that in spite of his alleged reluctance to talk about the war, the worthy notary had a story on his mind, and it required little pressing on the part of his friends to elicit it.

"It was a sad dull time," he began, "as most of us remember, the time of the Prussian occupation. The future was wrapped in gloom, the present hideous with the perpetual sense of humiliation. In my own profession there was little or nothing doing; no marriage contracts, no transfer of lands. If you would borrow there was no one to lend; indeed, coin was almost unknown among us. Our banker had fled to Paris, and was there shut up; and those who had money buried it in the ground. You will remember, Pottier," turning to one of his guests, "the circumstances under which I confided to you the whereabouts of my own strong box."

M. Pottier nodded gravely, and held out his hand to the notary, who pressed it warmly.

"Like many others in those days of sadness," went on M. Brunet, "I took refuge from the contemplation of my country's misfortunes in the pursuit of studies, partially suspended from the pressure of more urgent business. I began to prepare a long delayed monograph on the geological structure of the basin of the Lower Seine for our local society. I doubted very much whether our society would ever meet again. I thought it most improbable that my paper would ever see the light, but I went on, blindly, hopelessly, but still on. Two young

Prussian officers were quartered on me—they might have been Bavarians, but they are all Prussians to me—and as individuals I had nothing to complain of in them. They spoke our language fluently enough, although with a vile accent, and they made themselves very merry with Rosalie and Susette, my servants. Me they left alone to my studies and my gloomy thoughts. These thoughts were made gloomier still by anxiety as to the fate of my younger brother, my only living relative. Ernest was almost a son to me as well as a brother. A well loved mother on her death-bed had confided him to my charge. He had just completed his studies, and was about to become an avocat, and he was already affianced to Mademoiselle Thérèse, the charming daughter of M. Pottier; and, indeed, the necessary notices had been given at the mairie for their marriage, when the progress of the Prussians necessitated postponement. I had purchased a substitute for him in the ranks of the army—a thing permitted in those days—but he had thrown in his lot with those who were fighting for their country, and madly, as I thought, had joined one of those irregular bands of franc-tireurs who, to say the truth, were almost as formidable to their countrymen as to their foes. Not a word had come to me from him for many weeks.

"The winter was frightfully cold, you may remember, and the river was almost covered with ice—ice in huge masses, that went up and down with the tide, jarring and clashing together dismally. Never such a desolate scene as then upon our quay. Not a sail upon the river, not a boat could venture out, nor were there any faces in the street, unless under a pickelhaube. I sat one night in my library, working away at my manuscript, consoled a little by the reflection suggested by my subject, that, after all, the troubles of the human race were the merest trifles in comparison with the great cyclic changes I was now studying. Everything was quite still, except the measured tread of a sentry outside.

"It jarred sadly upon me, that solid martial tread, reminding me that there was no escape anywhere from a sense of the invader's presence. The step approached, the step died away in the distance, with a measured swing like the beat of a pendulum; and then when the pendulum had reached its farthest limit I heard a low tap at my library window, a

low tap, such as my brother used to give when, coming home late, he would find the house locked up and every light but mine extinguished.

"I opened the window and looked out. Nothing was to be seen but fog, in which the feeble rays of the street-lamp at the corner seemed quenched and lost. An indescribable feeling of trouble and depression came over me. My philosophy was at fault for once. I could not escape the influence of hitherto despised superstition. Perhaps he was dead, my brother, and thinking of me at his last moment had sent me this message. I peered into the formless void without, in vague expectation of I knew not what. Memories of the past came back to me; the bitter thought of what is passed for ever, hopelessly bitter to the lonely childless man.

"'Have you all that you want to-night, sir?' said a voice at the door. It was my tall awkward *bonne*, Susette. I had sent her hours before to the house of my friend Pottier to borrow a book I wanted, but I had forgotten all about her and her mission till she now burst in. I dreaded the presence of that young woman in my library as I should have dreaded the invasion of a Cherokee or a Uhlan.

"'Nothing! I want nothing—away!' I cried angrily; but the girl continued to advance awkwardly across the room, knocking over a pile of books here, and there putting a clumsy foot into the middle of my most cherished manuscript.

"'Will you begone!' I reiterated in rage and almost terror, as my hand was seized and pressed; and then the supposed Susette threw back her hood, and revealed the closely-cropped head and dark flashing eyes of Ernest—of my brother.

"When the first greetings were over—joyous, but subdued by the sense of danger—I began to reproach Ernest for coming to me in this unworthy disguise. Detection would be followed by instant military execution; there would be no hope for one thus almost self-confessed a spy.

"'I know,' said Ernest gaily; 'but I could reach you in no other way. There is less risk for me than another, as I am already doomed to the *fuillade* when caught in my capacity of franc-tireur; but they have to catch me first.'

"I urged him to go at once and resume his proper habiliments. There were some in his own room, that was kept always prepared for him. Let him not lose an instant; the danger was frightful and im-

minent. In his real character, as my brother, I could easily account for his presence; and who was there to identify him as the franc-tireur? Safety on one side and imminent death on the other, why did he hesitate?

"Let us talk a little, my brother," said Ernest, seating himself calmly in my arm-chair. "In the first place, I am not alone. I have five comrades not so comfortably placed as myself; in fact, lying at the bottom of a very damp ditch."

"I threw up my hands in despair.

"And Thérèse?" I asked.

"Yes; I have seen Thérèse," he said, mournfully. "I felt that I must see you both once more. Consider me as one coming from the grave to visit you."

"He explained in a few words how he came to be placed in this fearful position. Misled by false information, his band had found themselves entangled in the Prussian lines; the greater part had been destroyed; and only himself and five of his comrades had, for the time, escaped. Thanks to his knowledge of the country about, and the goodwill of the peasantry, to whom he was mostly well-known, the little band had thus far contrived to elude pursuit. And now they had found refuge in one of those sunken paths that here and there intersect the forest, and close to which, as Ernest well remembered, began the extensive grounds of the Villa Pottier, the residence of his fiancée. And then Ernest had volunteered to venture forth from the forest, to obtain much-needed provisions and some instructions as to their future route. The river lay before them, broad and deep, encumbered with ice, a labyrinth of pools and quicksands, with every boat closely guarded by the Prussians. Behind, a circle of fire hemmed them in.

"Then it occurred to me that I had a chart of the river, with the soundings marked, the sandbanks, and the various channels. We pored over it earnestly. At one point, where the wood closely approached the river—in a narrow ravine enclosing the bed of a small stream—the channel appeared to be at its shallowest. Here, too, a sandbank stretched boldly halfway across—barely covered with water at low tides—and at the farther end rising above high-water mark in the form of an island. On this island had been built a small lighthouse to mark the channel, with a wooden hut for the lightkeeper. There were no lights in the river now, and

the lighthouse staff had been withdrawn; but the Prussians had not thought fit to occupy the little island, which had seemed too insignificant, perhaps, to attract their attention. Ernest anxiously took the bearings of the lighthouse from the confluence of the little stream. He saw that if they could only reach it unobserved, they might be able to cross the deeper channel beyond. A raft could be improvised quickly from the timbers of the hut, and once on the other side of the river—a sort of neutral zone not yet included in the Prussian lines—it would be easy, by a forced march, to reach our own army.

"Yes; that is our way," said Ernest; "give me the chart of the river, that I may convince my comrades, who are not accustomed to implicit obedience. And now, my dear brother, I must find my way to the Villa Pottier." He concealed the chart on his person, and wrung my hand with emotion.

"At this moment the outer door was flung violently open with a great clatter of military accoutrements—my two German officers coming in! Ernest cast a hasty, burning glance around, and snatched up a knife that lay on my table, a curious silver-mounted Circassian dagger, which had been given me by one of my travelled friends, and which I commonly used as a paper-knife.

"Hush," I whispered; "they will not come here; they will go to their own rooms."

"But to-night, of all nights, my inmates departed from their usual practice. They had been supping with comrades, and were merry and excited as if with wine. The light usually placed for them in the passage had been accidentally extinguished, and seeing the glare from my room, they advanced and stood in the doorway, peering in with an owlish expression of good-nature on their blond stolid faces.

"News for you, worthy sir," cried the elder. "Venture not out to-night; for after the hour just struck all circulation is forbidden except with a special pass. The sentries are doubled, and all are on the alert; for a band of assassins—franc-tireurs, they call themselves—are lurking in the forest close by."

"I thought that the glare of Ernest's eyes from under his capeline, hastily pulled over his face as the Prussians entered, would have betrayed him; but our foes were in a happy, uncritical frame of mind. They had not noticed my companion at

the first moment, dazzled by the glare of my lamp; and when they saw the supposed Susette, they exchanged glances, and began to laugh furtively. Perhaps the attitude unconsciously assumed by Ernest, who stood leaning over my fauteuil, was rather familiar for a servant. Anyhow, they began to rally me broadly about Susette. 'Here was a second Faust,' cried one; 'the sage turned into the betrayer of innocence.' They saw that I was angered, and only laughed the louder, Ernest behind me boiling with rage, and ready in a moment to spring upon them.

"'We are two for two,' he muttered under his breath; but I held up a warning finger. The thing was madness. In the extremity of suspense and danger, however, I found a luminous idea: a way of averting the present danger, and placing my brother in comparative safety.

"'Messieurs,' I said gravely; 'I am glad you can amuse yourselves with such a childish joke. My servant here, about whose presence you are pleased to make merry, has brought me an urgent message from my friend, M. Pottier, of the villa on the heights.'

"'Ah, we know him! Prince L. is there, and some of the head-quarters staff. There is a charming daughter too. Ha! ha! our princes know how to choose their quarters. They share the penchant of savans for the rustle of a petticoat.'

"'Again I thought that Ernest would have flown at them; but I warned him with a glance to be patient.

"'My friend, M. Pottier,' I said sternly, 'will inform the prince of the motives imputed to him.'

"'Oh, no, no!' cried the Germans; 'pray don't repeat our words; we were only jesting.'

"'Well, as you have had your joke,' I said, resuming my good-humour, 'perhaps you will give me your help. Madame Pottier is dangerously ill, and requires my professional assistance to arrange her affairs. It is a matter of urgent necessity. Susette will accompany me to the villa with a lantern. Kindly give me the consigne, that I may pass your sentries safely.'

"The young men became instantly grave and sobered. 'What you ask is impossible. It is forbidden to tell the password; but we are anxious to oblige

you. Come, we will ourselves accompany you, and pass you to your destination.'

"This was a favourable turn of affairs on the whole, for the presence of these officers would ensure us against detentions and awkward examinations. True that when we reached the villa they might see the real Susette, and thus detect the false, but sufficient for the moment were its own perils. I extinguished my lamp at once, and we went out into the street, I holding fast by the supposed Susette on the pretext of my near-sightedness. We passed a line of sentries, eliciting challenges at every moment. At more than one post we were stopped, and a low conversation would ensue between our conductors and the officer on duty. The word given—all's well—we passed on, our hearts beginning to beat once more.

"As we ascended the hill we emerged from the fog into a clearer atmosphere, and were soon in sight of the house of M. Pottier. The lower rooms were brilliantly lighted up, and the strains of music could be heard—clarionet and horn—in a gay dancing measure, with the rush of dancers' feet, the murmur of voices, and the sound of light laughter.

"'For a sick house a merry one,' said one of my companions drily; and at the moment I felt confounded, thinking my ruse detected, incredible as it seemed that my friend should be thus dancing and making merry over his country's misfortunes. But as we approached the case became clear. Through the long windows we saw the glitter of splendid uniforms; a number of Prussians of high rank, as I gathered, were enjoying a frolic. There might have been unworthy French women among them. Of that I know nothing.

"To my intense relief, at this point our companions drew off. Here were Herrs and Vons, it seemed, of the blue blood, twice-born barons, two-sworded Damios; and our humble infantry officers, with the awe of rank inherent in Teutonic blood, feared to intrude upon them. They would wait on the terrace, and begged me to lose no time."

Here the notary broke off, seeing Rosalie approach with her arms full of bottles and jars of liqueurs and strong waters.

"And the Kirsch," cried the notary. "Rosalie, don't forget the Kirschenwasser."

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXV. "WHAT DID IT MATTER WHERE SHE WENT?"

AFTER a long, sleepless night of tossing to and fro, Vixen rose with the first stir of life in the old house, and made herself ready to face the bleak, hard world. Her meditations of the night had brought no new light to her mind. It was very clear to her that she must go away—as far as possible—from her old home. Her banishment was necessary for everybody's sake. For the sake of Rorie, who must behave like a man of honour, and keep his engagement with Lady Mabel, and shut his old playfellow out of his heart; for the sake of Mrs. Winstanley, who could never be happy while there was discord in her home; and last of all, for Violet herself, who felt that joy and peace had fled from the Abbey House for ever, and that it would be better to be anywhere, verily friendless and alone among strange faces, than here among friends who were but friends in name, and among scenes that were haunted with the ghosts of dead joys.

She went round the gardens and shrubberies in the early morning, looking sadly at everything, as if she were bidding the trees and flowers a long farewell. The rhododendron thickets were shining with dew, the grassy tracks in that wilderness of verdure were wet and cold under Vixen's feet. She wandered in and out among the groups of wild growing shrubs, and then she went out by the old gate which Titmouse used to jump so merrily, and rambled in the plantation till the sun was high, and the pines began to breathe

forth their incense as the day warmed them into life.

It was half-past eight. Nine was the hour for breakfast, a meal at which, during the squire's time, the fragile Pamela had rarely appeared, but which, under the present régime, she generally graced with her presence. Captain Winstanley was an early riser, and was not sparing in his contempt for sluggish habits.

Vixen had made up her mind never again to sit at meat with her step-father; so she went straight to her own den, and told Phœbe to bring her a cup of tea.

"I don't want anything else," she said wearily when the girl suggested a more substantial breakfast; "I should like to see mamma presently. Do you know if she has gone down?"

"No, miss. Mrs. Winstanley is not very well this morning. Pauline has taken her up a cup of tea."

Vixen sat idly by the open window, sipping her tea, and caressing Argus's big head with a listless hand, waiting for the next stroke of fate. She was sorry for her mother, but had no wish to see her. What could they say to each other—they, whose thoughts and feelings were so wide apart? Presently Phœbe came in with a little three-cornered note, written in pencil.

"Pauline asked me to give you this from your ma, miss."

The note was brief, written in short gasps, with dashes between them.

"I feel too crushed and ill to see you—I have told Conrad what you wish—he is all goodness—he will tell you what we have decided—try to be worthier of his kindness—poor misguided child—he will see you in his study, directly after breakfast—pray control your unhappy temper."

"His study, indeed!" ejaculated Vixen, tearing up the little note and scattering its perfumed fragments on the breeze; "my father's room, which he has usurped. I think I hate him just a little worse in that room than anywhere else—though that would seem hardly possible, when I hate him so cordially everywhere."

She went to her looking-glass and surveyed herself proudly as she smoothed her shining hair, resolved that he should see no indication of trouble or contrition in her face. She was very pale, but her tears of last night had left no traces. There was a steadiness in her look that befitted an encounter with an enemy. A message came from the captain, while she was standing before her glass, tying a crimson ribbon under the collar of her white morning-dress.

Would she please to go to Captain Winstanley in the study? She went without an instant's delay; walked quietly into the room, and stood before him silently as he sat at his desk writing.

"Good-morning, Miss Tempest," he said, looking up at her with his blandest air; "sit down, if you please. I want to have a chat with you."

Vixen seated herself in her father's large crimson morocco chair. She was looking round the room absently, dreamily, quite disregarding the captain. The dear old room was full of sadly sweet associations. For the moment she forgot the existence of her foe. His cold level tones recalled her thoughts from the lamented past to the bitter present.

"Your mother informs me that you wish to leave the Abbey House," he began, "and she has empowered me to arrange a suitable home for you elsewhere. I entirely concur in your opinion that your absence from Hampshire for the next year or so will be advantageous to yourself and others. You and Mr. Vawdrey have contrived to get yourselves unpleasantly talked about in the neighbourhood. Any further scandal may possibly be prevented by your departure."

"It is not on that account I wish to leave home," said Vixen proudly. "I am not afraid of scandal. If the people hereabouts are so wicked that they cannot see me riding by the side of an old friend for two or three days running without thinking evil of him and me, I am sorry for them, but I certainly should not regulate my life to please them. The reason I wish to leave the Abbey House is that I am

miserable here, and have been ever since you entered it as its master. We may as well deal frankly with each other. You confessed last night that you hated me. I acknowledge to-day that I have hated you ever since I first saw you. It was an instinct."

"We need not discuss that," answered the captain calmly. He had let passion master him last night, but he had himself well in hand to-day. She might be as provoking as she pleased, but she should not provoke him to betray himself as he had done last night. He detested himself for that weak outbreak of passion.

"Have you arranged with my mother for my leaving home?" enquired Vixen.

"Yes, it is all settled."

"Then I'll write at once to Miss McCroke. I know she will leave the people she is with to travel with me."

"Miss McCroke has nothing to do with the question. Your roaming about the world with a superannuated governess would be too preposterous. I am going to take you to Jersey by this evening's boat. I have an aunt living there who has a fine old manor-house, and who will be happy to take charge of you. She is a maiden lady, a woman of superior cultivation, who devotes herself wholly to intellectual pursuits. Her refining influence will be valuable to you. The island is lovely, the climate delicious. You could not be better off than you will be at Les Tournelles."

"I am not going to Jersey, and I am not going to your intellectual aunt," said Vixen resolutely.

"I beg your pardon, you are going, and immediately. Your mother and I have settled the matter between us. You have expressed a wish to leave home, and you will be pleased to go where we think proper. You had better tell Phoebe to pack your trunks. We shall leave here at ten o'clock in the evening. The boat starts from Southampton at midnight."

Vixen felt herself conquered. She had stated her wish, and it was granted; not in the manner she had desired, but perhaps she ought to be grateful for release from a home that had become loathsome to her, and ought not to take objection to details in the scheme of her exile. To go away, and immediately, was the grand point. To fly before she saw Borie again.

"Heaven knows how weak I might be if he were to talk to me again as he talked last night!" she said to herself. "I might

not be able to bear it a second time. Oh, Rorie, if you knew what it cost me to counsel you wisely, to bid you do your duty—when the vision of a happy life with you was smiling at me all the time, when the warm grasp of your dear hand made my heart thrill with joy—what a heroine you would think me! And yet nobody will ever give me credit for heroism; and I shall be remembered only as a self-willed young woman, who was troublesome to her relations, and had to be sent away from home.”

She was thinking this while she sat in her father's chair, deliberating upon the captain's last speech. She decided presently to yield, and obey her mother and step-father. After all, what did it matter where she went? That scheme of being happy in Sweden with Miss McCroke was but an idle fancy. In the depths of her inner consciousness Violet Tempest knew that she could be happy nowhere away from Rorie and the Forest. What did it matter, then, whether she went to Jersey or Kamtchatka, the sandy desert of Gobi or the Mountains of the Moon? In either case exile meant moral death, the complete renunciation of all that had been sweet and precious in her uneventful young life.

“I suppose I may take my dog with me?” she asked, after a long pause, during which she had wavered between submission and revolt, “and my maid?”

“I see no objection to your taking your dog; though I doubt whether my aunt will care to have a dog of that size prowling about her house. He can have a kennel somewhere, I daresay. You must learn to do without a maid. Feminine helplessness is going out of fashion; and one would expect an Amazon like you to be independent of lady's-maids and milliners.”

“Why don't you state the case in plain English?” cried Vixen scornfully. “If I took Phœbe with me she would cost money. There would be her wages and maintenance to be provided. If I leave her behind, you can dismiss her. You have a fancy for dismissing old servants.”

“Had not you better see to the packing of your trunks?” asked Captain Winstanley, ignoring this shaft.

“What is to become of my horse?”

“I think you must resign yourself to leave him to fate and me,” replied the captain coolly; “my aunt may submit to the infliction of your dog, but that she should tolerate a young lady's roaming about the island on a thoroughbred horse

would be rather too much to expect from her old-fashioned notions of propriety.”

“Besides, even Arion would cost something to keep,” retorted Vixen, “and strict economy is the rule of your life. If you sell him—and, of course, you will do so—please let Lord Mallow have the refusal of him. I think he would buy him, and treat him kindly, for my sake.”

“Wouldn't you rather Mr. Vawdrey had him?”

“Yes, if I were free to give him away; but I suppose you would deny my right of property even in the horse my father gave me.”

“Well, as the horse was not specified in your father's will, and as all his horses and carriages were left to your mother, I think there cannot be any doubt that Arion is my wife's property.”

“Why not say your property? Why give unnatural prominence to a cipher? Do you think I hold my poor mother to blame for any wrong that is done to me, or to others, in this house? No, Captain Winstanley, I have no resentment against my mother. She is a blameless nullity, dressed in the latest fashion.”

“Go and pack your boxes!” cried the captain angrily. “Do you want to raise the devil that was raised last night? Do you want another conflagration? It might be a worse one this time. I have had a night of fever and unrest.”

“Am I to blame for that?”

“Yes—you beautiful fury. It was your image that kept me awake. I shall sleep sounder when you are out of this house.”

“I shall be ready to start at ten o'clock,” said Vixen, in a business-like tone which curiously contrasted with this gust of passion on the part of her foe, and humiliated him to the dust. He loathed himself for having let her see her power to hurt him.

She left him, and went straight upstairs to her room, and gave Phœbe directions about the packing of her portmanteaux, with no more outward semblance of emotion than she might have shown had she been starting on a round of pleasant visits under the happiest circumstances. The faithful Phœbe began to cry when she heard that Miss Tempest was going away for a long time, and that she was not to go with her; and poor Vixen had to console her maid instead of brooding upon her own griefs.

“Never mind, Phœbe,” she said; “it is as hard for me to lose you as it is for you

to lose me. I shall never forget what a devoted little thing you have been, and all the muddy habits you have brushed without a murmur. A few years hence I shall be my own mistress, and have plenty of money, and then, wherever I may be, you shall come to me. If you are married you shall be my housekeeper, and your husband shall be my butler, and your children shall run wild about the place, and be made as much of as the litter of young foxes Bates reared in a corner of the stable-yard, when Mr. Vawdrey was at Eton."

"Oh, miss, I don't want no husband nor no children; I only want you for my missus. And when you come of age, will you live here, miss?"

"No, Phœbe. The Abbey House will belong to mamma all her life. Poor mamma! may it be long before the dear old house comes to me. But when I am of age and my own mistress I shall find a place somewhere in the Forest, you may be sure of that, Phœbe."

Phœbe dried her honest tears, and made haste with the packing, believing that Miss Tempest was leaving home for her own pleasure, and that she, Phœbe, was the only victim of adverse fate.

The day wore on quickly, though it was laden with sorrow. Vixen had a great deal to do in her den; papers to look over, old letters, pen-and-ink sketches, and scribbings of all kinds to destroy, books and photographs to pack. There were certain things she could not leave behind her. Then there was a melancholy hour to spend in the stable, feeding, caressing, and weeping over Arion, who snorted his tenderest snorts, and licked her hands with abject devotion—almost as if he knew they were going to part, Vixen thought.

Last of all came the parting with her mother. Vixen had postponed this with an aching dread of a scene, in which she might perchance lose her temper, and be betrayed into bitter utterances that she would afterwards repent with useless tears. She had spoken the truth to her step-father when she told him that she held her mother blameless; yet the fact that she had but the smallest share in that mother's heart was cruelly patent to her.

It was nearly four o'clock in the afternoon when Pauline came to Violet's room with a message from Mrs. Winstanley. She had been very ill all the morning, Pauline informed Miss Tempest, suffering severely from nervous headache, and obliged to lie in a darkened room. Even

now she was barely equal to seeing anyone.

"Then she had better not see me," said Vixen icily; "I can write her a little note to say good-bye. Perhaps it would be just as well. Tell mamma that I will write, Pauline."

Pauline departed with this message, and returned in five minutes with a distressed visage.

"Oh, miss!" she exclaimed, "your message quite upset your poor mamma. She said, 'How could she?' and began to get almost hysterical. And those hysterical fits end in such fearful headaches."

"I will come at once," said Vixen.

Mrs. Winstanley was lying on a sofa near an open window, the Spanish blinds lowered to exclude the afternoon sunshine, the perfume of the gardens floating in upon the soft summer air. A tiny teapot and cup and saucer on a Japanese tray showed that the invalid had been luxuriating in her favourite stimulant. There were vases of flowers about the room, and an all-pervading perfume and coolness—a charm half sensuous, half æsthetic.

"Violet, how could you send me such a message?" remonstrated the invalid fretfully.

"Dear mamma, I did not want to trouble you. I know how you shrink from all painful things; and you and I could hardly part without pain, as we are parting to-day. Would it not have been better to avoid any farewell?"

"If you had any natural affection, you would never have suggested such a thing."

"Then perhaps I have never had any natural affection," answered Vixen, with subdued bitterness; "or only so small a stock that it ran out early in my life, and left me cold and hard and unloving. I am sorry we are parting like this, mamma. I am still more sorry that you could not spare me a little of the regard which you have bestowed so lavishly upon a stranger."

"Violet, how can you?" sobbed her mother. "To accuse me of withholding my affection from you, when I have taken such pains with you from your very cradle! I am sure your frocks, from the day you were short-coated, were my constant care; and when you grew a big, lanky girl, who would have looked odious in commonplace clothes, it was my delight to invent picturesque and becoming costumes for you. I have spent hours poring over books of prints, and I have let you wear some of my most valuable lace. And

as for indulgence of your whims! Pray when have I ever thwarted you in anything?"

"Forgive me, mamma!" cried Vixen penitently. She divined dimly—even in the midst of that flood of bitter feeling in which her young soul was overwhelmed—that Mrs. Winstanley had been a good mother, according to her lights. "Pray forgive me! You have been good and kind and indulgent, and we should have gone on happily together to the end of the chapter, if fate had been kinder."

"It's no use your talking of fate in that way, Violet," retorted her mother captiously. "I know you mean Conrad."

"Perhaps I do, mamma; but don't let us talk of him any more. We should never agree about him. You and he can be quite happy when I am gone. Poor, dear, trusting, innocent-minded mamma!" cried Vixen, kneeling by her mother's chair and putting her arms round her ever so tenderly. "May your path of life be smooth and strewn with flowers when I am gone. If Captain Winstanley does not always treat you kindly, he will be a greater scoundrel than I think him. But he has always been kind to you, has he not, mamma? You are not hiding any sorrow of yours from me?" asked Vixen, fixing her great brown eyes on her mother's face with earnest enquiry. She had assumed the maternal part. She seemed an anxious mother questioning her daughter.

"Kind to me?" echoed Mrs. Winstanley. "He has been all goodness. We have never had a difference of opinion since we were married."

"No, mamma, because you always defer to his opinion."

"Is not that my duty, when I know how clever and far-seeing he is?"

"Frankly, dear mother, are you as happy with this new husband of yours—so wise and far-seeing, and determined to have his own way in everything—as you were with my dear, indulgent, easy-tempered father?"

Pamela Winstanley burst into a passion of tears.

"How can you be so cruel?" she exclaimed. "Who can give back the past, or the freshness and brightness of one's youth? Of course I was happier with your dear father than I can ever be again. It is not in nature that it should be otherwise. How could you be so heartless as to ask me such a question?"

She dried her tears slowly, and was not easily comforted. It seemed as if that speech of Violet's had touched a spring that opened a fountain of grief.

"This means that mamma is not happy with her second husband, in spite of her praises of him," thought Vixen.

She remained kneeling by her mother's side, comforting her as best she could, until Mrs. Winstanley had recovered from the wound her daughter's heedless words had inflicted, and then Violet began to say good-bye.

"You will write to me sometimes, won't you, mamma, and tell me how the dear old place is going on, and about the old people who die, and the young people who get married, and the babies that are born? You will write often, won't you, mamma?"

"Yes, dear, as often as my strength will allow."

"You might even get Pauline to write to me sometimes, to tell me how you are and what you are doing; that would be better than nothing."

"Pauline shall write when I am not equal to holding a pen," sighed Mrs. Winstanley.

"And, dear mamma, if you can prevent it, don't let any more of the old servants be sent away. If they drop off one by one home will seem like a strange place at last. Remember how they loved my dear father, how faithful they have been to us. They are like our own flesh and blood."

"I should never willingly part with servants who know my ways, Violet. But as to Bates's dismissal—there are some things I had rather not discuss with you—I am sure that Conrad acted for the best, and from the highest motives."

"Do you know anything about this place to which I am going, mamma?" asked Vixen, letting her mother's last speech pass without comment; "or the lady who is to be my duenna?"

"Your future has been fully discussed between Conrad and me, Violet. He tells me that the old Jersey manor-house—Les Tourelles, it is called—is a delightful place, one of the oldest seats in Jersey; and Miss Skipwith, to whom it belongs, is a well-informed, conscientious old lady—very religious, I believe, so you will have to guard against your sad habit of speaking lightly about sacred things, my dear Violet."

"Do you intend me to live there for ever, mamma?"

"For ever! What a foolish question.

In six years you will be of age, and your own mistress."

"Six years—six years in a Jersey manor-house, with a pious old lady. Don't you think that would seem very much like for ever, mamma?" asked Vixen gravely.

"My dear Violet, neither Conrad nor I want to banish you from your natural home. We only want you to learn wisdom. When Mr. Vawdrey is married, and when you have learnt to think more kindly of my dear husband——"

"That last change will never happen to me, mamma. No, mamma; we had better say good-bye without any forecast of the future. Let us forget all that is sad in our parting, and think we are only going to part for a little while."

Many a time in after days did Violet Tempest remember those last serious words of hers. The rest of her conversation with her mother was about trifles—the trunks and bonnet-boxes she was to carry with her, the dresses she was to wear.

"Of course in a retired old house in Jersey, with an elderly maiden lady, you will not see much society," said Mrs. Winstanley; "but Miss Skipwith must know people—no doubt the best people in the island—and I should not like you to be shabby. Are you really positive that you have dresses enough to carry you over next winter?"

This last question was asked with deepest solemnity.

"More than enough, mamma."

"And do you think your last winter's jacket will do?"

"Excellently."

"I'm very glad of that," said her mother, with a sigh of relief, "for I have an awful bill of Theodore's hanging over my head. I have been paying her sums on account ever since your poor papa's death; and you know that is never quite satisfactory. All that one has paid hardly seems to make any difference in the amount due at the end."

"Don't worry yourself about your bill, mamma. Let it stand over till I come of age, and then I can help you to pay it."

"You are very generous, dear; but Theodore would not wait so long, even for me. Be sure you take plenty of wraps for the steamer. Summer nights are often chilly."

Vixen thought of last night, and the long ride through the pine wood, the soft scented air, the young moon shining down at her, and Rorie by her side. Ah, when

should she ever know such a summer night as that again?

"Sit down in this chair by me, and have a cup of tea, dear," said Mrs. Winstanley, growing more affectionate as the hour of parting drew nearer. "Let us have kettledrum together for the last time, till you come back to us."

"For the last time, mamma!" echoed Violet sadly.

She could not imagine any possible phase of circumstances that would favour her return. Could she come back to see Roderick Vawdrey happy with his wife? Assuredly not. Could she school herself to endure life under the roof that sheltered Conrad Winstanley? A thousand times no. Coming home was something to be dreamt about; but it was a dream that never could be realised. She must make herself a new life, somehow, among new people. The old life died to-day.

She sat and sipped her tea, and listened while her mother talked cheerfully of the future, and even pretended to agree; but her heart was heavy as lead.

An hour was dawdled away thus, and then, when Mrs. Winstanley began to think about dressing for dinner, Vixen went off to finish her packing. She excused herself from going down to dinner on the plea of having so much to do.

"You could send me up something, please, mamma," she said. "I am sure you and Captain Winstanley will dine more pleasantly without me. I shall see you for a minute in the hall, before I start."

"You must do as you please, dear," replied her mother. "I hardly feel equal to going down to dinner myself; but it would not be fair to let Conrad eat a second meal in solitude, especially when we are to be parted for two or three days, and he is going across the sea. I shall not have a minute's rest to-night, thinking of you both."

"Sleep happily, dear mother, and leave us to Providence. The voyage cannot be perilous in such weather as this," said Vixen, with assumed cheerfulness.

HOW SURNAMES GROW.

THE thought crosses one's mind occasionally whether the names of men and women, the designations usually known as "surnames," become what they are by a process of natural growth, by a definite system of invention, by freaks of individual fancy,

or by mere accident; or whether all these modes of origin are to be met with in different instances. Certain it is that the names themselves are often remarkable, and even extravagant. The punster, the conundrum maker, the epigrammatist, would be bereft of much of their working material if surnames were less strange than they are; even the epitaph composer would occasionally feel the loss.

The proneness to construct a surname which would denote some (at any rate) of the personal characteristics of the individual to whom it was first applied, is plainly observable in names ending in the syllable "man." They may in many cases have been invented by the persons themselves; but the majority had evidently some other origin, expressive of admiration, of ridicule, or of plain matter-of-fact: the initial syllable or syllables serving as an adjective to define what sort of "man" is under consideration. If size of person were the characteristic held in view when the naming process took place, we find as examples Ampleman, Flatman, Highman, Longman, Smallman, Weightman. If complexion or colour, Blackman, Brightman, Greenman, Redman, Whiteman. If terms of approval touching personal appearance or qualities, Dearman, Freeman, Gladman, Godman, Goodman, Hardyman, Honeyman, Ladyman, Merryman, Strongman, Sweetman, Tidyman, Truman, Wiseman. If expressive rather of disapproval than approval, Ailman, Assman, Badman, Bentman, Blankman, Chillman, Coldman, Deadman, Fearman, Flashman, Gooseman, Hardman, Killman, Proudman, Sickman, Slewman, Slowman, Wildman. If the occupation or avocation of the individual were the point chiefly held in view, it supplies us with a formidable number of examples, such as Aleman, Axman, Backerman (Baker), Batman, Bellman, Billman, Boatman, Bootman, Cashman, Callman, Cheeseman, Coalman, Dayman, Ferryman, Fleshman (Butcher), Footman, Fryman, Goatman, Goldman. Nor would the second portion of the alphabet of initials be less prolific in illustrative examples—Herdman, Horseman, Houseman, Lawman, Nutman, Packman, Sandman, Seedsman, Studman, Styman, Tollman, Trotman, Watchman, Waterman, Wayman, Woodman, Yeoman.

Other examples do not lend themselves so easily to classification or grouping: Ambleman, Batterman, Cherryman, Chessman, Chipman, Farman, Fortyman,

Human, Kinsman, Maidman, Notman, Otherman, Pennyman, Sayman, Stainman, Twentyman. Who originated Twentyman and Fortyman; and why; and what do such appellations mean?

The Registrar-General, in his tabulation of births, marriages, and deaths, encounters surnames so extraordinary that one is sorely puzzled to account for their origination. On two or three occasions he has caused his records to be overhauled by members of his staff, with the view of transcribing from them examples of odd, strange, quaint, or outrageous surnames; and Dr. Charnook has since added specimens from other sources.

If, at one moment, we are struck with the seriousness of such surnames as Christ, Incarnation, Apostle, Crucifix, Jerusalem, Pharaoh, risibility is aroused in the next by such names as Vulgar, Winegar, Fippenny, Onions, Gollop, Bowels, Bottles, Areskin, Boils, Bullwinkle, Bugg, Lightning, Muchmore, Pussy, Gotobed, Tentimes, Zigzag, Fairfoul, Bogy, Brains, Dullhumphrey, Collarbone, Drinkdregs, Bultitude, White-monastery, Winfarthing, Potiphar, Thousandpound, Bedbug, Maggot.

As may well be surmised, peculiarities of person supply an almost endless fund of surnames: Allbones, Blackmonster, Handsomebody, Waddle, Pettibones, Smallbones, Barebones, Baldhead, Kneebone, Awkward, Hogsmouth, Heavysides, Heavyeye, Noodle, Bunion, Yalowhair, Cockeye, Chataway, Crackbone, Narrowcoat, Blackamore, Dandy. In vain should we try to trace to their individual origin such strange surnames as 'Odium, Bosh, Cutmutton, Argument, Bad, Brittle, Weatherwax, Ticklepenny, Downwards, Inwards, Decent, Boobyer, Strawmat, Ashkettle Devil.

In many countries surnames have grown out of personal names, baptismal or otherwise, in a manner that can be pretty clearly traced. If John's son be George, then John the son of George becomes a distinct name, cumbersome when thus expressed, but succinct and compact in many languages. For instances of analogous character, in Russian we find Witz or Witch, or Vitch or Vich, meaning "son of"—such as Czarevitch and Paskievitch; in Polish, Skior Sky—such as Petrovski and Sobieski; in Highland Scotch, Mac; in Irish both Mac and O—the latter implying descendant generally, rather than merely son; in English, Son, melted down as the final syllable of a

word; the "son of John" becomes "John's son," and then "Johnson;" the "son of William," in like manner, becomes "William's son," and then "Williamson." Lastly, in Welsh, Ap, by which "Morgan Ap Shenkin" comes to mean Morgan the son of Shenkin.

We have said that Mac, in Scotch, implies "son of," but the point here more particularly dwelt upon is that this Mac becomes a surname when combined with the clan or family name—i.e. MacDongal, McDongal, or M'Dougal, becomes Macdongal, and so on. Something nearly, though not exactly, equivalent to this occurs in Irish surnames, many of which run in couplets—such as Connell and O'Connell, Connor and O'Connor, Donovan and O'Donovan, Ferrall and O'Ferrall, Flanagan and O'Flanagan, Leary and O'Leary, Shea and O'Shea, Meagher and O'Meagher, Sullivan and O'Sullivan. Thus the name of the father, Connor, and the name of the son, O'Connor or Connor's son, become by degrees recognised as two distinct surnames.

But the Welsh afford more curious examples of the growth of surnames than any of the other nationalities of the United Kingdom. As already implied, John, Thomas, William, Richard, Robert, &c., being abundantly used as Christian names, if the son of any one of them be called ap John, or the son of John, or John's son, a natural process soon melts it down to Johnson and to Jones; and so in other instances. Moreover, a similar clipping gives origin to Williams, Richards, Roberts, Davis, Lewis, and the like. There is from these causes, comparatively to the small total number of inhabitants in Wales, a peculiarly large percentage of each particular surname, because the surnames themselves are limited in variety. True, some of the forms are disguised by difference of spelling; such as Powell for Ap Howel, Price for Ap Rhys, Pritchard for Ap Richard, and the like; but this does not affect the truth of the statement that Welsh surnames are few in kind, with a necessarily large number of each kind.

Jones, John's son, is by far the most prevalent of these names. At one time there were thirty-six John Joneses in one Welsh militia regiment. Taking England and Wales together Smith outnumbered all other surnames, but Jones comes next, notwithstanding the formidable claim of Brown. Williams, which stands next to Jones in Welsh frequency

of usage, is, in England and Wales combined, more prevalent than either Brown or Robinson.

If postal arrangements are satisfactory in the Principality it reflects some credit on the authorities, for the difficulties are many. At one time the whole of the inhabitants of a large village, except three persons, bore the surname of Williams. How on earth could a letter stand a fair chance of reaching the proper addressee? The difficulty was lessened by the fact that letter-writing was not much in vogue at that time and in that spot. But we might put this particular aspect of the subject to a practical test in our own day, and in a town which assumes no small degree of importance in summer and autumn. Aberystwith has a Marine Parade, much frequented by holiday folks and tourist families. Suppose a letter to be addressed to "Mrs. Jones, lodging-house keeper, Marine Parade, Aberystwith," would it reach the proper person? Consult a directory of that pleasant west-Welsh watering-place, and you will find that there are several worthy dames, each of whom is entitled to be called Mary Jones, lodging-house keeper, Marine Parade; while Sophia Jones, Martha Jones, Margaret Jones, Kate Jones, Louisa Jones, Elizabeth Jones, all help to swell the number of Joneses who let lodgings to visitors at the Marine Parade in the same identical row of houses.

The Welsh "ap," we have said, was formerly used with remarkable frequency, in days when surnames can scarcely be said to have existed in that country. It was necessary to mention not only the name of a man's father, but the name of his father, and so on. There ought not, if parochial records are properly kept, to be any doubt concerning the full and proper name of a particular parish; therefore we will infer the correctness of a statement to the effect that a church at or near Llangollen is dedicated to St. Collen ap-Gwynnawg ap-Clyndawg ap-Cowrda ap-Caradoc Friechpas ap-Lynnmerim ap-Erion Irth ap-Cunedda Wledig. Judging from the number of aps, St. Collen must have been grandson to Cunedda Wledig's great grandson's grandson.

The whimsical effect of this accumulation of aps has given rise to stories which may or may not be true, but which are at any rate illustrative of a possibility. In the old play of Sir John Oldcastle, first printed in 1600, a judge is represented

as asking what bail or surety was forthcoming at a particular trial? He was informed that the bail tendered would be the accused person's cousin, Rhys ap-Evan ap-Morris ap-Morgan ap-Llewellyn ap-Madoc ap-Meredith ap-Griffith ap-Davies ap-Owen ap-Shenkin Jones. "Any two of them will do," said the judge." "Please you, they are only one altogether." Mr. Lower, while making researches into the history of surnames, was told the following story by a Welshman. An Englishman, riding one dark night among the mountains, heard a cry of distress proceeding, apparently, from a man who had become stuck in a bog or morass at some little distance from the highway. On listening more attentively, he heard the words: "Help, master, help!" in a voice unmistakably Cambrian. "Help? well, who are you?" "Jenkins ap-Griffith ap-Robin ap-William ap-Rhys ap-Evan," was the reply. "Lazy fellows that you are, to be rolling in that hole, half-a-dozen of you! Why, in the name of common-sense, don't you help one another out?"

Besides the derivation of surnames from Christian or baptismal names, worked out in the various forms and modes we have described, there is a large group arising from local associations with the country of birth or of residence. Such as Ireland, France, Gascoigne, Scott, England; or the town of birth, exemplified in Rochester, Middleton, Bolton, Bury, Windsor; or such names of counties as Durham, Kent, Cornwall, Lincoln, Bedford; while a large supply is obtained from such topographical distinctions as Hill, Forest, Wood, Copse, Dale, Vale, Gore, Lynch, Foss, Fenn, Marsh, Peat, Slade, Pond, River, Mead, Dyke, Lake, Mountain, Hill, Down, Combe.

Much more extensive are the derivations from the numerous occupations and pursuits of men. John the smith and James the weaver readily became abbreviated to John Smith and James Weaver; such a designation at once includes baptismal name and surname. It would not be difficult in this way to make up a couple of hundred surnames of the kind exemplified by Carpenter, Glover, Butcher, Baker, Farmer, Cartwright, Wheelwright, Wainwright, Slater, Tyler, Saddler, Salter, Spicer, Brazier, Wheeler, Farrier, Draper, Mercer. Smith—the all-pervading Smith—gives rise to a distinct group of its own, according to the kind of smith's work denoted: Brownsmith, Nasmyth (nailsmith), Spearsmith, Shoosmith, Shearsmith, Gold-

smith, Arrowsmith. Dignities, offices, and functions, as well as handicraft employments, are very prolific in this direction witness such surnames as King, Prince, Princess, Duke, Marquis, Earl, Lord, Baron or Barron, Count, Chevalier, Knight, Squire, Gentleman; and such as Pope, Pontifex, Bishop, Priest, Deacon, Dean, Abbot, Prior, Monk, Nun or Nunn, Clerk, Chaplain or Chaplin, Parsons; and such as Mayor, Alderman, Burgess, Chamberlain, Constable, Serjeant, Warden, Steward, Marshall, Provost, Proctor.

Personal and moral qualities, good and bad, we have already mentioned as being denoted among surnames; but the point here held in view is that the quality or attribute, as possessed by some one individual among many, was the special cause of the naming process. Is it the colour or complexion? We have Fair, Ruddy, &c. Or the colour of the hair? Blacklock, Redhead. Or the form of the head? Broadhead, Greathead. Or the stature? Long, Short, Small. Moral qualities are shown in Merry, Wild, Coward, Thoroughgood, and the like. Domestic relationship gives us Brother, Cousin, Bachelor, Lover, Bride, Husband, Young-husband, Baby. In this matter a queer incongruity sometimes arises when the person is a female. "Died, Miss Bridget Youngusband;" "Birth, Mrs. Batchelor of a son."

Periods of time, such as Spring, March, May, Early, Quarterly, occur in our researches. It is not surprising that we find virtues and abstract ideas, such as Hope, Joy, Pride, Love, Wisdom. Terms of contempt or censure are naturally exemplified in Lawless, Scamp, and Hussey. Oaths and exclamations, such as Godhelp, Truly, Fudge, Heigho, are not wanting. Natural objects, including the names of multitudes of quadrupeds, birds, fishes, reptiles, insects, vegetables, flowers, fruits, and minerals—all have been concerned in the origination of surnames, and all supply testimony to the fact that every or nearly every such name had a definite meaning at the outset. Almost endless is the variety; nevertheless, order runs through the apparent chaos.

It has been justly remarked that a good list of surnames would enable persons whose names are unpalatable to themselves or to others to discover their proper orthography, instead of abandoning them and making a new selection. Then it would be found that Buggin and Simper can be

traced back to Bacon and St. Pierre; Death and Diaper to D'Æth and D'Ypres. A tendency exists to assign a meaning to a name apparently without one by modifying the orthography in a haphazard sort of way. Pettycot becomes Petticoat; Eyville, Evil; Frisk, Freak; Lepard, Leopard; Sigar, Segar; Bradford, Broadfoot. In former times Botland Brandi were changed by some of the persons so named to Bottle and Brandy, in ignorance of the fact that botl was Anglo-Saxon for an abode or dwelling-place, while brandi was a Scandinavian name for a skilled horseman.

After making all necessary allowances for odd whims and strange vagaries, mere oddity and mere accident, there must nevertheless be, if we take the trouble to ferret it out, something like a system in the formation of the thousands of surnames known to directory compilers and registrars of births and deaths. This fact has been pretty fully illustrated in the foregoing paragraphs, but Mr. Lower states it more distinctly: "All names were originally significant; although in the course of ages the meaning of most of them may have lapsed from the memory of mankind. It is most unphilosophical to arrive at the opposite conclusion. Invention without motives and without principles is as difficult in relation to this subject as to any other. If the names of common objects were not dictated by mere caprice, how can we imagine that those of persons and of places had so vague a beginning? Let anyone call to remembrance the names of his nearest friends and neighbours, and he will immediately recognise in them an identity with names of the most familiar objects, epithets, localities, &c. He will then scarcely allow his mind to doubt that these, in their primitive application to persons, had some connection with those objects, epithets, and localities respectively; and if he thinks wisely, he will hardly reject as destitute of service or meaning the still larger number of personal appellations which convey no distinct idea to his mind."

Dr. Charnock, in his *Etymology of Curious Surnames*, has made a whimsical attempt to show how numerous are the verbal elements or materials of the English language which have been brought into requisition to denote names of persons. We have shown how varied are the sources whence these names have derived; and Dr. Charnock shows that whole sentences may be constructed with them, with the addition of a very few short words, such as

"a," "the," "and," &c. He makes up a queer story, a kind of autobiography, supposed to be written by a man not quite on the proper level in his orthography. The wrong spelling in many instances we are called upon to attribute to the autobiographer himself; but this does not militate against the fact that the words so spelt are really surnames. Any reader could work on the same lines as Dr. Charnock to a greater or less extent: the main or only point to bear in mind being that, with a few exceptions, all the words are veritable surnames. The possibility of making up such a story shows how surnames grow.

UNSPOKEN.

I MAY not keep thee, dear. I long have known
An hour must come for farewell look and sigh;
An hour wherein love-blossoms that have blown
Around our path, like summer flowers must die.
And I have communed with my wakeful heart,
And thought of all that I would say to thee,
Ere hand and lip from hand and lip should part,
And oceans roll between my love and me.
But as we stand upon the moor to-day,
The gorse and purple heather at our feet,
I have no spirit left in me to say
The words I meant to be so strong and sweet;
No eloquence to help me at my need,
No words of fire to thrill my last "God speed!"

Yet standing thus beneath September's sky,
With solitude around us, God above,
We feel, with precious moments fleeting by,
That silent farewell better suiteth love.
No honeyed phrase can ease the cruel smart
Felt with the stroke fate dealeth us to-day.
I read each longing of thy tender heart,
Thou knowest all I would, but cannot say.
I do not bind thee by a parting vow,
Thou speakest not of faithfulness to me;
It is enough to be together now,
Ere yet between us rolls the mighty sea.
Silent, alone, among the moorland flowers,
Passeth the last of all our happy hours!

"OLD DRURY."

EARLY in the seventeenth century there stood a theatre on the eastern side of Drury Lane, between Pitt Place, formerly known as Cockpit Alley, and Orange Court. The neighbourhood was then open and airy enough; at the back of the theatre a grass field was to be found; in front, westward to St. Martin's Church, very few houses had yet been erected. The playhouse was known indifferently as the Phoenix, because of the signboard it exhibited, or the Cockpit, in relation to the purposes it had originally served. The fighting of cocks, was an admired spectacle and entertainment in Queen Elizabeth's time, and, indeed, long afterwards. And between cockpits and theatres some resemblance

existed. The chorus to Shakespeare's Henry the Fifth demands:

Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?

A cockpit was readily convertible into a theatre by cutting off a segment of the circle, and raising upon it a platform or stage for histrionic uses.

The Cockpit Theatre, it seems, gave much offence to well-conducted citizens. It was a scandalous and profligate establishment. On March 4th, 1617, Shrove Tuesday, when the London apprentices claimed and exercised a special right to be active and mischievous in the cause of morality, there assembled a mob of disorderly persons in Lincoln's Inn Fields, who presently attacked and sacked the Drury Lane playhouse, destroying the decorations, rending the costumes, and burning the players' books. It may be that the public in this way demonstrated their opinion that cock-fighting was preferable to the drama.

The theatre was soon open again, however, the Privy Council by letter enjoining the Lord Mayor, lest "the example of so foul and insolent a disorder might prove of dangerous consequence if this should escape without sharp punishment of the principal offenders," to hold a special sessions of Oyer and Terminer, and to proceed with severity against the rioters and the "great multitude of vagrant rogues" who had assisted them. In 1623 the parish books showed that the "plaiers of the Cockpitt Plaiehouse" subscribed twenty pounds towards the rebuilding of St. Giles's church. From other entries it appeared that the theatre was first assessed eight pounds fourteen shillings and five pence, upon this account as the Phoenix; and afterwards, under its old title of the Cockpit, in a further sum of ten pounds seven shillings. The actors at this theatre were called the Queen's Servants until the death of James the First's consort in 1619, when they became the servants of Princess Elizabeth, the Queen of Bohemia. They resumed their former title upon the marriage of Charles the First with Henrietta Maria of France in 1625.

In 1647 the theatres were all closed by ordinance of parliament; but in 1658 Sir William Davenant was permitted to open the Cockpit with an entertainment not absolutely dramatic, but of a musical and scenic character, intitled The Cruelty of

the Spaniards in Peru, "expressed by instrumental and vocal music and by art of perspective in scenes." In the following year, Rhodes, a bookseller, who in times past had been wardrobe-keeper and prompter at the Blackfriars Theatre, obtained a license to fit up for acting the house then called the Cockpit. According to the parish books the new manager was subjected for every day's performance to a payment of twopence towards the relief of the poor. Among his company were Kynaston and Betterton, to become better known to fame at a later date. But Rhodes had to meet the opposition of Herbert, the Master of the Revels, and of the rival managers, Davenant and Killigrew, who presently obtained patents, giving them special privileges, from Charles the Second. Ultimately the actors collected by Rhodes were joined to Davenant's company, and appeared in the spring of 1662 at a newly built theatre in Portngal Row, Lincoln's Inn Fields. This was the first English theatre the king entered after his restoration; it was known as the Duke's Theatre, the company having been sworn the Duke of York's servants. Under his patent Killigrew built a new playhouse on what was known as the Riding Yard, the site of the existing Drury Lane, the ground being leased of the Earl of Bedford for forty-one years at an annual rent of fifty pounds. The performers were sworn the king's company; the performances commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon. The building, which cost one thousand five hundred pounds, a small sum comparatively speaking, although money was more valuable then than now, was one hundred and twelve feet in length and fifty-nine in breadth. It was opened to the public on April 8th, 1663. In the previous February Mr. Pepys noted in his diary: "I walked up and down, and looked upon the new theatre in Covent Garden, which will be very fine." This playhouse, situated partly in the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, and partly in the parish of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, was usually called the Theatre Royal simply.

The first play represented in the first Drury Lane Theatre was The Humorous Lieutenant of Beaumont and Fletcher, supported by the players Winterset, Hart, Burt, Major Mohun, Clun, and Mrs. Marshall. The prices at this time were: boxes, four shillings; pit, two shillings and sixpence; middle gallery, one shilling and sixpence; upper gallery, one shilling. Pepys, on May 8th, 1663, relates his visit to the

Theatre Royal "being the second day of its being opened." Perhaps the opening on April 8th was only an experiment, and the theatre afterwards closed its doors again for a month. Pepys describes the house as "made with extraordinary good convenience, and yet hath some faults, as the narrowness of the passages in and out of the pit, and the distances from the stage to the boxes, which I am confident cannot hear; but for all other things is well; only, above all, the musique being below, and most of its sounding under the very stage, there is no hearing of the basses at all, nor very well of the trebles, which sure must be mended. The play was *The Humorous Lieutenant*, a play that has little good in it, nor much in the very part which by the king's command Lacy now acts instead of Clun. In the dance the tall devil's action was very pretty. The play being done we home by water, having been a little shamed that my wife and women were in such a pickle, all the ladies being finer and better dressed in the pit than they used, I think, to be." But the new theatre had its discomforts. A year after his first visit Pepys records: "To the King's house and saw *The Silent Woman* . . . Before the play was done it fell such a storm of hayle that we in the middle of the pit were fain to rise, and all the house in a disorder." In 1666 the theatre was closed because of the raging of the plague in London. On December 7th in that year Pepys stealthily entered the house after two acts of the play had been performed, and sat with his cloak about his face in "mighty fear" lest he should be seen by anybody. "This is the first play [*The Maid's Tragedy* by Beaumont and Fletcher] I have seen," he writes, "in either of the houses since before the Great Plague, they having acted now about fourteen days publicly." After a performance in the following February he records: "And so home in the dark over the ruins with a link." The ruins were those of the City after the Great Fire. In October, 1667, on the occasion of the first performance of Lord Orrery's play, *The Black Prince*, produced by the king's desire, the house was so full that, as Pepys relates, "though we came by two o'clock yet there was no room in the pit, but were forced to go into one of the upper boxes at four shillings apiece, which is the first time I ever sat in a box in my life." In May, 1668, there was "a disorder in the pit by its raining in from the cupola at top."

The roof was still in an imperfect state. In July Pepys notes that horses were brought upon the stage in a revival of Shirley's old play of *Hyde Park*.

In January, 1672, the first Drury Lane Theatre was totally destroyed by fire. For the benefit of the theatrical sufferers collections were made in the churches throughout England, probably upon the bidding of a royal letter. Boaden quotes the following entry from the parish register of Symonsbury, in the county of Dorset: "Ann. 1673, April 27th. Collected by brief for the Theatre Royal in London, being burnt, the sum of two shillings. John Way, curate; James Morey and George Seal, churchwardens."

The proprietors took counsel of Sir Christopher Wren, who produced forthwith a design for a new theatre. The great architect's plan is said to have combined every advantage to both actor and spectator; it "was deliberately approved and adopted by men of the soundest judgment." The king was pleased to sanction the handsome simplicity of the building. Cibber describes the internal arrangements in their original form as perfection. He writes, in 1740: "As there are not many spectators who may remember what form the Drury Lane Theatre stood in about forty years ago, before the old patentee [Rich], to make it hold more money, took it in his head to alter it, it were but justice to lay the original figure which Sir Christopher Wren first gave it, and the alterations of it now standing, in a fair light." Wren's stage had been reduced so as to enlarge the pit, and a new proscenium, with additional boxes, had encroached upon the space formerly occupied by two sets of sidewings, "which had then almost a double effect in their loftiness and magnificence." In the original plan "the usual station of the actors in almost every scene" was some ten feet nearer to the audience than in the altered theatre. "When the actors were in possession of that forwarder space to advance upon," writes Cibber, "the voice was then more in the centre of the house, so that the most distant ear had scarce the least doubt or difficulty in hearing what fell from the weakest utterance; all objects were thus drawn nearer to the senses; every painted scene was stronger; every grand scene and dance more extended; every rich or fine coloured habit had a more lively lustre; nor was the minutest motion of a feature, properly changing with the passion or humour it suited, ever lost,

as they frequently must be in the obscurity of too great a distance, &c."

The principal entrance to Wren's theatre was down Playhouse Passage. Over the stage was inscribed *Vivitur Ingenio*. This second Drury Lane opened on March 26th, 1674, with a new prologue by Dryden, in which strees was laid upon the simplicity of the new building, and sneers were pointed at the gaudy decorations and scenic splendours and illusions of the rival theatre—the Duke of York's—in Dorset Garden :

A plain-built house, after so long a stay,
Will send you half unsatisfied away ;
When, fallen from your expected pomp, you find
A bare convenience only is designed ;
You, who each day can theatres behold,
Like Nero's palace, shining all with gold,
Our mean unglided stage will scorn, we fear,
And for the homely room disdain the cheer.

Presently it is hinted that the king favoured the simpler decorations of the new theatre :

Yet if some pride with want may be allowed,
We in our plainness may be justly proud ;
Our royal master willed it should be so ;
Whate'er he's pleased to own can need no show ;
That sacred name gives ornament and grace ;
And, like his stamp, makes basest metals pass.

The epilogue discourses of the merits of the new theatre arising from its situation :

Our house relieves the ladies from the frights
Of ill-paved streets and long dark winter nights ;
The Flanders horses from a cold bleak road
Where bears in furs dare scarcely look abroad.

and satirical allusion is made to the portraits of the poets adorning the Duke's Theatre :

Though in their house the poets' heads appear,
We hope we may presume their wits are here.

Wren's Drury Lane endured for nearly one hundred and twenty years. Having become ruinous and dilapidated, it was at last taken down. On June 4th, 1791, the playbills announced "the last time of performing in this theatre." The entertainment consisted of the comedy of *The Country Girl*, and the farce of *No Song No Supper*. The theatre then was finally closed, and its demolition immediately commenced. It had undergone considerable alteration subsequent to Cibber's time. Externally it had been new-faced by the brothers Adam, under Garrick's management, which commenced in 1747; and increased accommodation had been provided for the audience so as to relieve the stage of the spectators who formerly crowded upon it, to the distress of the players and the destruction of scenic effect. The enlarged theatre was said to hold three hundred and thirty-five pounds. "To the last," writes Boaden, in 1831,

"for I can bring it very accurately to my mind's eye, it was a plain theatre as to its interior. It had the common defect of all our theatres except the opera-house: namely, that the pit doors of entrance were close to the orchestra." There were thus inconvenient currents of cold air rushing in each time the doors were opened, while much disturbance ensued from the late arrival of visitors. Boaden speaks of "fits among the women and fights among the men;" audience and actors being compelled to suspend operations, and simply look on till peace was restored. Over such incidents he had seen, he relates, "the solemn countenance of Kemble bent with calm attention; and the assumed sympathy of Palmer bow with graceful ambiguity. Mrs. Siddons had somewhat more difficulty, for she could not be sure always whether the disturbance arose from the desire to see her or the hysteric results of that painful pleasure. Miss Farren on these occasions relaxed the lovely smile which usually sat upon her features, and looked among her fashionable friends for pity that she should be so annoyed. Mrs. Jordan saw it with the eyes of the character she most commonly performed, and at the first symptom of composure below started off into the sprightly action and the unfailing laugh which she had only to will and they obeyed."

It was in Wren's theatre that Garrick, on his return from foreign travel, introduced the French improvement of foot-lights: "the trap or floating light in front of the stage, screened from the spectators and reflected upon the actor," in lieu of the old brass circular chandeliers swinging from the proscenium over the heads of the performers. In Wren's theatre Garrick amassed a fortune; his successor, Sheridan, who became proprietor in 1776, accumulated nothing but debt. And "he sealed his fate," as Boaden writes, "by the encumbrances which the building of a national theatre upon a vast scale necessarily fastened upon the concern."

The third Drury Lane was built by Holland, and opened for dramatic exhibitions on April 21st, 1794, when, under Kemble's management, *Macbeth* was presented with great improvements in scenery, costumes, and effects. Banquo's ghost was not permitted to be visible, and Charles Kemble made his first appearance upon the London stage. The house held three thousand six hundred and eleven persons. The receipts, supposing the theatre to be

completely filled and no orders admitted, were calculated at seven hundred and seventy-one pounds. The cost of erection was two hundred thousand pounds. The building measured, from east to west, three hundred and twenty feet; from north to south, one hundred and fifty-five feet; the height of the roof was one hundred and eighteen feet. The space within the frame of the proscenium measured forty-three feet in width and thirty-eight feet in height. John Kemble spoke a prologue, written by General Fitzpatrick; in the character of Housekeeper to the new building, Miss Farren delivered an epilogue by George Colman the younger. The recent burning of the Opera House had much alarmed the public. Miss Farren assured the audience that they need not fear fire in Drury Lane; there was an iron curtain dividing them from the stage, so that the scenes only and the actors could be burnt—and there was water enough to drown them all. As she spoke the curtain was raised, and a waterman was seen rowing his wherry to and fro in a large tank full of water upon the stage.

Holland's Drury Lane, or the Apollo Drury Lane, as it was called, because of a statue of that pagan divinity, ten feet high, reared upon the roof and "presiding over the ventilator," did not last long. It was totally consumed by fire on the night of February 24th, 1809. Fate dealt ironically with Holland's measures of precaution. The tanks were empty; the iron curtain would not descend. It was a Friday in Lent, and there had been no performance that evening. The leading actors and officers of the theatre were dining with Mr. Richard Wilson at his house in Lincoln's Inn Fields when news came of the fire. All rushed into the square; the fire was raging furiously. Peake, and Dunn, the treasurer, with Kelly, the acting-manager, hurried to the theatre, and at the hazard of their lives succeeded in saving an iron box containing documents of value. Sheridan was in the House of Commons, on the occasion of Mr. Ponsoby's motion as to the conduct of the war in Spain. The reflection of the fire crimsoned the windows of the House. Many members climbed to the roof or ran to Westminster Bridge, the better to view the spectacle. Mr. W. Elliot and Lord Temple proposed that the House should adjourn, in regard to the loss sustained by one of its most distinguished members. Probably all were aware that the catastrophe involved the absolute ruin of

Sheridan. He retained his composure, however, as he said, that "Whatever might be the extent of the private calamity, he hoped it would not interfere with the public business of the country." He left the House with a few personal friends and hastened to the theatre. "After standing some minutes in dreadful agony in front of the building, he was prevailed on to retire to the Piazza Coffee-house," writes Boaden, "where he could receive and make any communications that were proper on the occasion." The Duke of York and Lord Mountjoy were with him, and he bore himself with great firmness. It was told that his philosophic calmness being commented upon, he even replied jestingly: "Surely a man may be allowed to take a glass of wine by his own fireside." Moore observes: "Without vouching for the authenticity or novelty of this anecdote, which may have been, for aught I know, like the Wandering Jew, a regular attendant upon all fires since the time of Hierocles, I give it as I heard it."

The fire was laid to the account of an incendiary. Covent Garden had been burnt down only five months before; the Opera House had been totally destroyed June, 17th, 1789. There had been fires, too, at Westminster Abbey, St. James's Palace, St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden, the Pantheon, Oxford-street, and at Astley's Theatre, over Westminster Bridge. Still it was said that some careless plumbers after melting their lead had departed, leaving a fire burning in a basket-grate. And the theatre was so constructed that it burnt very rapidly. It was erected on timber piers, cased with brick; the walls fell at the burning of the beams. The fire commenced in what was called the coffee-room on the first floor in Brydges Street, communicating directly with the first circle of boxes. The wood-work of the boxes once caught by the flames, their advance to the stage could not be stayed; for the iron curtain stuck fast.

The fourth Drury Lane Theatre is the existing house built from the designs of Benjamin Wyatt, and opened to the public with a performance of Hamlet on Oct. 10th, 1812. For some months no funds were forthcoming for the re-erection of the theatre; but a committee of gentlemen, with Mr. Whitbread for their chairman, engaged to find the means, and in the session of 1810 obtained an Act of Parliament establishing a Joint Stock Subscription Company in shares of five hundred and one hundred pounds, for the reconstruction of Drury Lane. A

committee, of which Lord Byron was a member, undertook the management, with disastrous consequences. Lord Byron, it may be noted, had written the opening address, after the complete failure of the attempt, immortalised in the *Rejected Addresses* of James and Horace Smith, to obtain an appropriate effusion by public tender. The appearance of Edmund Kean in 1814, and the extraordinary favour with which his performances were received by the public, did something to relieve the committee from their embarrassments. But, in 1818, it was held advisable to accept Elliston as lessee and manager of the theatre for fourteen years at an annual rent of ten thousand two hundred pounds. Elliston was further pledged to expend some seven thousand pounds in the improvement and decoration of the theatre, and to pay all rates, taxes, &c. He was bound, moreover, to give free admission nightly to six hundred and fifty-three persons—the renters or proprietors and their nominees.

The theatre suffered from its excessive size. At a cost of twenty-two thousand pounds, Elliston, from the designs of Beasley, the architect, remodelled the interior. The ceiling was lowered fourteen feet; the fronts of the boxes were projected five feet, diminishing the horse-shoe of the auditory, and reducing the limits of the pit. The walls, indeed, in this task of reconstruction, were laid bare to the back of the boxes. Towards the close of these labours a curious dinner-party was given on the scaffold vibrating within five feet of the ceiling and fifty above the pit. "On this spot," writes Elliston's biographer, "a rump-steak collation was actually dressed for a dozen persons—Elliston presiding, and his architect, Beasley, facing him." A brass plate was deposited in the centre of the pit, near the orchestra, twenty feet below the level, with an inscription registering the fact that "the interior of this national theatre was pulled down and rebuilt in the space of fifty-eight days." The theatre reopened for performance on October 16th, 1822, the day of Mrs. Garrick's death. Elliston had in addition erected the portico in Brydges Street, from the design of Sir John Soane, at a cost of one thousand and fifty pounds. The bankruptcy of Elliston in 1826 voided his lease, and brought his management to an end. During his seven years' lease-ship he had paid the proprietors sixty-six thousand pounds for rent.

The subsequent history of Drury Lane is a catalogue of disasters. With the

exception, perhaps, of the late Mr. E. T. Smith, who is understood to have withdrawn from management and resigned the remainder of his lease "for a consideration," each lessee of Old Drury has in turn retired from its direction a heavy loser. Several of its managers have been constrained, indeed, to exhibit their accounts and seek relief in the Courts of Bankruptcy or Insolvency. Bish, famous in connection with the lottery offices, sought to fill Elliston's vacant post; but Bish's heart failed him at the last moment, and he paid a forfeit of two thousand pounds to be released from his rash bargain. Stephen Price, a New York manager, then became lessee of Drury Lane. "Mr. Price," writes Macready, "had no pretensions to justify his appointment. He was a reckless speculator; Gully the pugilist made up his betting-books for him." He was of rude and overbearing manners, unpopular, uneducated, ignorant of histrionic art and dramatic literature. "In conversation," Macready continues, "his only argument was a wager; in short, he was not a gentleman, and in an evil hour was permitted to preside over the fortunes of the British drama. But the only consideration of these to whom the patents of the Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres had been entrusted was the amount of interest they could obtain for their shares; the improvement of the public taste, the cultivation of dramatic literature, or the respectability of the audiences, being subjects below their liberal and enlightened views."

Price lost seriously by his management. His successors, Captain Polhill, Alfred Bunn (who had been Elliston's stage-manager), Hammond, Macready, and others, all suffered. Naturally, candidates to fill the post of manager presented themselves more and more intermittently. There were long intervals when the theatre remained closed. From time to time entertainments of an experimental sort were presented: promenade concerts; feats of horsemanship; acrobatic performances; French plays, which produced a riot; French, German, and Italian operas. The prices of admission underwent great reduction. Mr. E. T. Smith's management commenced in December, 1852. He was succeeded by Messrs. Falconer and Chatterton. Finally Mr. Chatterton assumed the sole direction of the theatre in the season of 1866-7.

In a pamphlet published in 1875, entitled *Poets and Profits at Drury Lane*, a Theatrical Narrative, Mr. Chatterton took

the public into his confidence, and revealed certain of the secrets of his management. He had said once, or it had been said on his behalf, that "Shakespeare spelt ruin and Byron bankruptcy." He was often reproached because of this utterance; and it was charged against him that he had set before his audiences entertainments of inferior quality. He was able to show that although he had assembled a strong company for performances of the "legitimate drama," and taken pains to present these with scenic completeness, he had met with very inadequate patronage. Of his first season he wrote: "Macbeth was productive of loss; Faust cleared its expenses for the short time it was in the bills; and Miss Helen Faucit's engagement only partially restored the balance of profit and loss. After the pantomime the attempt to revive Faust proved disastrous; the receipts dropping down as low as fifty pounds per night." In the summer, however, the melodrama of *The Great City* brought "a welcome flow of gold into the treasury."

Concerning the importance of the pantomime season to the fortunes of Old Drury much was said. "The pantomime safely reached, the manager of Drury Lane Theatre leaves for a time all his troubles and anxieties behind him. Its run is to him as an *El Dorado*, a *Tom Tiddler's Ground*. The annual rising of the Nile, fructifying the Egyptian valley and covering the arid soil with golden harvests, is not looked forward to with more eager anticipation, nor blessed on its arrival, with more fervent thanksgiving, than is the advent of the Christmas holiday season by the lessee of this temple; especially if he has been sacrificing too freely to its all-devouring idols—Shakespeare and Legitimacy. In fact, but for the golden tide which now flows into the exchequer to fill up ugly deficits and make all smooth and pleasant again, it would be impossible to pay the least regard to the exacting requirements of those local deities."

Further, in regard to the ups and downs of management, and the caprices of public favour, it was told that the production of Byron's *Marino Faliero* brought with it a loss of five thousand pounds; while from the melodrama of *Formosa* came a profit of ten thousand pounds. The revival of *Peep of Day* brought a profit of two thousand pounds; Amy Robsart produced ten thousand pounds. A dramatic version of Scott's *Fortunes of Nigel* was attended with great success; but after the pantomime, "a partial return to the old legitimate repertory dragged down the receipts

and seriously impaired the favourable results previously obtained." *Ivanhoe* was a very prosperous play, but the *Lady of the Lake* completely failed. From *Antony and Cleopatra* came a loss of between four and five thousand pounds; and the management suffered to the same extent from the play of *Cœur de Lion*, a dramatic edition of Scott's *Talisman*.

Altogether it may safely be concluded that the manager of Drury Lane Theatre does not occupy an enviable post, and that his risks and responsibilities are very serious indeed.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK IN CORNWALL.

LET me suppose that you have made your own way as far as Tavistock, where, under the shadow of Dartmoor, Ordgar Ælderman of Devon founded what became the largest abbey in the west. Abbey lands were said to bring a curse with them; but Tavistock seems to thrive under its ducal owner. It looks wonderfully spruce—with new streets, and new rows of semi-detached villas, and its old corners swept so clean that there is really nothing left for the antiquarian except a few ivied walls and mullioned windows close to the Bedford Hotel. In the church they show you some very big pewter flagons, belonging, they say, to the abbey; and some very big bones, said to be those of Ordolph, Ordgar's son, a giant who once tore down the gate of Exeter city, and thought nothing of wrenching away the iron bars of a prison-window. While you are at Tavistock see Kelly College; it is half a mile out, close to a spur of Dartmoor, called Cockstor, and is a very interesting sample of modern Gothic, showing that a place may really be made comfortable and fit for modern use, and yet be quite architecturally correct. Why it was built I can't quite tell you. Admiral Kelly left money to found a school; but the days of gratuitous education are gone by. At Kelly College you have to pay all the same, in spite of the admiral's munificence; only, if you are kin to that old Devon family, the Kellys of Kelly, you pay somewhat less. When I was there, Kelly College seemed to exist mainly for the use of the masters; but now, I daresay, boys have begun to come.

From Tavistock it is an easy walk to Morwell Hall, an old hunting-lodge of the monks, who are said to have cared more for the chase and less for books than Benedictines in general. Three

large strangely-twisted roadside trees are now all that is worth seeing at Morwell. The Rocks are close by—tilted ridges of clay slate, more jagged than the St. Vincent's Rocks at Bristol, and higher but far less perpendicular. The apparent height is also lessened by the greater breadth of the river. Tamar has made himself a far broader channel than that of the Bristol Avon.

Your first introduction to Cornwall will not be a very cheery one. Just over the bridge begins the long mining village of Gunnislake, inhabited by those who work Drakewalls and the other mines round, and by those who keep shop for them. Drakewalls, which looks like a grand fortification crowning the heights to the west, is worth walking up to. You may there see a tin-lode open to the light of day and—what is of more vital consequence to the miners—to the air. Mr. Huxley calculates that the air in a deep Cornish mine contains about nineteen times as much carbonic acid gas as that in a close London court. Dingdong, near Penzance, one of the mines which lately “knocked,” after working on and off, they say, since Roman times, had some of these deep levels, unventilated—for since fire-damp does not gather in a metalliferous mine, ventilation is not an absolute necessity. Some of the men from Dingdong went to seek farm-work. “You call yourselves men?” was the rebuff they met. “Half men, I should call you, or quarter men, a good many of you.” What could be expected from men who had been working, from father to son, in air that you could not comfortably breathe for five minutes? Such men, you think, ought to be well paid. I know I'd rather be a farm-labourer at fifteen shillings a week than a miner at fifty shillings. But, unhappily, fifty shillings very nearly represent the monthly gettings of the average Cornish miner just now. “Tin is low.” It pours in from Australia and Van Diemen's Land, and Chinamen have taken to work it in the Straits of Malacca. Copper, too, is now smelted in Chili. Not many years ago all the South American ores were brought to Swansea; now, in Chili, and elsewhere, they have the latest improvements and machinery, and do all the work for themselves. Tin, therefore, does not pay at all, and copper very badly; and so the wages must needs be low, or the mines would have had to shut up long ago. You should learn something about mining and miners while you are in Cornwall. Independent, you will find the men, but without rudeness. You need never fear

the gruff, surly refusal which too often in the north, or the midlands, meets a request to be shown the way. “Good-night” is as universal a greeting to the belated pedestrian as “God save you” was in Ireland before the famine days. Uneducated the Cornish miner certainly is; and he has that Celtic quickness which, making his lack of education less apparent, deceives him into fancying that it is unnecessary. He has, too, very often a superficial acquaintance with theological catchwords, and constantly mistakes talk (his own or another's) for argument, and sound for sense. In one way, this modification of the old religious spirit that covered the country with wayside crosses, and little chapels along the roads to all the famous pilgrimage places, has been a great blessing—it has kept him from the public-house. He is very sober, despite the bad example often set him at mine-account dinners, and the poorness of his diet would astonish a north-country miner; but his children generally manage to get a little “scald-milk” (i.e. skimmed of its cream), and so far are better off than four-fifths of the children of our agricultural poor. Farm labour, by-the-way, needs steadier exertion than mining, but gives less room for individual cleverness. A shrewd miner, who knows where to drive his blasting-holes, will raise perhaps thrice as much stuff as the man working next to him. Hence wages are not the rule underground. Some men work by contract (tat-work, it is called), and then their gettings depend to some extent on the nature of the ground. If “the stuff turns dead against him,” even the best man must lose on a bargain, which he took supposing the soil to be light. Others (“tributers”) become for a time joint-stock sharers in the mine; their gettings depending, not on the amount of stuff they raise, but on its value—i.e. on the percentage of tin it contains. Hence another element of uncertainty, which sometimes leaves the worker actually in debt to the mine at the month's end. Still, however, the Cornish mines could not be worked at a profit on any other plan; and fortunes have been made by “tributers” in the good old days, when tin was higher, and “mine-captains” less rigid in their supervision. Among the evils of the “tributing” are the gambling spirit which it produces, and the idleness which follows when a man's bargain turns out so poor as really not to be worth working. But the greatest evil of the system is that a man must work

two months before he touches money, unless he is in the interval allowed to draw some "subsist." "A month in hand" is always the rule; in order that he whose contract turns out hopelessly bad may not move off somewhere else without thinking twice about it. Hence when a mine is "knocked," it is always a good deal in debt to the men, who sometimes have the trouble and expense of going before the Stannaries' Court, and even then lose a part of what is due to them. Another evil is the inequality in the returns which come from the "accident and death pay." Every man pays sixpence a month to the doctor, besides sixpence to the accident club; and whenever there is a death, a shilling is deducted from each man's, ninepence from each boy's, wages. In a large mine this makes a good sum for the widow; but in a small mine of course she gets but little. Absenteeism again is the curse of most Cornish mining parts. The mines are worked with money from a distance, and the managers are the only people above the rank of working men who are to be found in whole villages. In the old days the Cornish gentry worked their own tin, and smelted it themselves at the "blow-houses," of which there was one for every group of mines. Division of labour has now made smelting a separate affair. The smelter is a wholesale dealer, who buys up the Cornish tin, mixes it with other kinds to render it more workable, and often makes a fortune in so doing. If one of the old "tanners" could come to life, and see what a position the modern smelter has taken, he would be astonished indeed.

You will learn plenty about mines and mining if you choose to ask questions. I only want to remind you that there are two sides to every story; so learn from both the pursers and mine-captains and from the men, and strike a balance accordingly; never forgetting that to work underground from ten or twelve years old, without schooling, and for miserably uncertain gettings, is not the best way to develop good mental any more than good physical qualities. Indeed, the fact that the Cornish miners are as good as they are, and that they get on so well wherever they go, clearly shows that the breed must be exceptionally good. This old British stock is not one of which Englishmen need be ashamed.

From Gunnislake be sure to turn aside and follow the Tamar bank to Cothele, one of the most interesting old houses

in England — the Haddon Hall of the west, with the advantage of having been always "kept up" ever since it was built in Henry the Eighth's reign. Its quadrangle; its hall, with armour and weapons of all dates, and flags that have been in many fights; its queer little chapel, into which there is a peep-hole from the long drawing-room, so that my lady when sick might share in the service; its tapestry, its old furniture, all are worth looking at. Of course there is a picture of Mary Queen of Scots, and also one of her rival. One bedroom was Charles the Second's, and the furniture is the same as when "his sacred majesty" lay there; another is Queen Anne's room; in another lay George the Third and Queen Charlotte. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, too, went to Cothele in the same year in which they visited the Mount, and looked in on Augustus Smith, the king of Scilly. In the woods, which are fine and overhang the water—Coet heyle means the wood by the tidal river—is a memorial-chapel set up in Richard the Third's day by Sir Richard Edgcumbe to commemorate his escape from the king's men. Suspected as a partisan of Richmond, he was so closely watched, that no sooner had he started from his house than the pursuers were on his track. Happily, as he was climbing a tree near where the chapel was afterwards built, his cap blew off into the water. The soldiers saw it, and thinking he had jumped in, gave up the pursuit. So Sir Richard was able soon after to get away to France. The story is told in some curious old glass in the chapel.

From Cothele to Callington, past Dupath Well; almost the only one of the Cornish holy wells over which the old chapel remains perfect. It has its pinnacles and bell-gable, and, inside, the bath wherein the sick person was dipped. Some of the old wells are still held in repute for weak eyes, and some for children's sicknesses; but in general they have ceased to be anything more than wishing-wells, into which girls fling pins over the left shoulder, whispering at the same time something that they would like to have; not that they believe the ceremony will help them to get it, but that they like to keep up an old custom, and to have an object for a summer's walk. Hunt's Cornish Drolls and Botrell's Hearth Stories of West Penwith—both books to be read by tourists who want to know something of the people—tell us that not long ago the old belief in the virtue of wells was alive and vigo-

rous. Neither of them tells the summary way in which a squire near Hayle broke the charm by which he imagined his neighbours were infatuated. He washed his pack of dogs in the holy well.

From Callington you should go up Kit Hill, where the Cornish tinnerns used to meet those of Devon, until Edmund, Earl of Cornwall, A.D. 1305, separated the two, appointing Crockern Tor on Dartmoor as the meeting-place of the Devonians, while the Cornishmen were ordered to meet at Lostwithiel. The view from Kit Hill is very fine: to the west the Bodwin moors, with the Tamar Valley up to Launceston; south, the irregular coast, outlined so plainly that you can trace the whereabouts of every inlet; east, across the broad river lies Dartmoor, with all its Tors.

Your next point should be St. Cleer, where there is another holy well covered with a chapel much like that at Dupath, and a very fine church, with a curious monument to a man who left a dole of bread to those who could pass an examination in the principles of the Reformation. Just north begins the moor, on which when I was there, early last April, lay the traces of the snow which on Dartmoor was quite deep. Down in the vales, full of spring flowers, the climate was Italian; but on the moorland the air felt as cold as on a snow-mountain in the shade.

There is a whole day's work on these moors—if you care, that is, for prehistoric stones. Trevetthy grave-house, for instance, a mile north of St. Cleer, is a grand cromlech, with capstone sixteen feet long. Not far off are The Hurlers, three intersecting circles of upright stones, so named because the tradition is that they were once lads who were playing the old Celtic ball-play on "the Sabbath." -Hut circles, avenues of upright stones, and tumuli, are to be found all about. One of the heights is called King Arthur's Bed; and from almost everywhere you will see the Cheesewring—a pile of granite blocks laid on one another like cheeses, with a big one atop, as if to wring out the whey. There will be no Cheesewring before long, for the granite all round is excellent, and is largely quarried. The pile would have fallen already, but that it has been stayed up with artificial supports. The people who wrote about rock-basins and Druids, and spoke of cromlechs as altars for human sacrifices, used to say that the Cheesewring was a "rock idol." Look at it, and you will see at once that it is natural, its strange shape being due to the weathering

down of the softer parts of its constituent blocks.

If you are fond of thoroughly wild country, covered with granite blocks half hidden in heather and fern, walk across to St. Neot's by way of Dreynes Bridge and the three waterfalls. I went the other way—up and down dale from St. Cleer; and such deep little dales! It is across them, grown wider as they get nearer the sea, that Brunel's wooden viaducts are thrown. Last April each new dale was fuller than the last of primroses and wild Lent lilies.

And now we get to one of our main points, for all this time I have been bringing you to St. Neot's, a quiet little village in one of these dales aforesaid, with a fine old church, some quaint monuments, and the best old stained glass in the west of England. Indeed, I doubt if in any other English church there are so many good windows. They were given, too, not all by the big families, though some do bear their names, but several by the townspeople in general. There is the Maid's Window, the Matron's Window, the Young Bachelors' Window, given, all of them, in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. In the Young Men's Window is the story of St. Neot: how, when his horses were stolen, he ploughed with the stags that were miraculously sent to fill their place; which sight so struck the thieves that forthwith they restored their plunder and became monks. How the saint's supply of fish came to life after being cooked is quaintly told. In his fountain swam three fishes, of which he was ordered never to take more than one; but during his illness his servant thought to tempt his master's appetite by serving up one broiled and another stewed. "Go back," said the saint, falling to his prayers, "and fling them in again." He did so, and they swam off, none the worse for their cooking. There is a St. George window, making marvellous additions to the ordinary story; and there is a yet more wonderful and much older pair of windows, representing, the one the Creation—the Creator planning it with a pair of compasses in hand—the other the journey of the ark and life of Noah.

There is, you know, another St. Neot's, to which, soon after his death, our saint's body was surreptitiously carried; and The History and Antiquities of Eynesbury and St. Neot's in Huntingdonshire, and of St. Neot's in the County of Cornwall, by George Cornelius Gorham—of the Gorham Case—published in 1820, is a wonderful

contrast to Mr. Whitaker's book about the Cornish St. Neot's, published fourteen years earlier. Mr. Gorham ruthlessly breaks up the pretty picture of Neot, as "the first theological professor at Oxford, dispensing his pious instructions to that infant university." He will not allow that Neot was "the eldest brother of Alfred the Great, disqualified from reigning by his small size and feeble frame." He grants that, as Whitaker points out in many instances, it was quite in accordance with the usages of the time for the saint to change his name to *véorros* (the little one), but that he should have done so without the inevitable flourish of trumpets on the part of the Glastonbury monks, he shows to have been incredible; and though Hals's notion that Neot was the youngest son, called Ethelwulph-Neot, to distinguish him from his father, is less untenable, the probability is that the saint was no more than a distant relation of Alfred—cognatus, says the oldest chronicle (*Gale's Script. xx., vol. i., 167*). The passage in Asser Mr. Gorham suspects is an interpolation; it was wanting in the oldest MS., once in the Cotton Library.

No doubt Neot knew the value of education. He urged Alfred to restore the English school at Rome; but that New College was named after him, as Fox says in his *Acts and Monuments*, or that his name may be traced, as Anthony à Wood will have it, in the old hostel of Neot's Hall, are "puerile conjectures," which show what stuff passed current for antiquarian lore in the prehistoric days.

I fear Mr. Gorham is right in looking on the stealing of St. Neot's body as "offering a melancholy picture of the superstition and demoralisation of the times, in which a king, a bishop, an abbot, and a nobleman are found conspiring in a theft intrinsically contemptible, but of no mean value as a source of ecclesiastical revenue." The only excuse is that the raid was made into the lands of the Cornish enemy. We can imagine that a pious East Anglian abbot might have been as grieved to find his countrymen streaming away on pilgrimage to the far west, as a Jerusalem high priest was at the worship paid at the neighbouring shrine of Bethel. Besides, Neot being a man of the neighbourhood of Wessex, what right could those West Welsh have to appropriate his remains? The St. Neot's men did not tamely submit to their loss; they marched across England to recover their lost treasure. But Edgar, who had given special license for the body-

snatching, sent armed men to Eynesbury to drive the Cornish out of the village, and to put them to the sword in case of resistance. In fact, so great was his wrath, that he would scarce grant the aliens permission to go home:

Namque furor Regis tam ævius canduit inde
Illis quod demum vix copia mansit eundi,

as the Bodleian MS. has it.

Whether Cornwall retained any portion of its saint is doubtful. At the visitation made by Anselm in 1078-9 to the English possessions of the Abbey of Bec, special search was made for St. Neot, it having been rumoured that he never came back from Croyland, whither he was taken in 1003 to escape the ravages of the Danes. Anselm writes to the Bishop of Lincoln, and to all who wish to know the truth about St. Neot's body, that he found it in the "feretrum, excepto uno brachio quod dicitur esse in Cornu-Galliæ, et excepto modico quod mecum, propter memoriam et venerationem jusdem Sti. retinui."

Mr. Gorham gives a list of all the worthies connected with St. Neot's in the east, quoting, amongst other things, some curious facts about the pulling down of the rood loft, in 1580: "Yt the doying myght be an example vnto the residue of the cuntrye to do the like." The annals of the Cornish period he thinks beyond his scope, nor has any Cornishman as yet filled up the blank. One would like, for instance, to know something of that Robins

Who dying gave A pension to the poor
Yearly for ever, which unlocks the door
Of everlasting bliss for him to reign,

and who wisely ordered that if his tombstone is not kept in repair his heirs are to have the legacy.

But perhaps the Cornish St. Neot's never had any worthies deserving a wider fame than is given by a tombstone. It is, indeed, a contrast, that sleepy little village, lying off the road to anywhere, to the busy, thriving, Huntingdon borough; but I know which St. Neot would like best if he were to come to life now. A better place for a "retreat" could not be imagined; and yet how different it is from what it must have been when the saint, running away from the splendour and too much life of Glastonbury, settled down here and ploughed his own glebe, which he had perhaps himself cleared of trees and brushwood.

St. Neot's tells of a different England from that of which the cromlechs speak. They bring before us the British tribe, with its wild ways and childish super-

stition. For those who lived in the clusters of hut-circles which crown so many Cornish hills, the cromlech, the chief's family grave, was also the chief place of worship; when any trouble came, the chief would creep in through the narrow gallery that was left in the mound with which most cromlechs were earthed over, and sitting among his inurned forefathers, would ask their counsel. There were, indeed, Druids also, but they were rather "medicine-men" than anything else; the worship at the ancestors' graves was for a Briton what it is for a Chinaman—the proper thing in contrast with newer fangled religions. These Cornish Britons went on for a long time building bee-hive huts of turf or wattles with stone foundations, and burying their dead, burnt or unburnt, under cromlechs, just as they went on for a long time talking their old Welsh tongue. Roman culture never did much for them; it probably stopped for all practical purposes at Totnes. Meanwhile the Huntingdon Britons had been civilised—were gathered into the Roman towns as servants and small traders; a few being left on the land to till, as slaves, the big farms, into which no doubt the Romans divided the country as they brought it under cultivation. Some still remained "wild Britons," like the "wild Highlanders" of a later time; living among the fens, selling birds and fish to the townsmen, ancestors of those British who (to the confusion of Dr. Freeman's theory) are specially named as existing in Huntingdon in Canute's time. By-and-by came the Angles, altogether another people, and stamped out the old Roman-British life of towns, and set up the old tribal life again, each atheling fixing his ton or ham apart from his fellows, and gathering into it the little hovels of his farm servants. But Christianity drew both together again; Briton and Englishman not only came at last to worship the same God, but to reverence the same saints; if you could not fare eastward far enough to visit St. Neot's blessed body, why there was his arm still in Cornwall.

In Cornwall you must not be content with cliffs and cromlechs, or with the rush round the Lizard in the Helston coach, followed by an equally rapid rush from Penzance to the Logan and Land's End. Read up something about the country first; study Murray or Black, and then strike out a route for yourself. If you mean to see Cornwall once and forever, I would advise you to enter, as I said,

by Gunnislake; and from Cheesewring I would have you strike across the moor to Camelford, breasting the beacon of Brown Willy ("Bron" is breast, and "willa" beacon), armed, of course, with compass and ordnance map. At Camelford you should take coach for King Arthur's Tintagel; and having got some Cornish diamonds at the Delabole quarries, you should coach again to St. Columb Major, stay a day there so as to see Mawgan and the vale of Lanherne, wooded almost to the water's edge. Then, if you want to explore a Cornish watering-place, walk on to Newquay; and if you would see the Cornish cathedral city, take coach across to Truro; thence to Falmouth; and thence (by market-boat, if you choose the right day) to the Lizard. From the Lizard (about which consult your guide-books) by coach to Penzance, and there you will be near Tolpedn and the other granite cliffs of the extreme west, and will find yourself in a cluster of stone circles, holy wells, and cliff castles. Then back by rail to Par, whence you can easily get to Looe through Fowey, which is almost as quaint, and well worth seeing. From Looe to St. Neot's, and thence to St. German's; and having seen what this route will bring you within reach of, you will know pretty much about Cornwall. I have not attempted to say how long all this should take; each must decide that for himself. But whatever you miss, you must see these representative places—St. Neot's, East and West Looe, and St. German's.

THE VILLA POTTIER.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II.

"Yes, try the Kirsch," said the notary; "the only reminder of the German occupation that is not altogether distasteful." It was tried and pronounced good, and our host, having himself swallowed a glass of the compound, and made a wry face over it, proceeded with his story refreshed.

"Someone had been waiting for us at the Villa Pottier, for when we reached the side door—the great door had been abandoned to the use of the Prussian inmates—it was opened quickly and noiselessly. I received a soft warm pressure of the hand—not intended for me, alas!—a pressure that made me for the moment feel envious of my younger brother, even in his present plight. Thérèse had been waiting at the door, listening for Ernest's footsteps; for the younger servants could not be altogether trusted, and the old

housekeeper, who was known to be faithful, was watching over my poor Susette, whose loyalty was also suspected, though, as it proved, unjustly.

"My pious fraud was almost justified by facts. The excellent Madame Pottier was actually ill in bed, overcome by the troubles and anxieties of this dreadful time. The suite of rooms occupied by her and her daughter were the only parts of the house absolutely secure against interruption, and at Madame Pottier's bedside we held our family council. Gathered about her couch, in low sad tones we consulted as to Ernest, who now in his own proper garb stood beside Thérèse, holding her hand in his. Should we let him go—him upon whom depended the happiness of two families, the very existence of his own?"

"'Ernest,' began Madame Pottier in a low broken voice, 'my child may soon lose the protection of her mother. Remain here and guard her in the troubles and perils that may beset her. Here we are all assembled; your brother will draw out the contract of marriage on the spot; it shall be signed to-night, and to-morrow my Thérèse will have a protector.'

"'To-morrow,' murmured Ernest; 'to marry Thérèse to-morrow; oh, my dear belle mère, you tempt me sorely. But my comrades who wait in the forest?'

"I own that I forgot for a moment the claims of honour and patriotism. I thought only of the dear mother deceased, recalled only her dying words confiding the much loved son to my charge.

"'Remain here, Ernest,' I cried; 'remain here and live for our sakes. In the name of our dead parents I bid you remain; your comrades shall be warned.'

"'But I am their leader,' he said; 'without me they are lost. Tell me, my friends, can any asylum be found for them in this place?'

"We looked at each other, but felt that it was impossible to rescue them. With every house occupied by soldiers, and a strict watch kept upon all, to attempt to harbour this little band would be only to lead them to destruction, and uselessly to bring severities upon the peaceable inhabitants of the town. Ernest we could save, but the rest must save themselves. He saw the answer in our faces.

"'Then I must go,' he cried.

"'Speak to him, Thérèse,' I said to the young girl; 'remind him of the rights that you have over him. Forbid him for your sake to throw away his life.'

ingenuous face of a maiden who had hardly left her mother's side since infancy, who had known no world except that of the affections, and whose softly dawning passion had been engrossed by one alone. He was all the future to her now, this bright young lover, as her parents had been all her past. Surely the mother's voice would find an echo in her. She too would bid him to stay. How could he resist her voice, the gentle appeal of her tears? for tears ran unheeded down her cheeks, while her soft swimming eyes were fixed upon him. A sob quivered in her slender throat, and her lip trembled like that of a child in deep tribulation. But her voice was clear and firm as she clasped her hands on his shoulder and said, leaning against his breast:

"'You must go, dear Ernest. If I have the right over you, as they say, still I must bid you go; it is better to die with honour than live disgraced.'

"We all wept like children, for we felt that the girl was right, and yet it seemed to be sending him forth to certain death.

"The merry music from below now broke out in wild mocking strains, and the house shook as the waltzers whirled swiftly round. Ah, how our enemies rejoiced, while we gathered stealthily together and in silence and grief devoted our youngest and best to death and sorrowful separation!

"That night I lay in bed, but not asleep—with my clothes on, indeed, and a cloak beside me, ready to throw over my shoulders. It was a cruel night—real wolf-cold, and I thought bitterly of poor Ernest in his miserable bivouac awaiting the approach of the hour that was to bring release or death. At three o'clock the tide would be at the lowest, and that was the hour fixed for the attempt to steal through the Prussian lines. As the clock struck three I rose and went to my window, an upper window which commanded the river. The fog had cleared away, and the stars were shining brightly. The frost had congealed the vapour, and everything was covered with a white shroud. By the soft diffused light the landscape was visible in a faint, filmy way, but I strained my eyes in vain to make out the point where I knew the lighthouse to be. I could see nothing distinctly, although the frozen part of the river showed all ghastly white with a dark channel of deep water winding through it.

"Then I heard a shot—a second followed

fallade all along the line, fearfully distinct in the still night, and rolling back from the hills in thunderous echoes. A trumpet rang out a call to arms. My inmates were at once on the move, and in a few moments were off at the double to the place of assembly. The town was now astir, every house gave forth its complement of soldiers, and the peaceful inhabitants, aroused from their slumbers, peered cautiously out from behind shutters and blinds at the gathering troops. Something had happened, and hope whispered fondly something wrong for the Prussians—an evacuation, perhaps, following some crushing disaster. We dreamt of such things then—of armies breaking through our iron bonds; of victorious legions issuing forth from Paris—we dreamt of such things, to awake to realities of fresh woe and disaster.

"After awhile the excitement subsided, the troops returned to quarters. Also came back my two inmates. They did not go to their room. They stopped at my door and knocked gently. With a swift presentiment of misfortune I opened to them. 'What is the matter?' I asked.

"Nothing, we hope. A small band of your countrymen tried to break through our lines and cross the river. One was shot by a man of our company, who, hastily searching him, found this map."

"The chart was there before me—the chart that I had given my brother the night before! It was all too clear. The poor boy had fallen. I turned away that our enemies might not see my grief.

"A moment; we notice that your name is stamped on one corner. You lent it to a friend perhaps?"

"To my brother—my only brother—whom you have killed."

"The two murmured some sympathetic sentences, with looks that seemed to say, 'Do not think us to blame.' Then the elder went on to say: 'The map we must deliver up to our superiors; but the name upon it, leading to the inference that it had been lent by the owner to one of these irregular soldiers—would it not be an act of common prudence to cut it off? See, here is a knife; we will turn away.'

"No, I would not avail myself of the chance. It was not for me to disown my brother in his hour of death. Let them do what they liked with me. Still, I was touched with the good feeling of these two young fellows, who perhaps risked a good deal to serve me. We even shook hands, a thing I had never thought to do. 'They

ever happens do not blame us. Let us part friends.'

"I slept after this, quite worn out, a heavy unrefreshing slumber, broken just at daybreak by a tramping of feet past my window. A detachment of Prussians was hurrying past, and in the midst a stretcher borne upon men's shoulders, the barden hastily covered with a soldier's great-coat, but showing the rigid lines of a corpse. Was it Ernest? I hastily prepared to go out and see.

"Just as I was going out there was a loud knocking at the great door. I opened, and there stood a sub-officer with a guard of soldiers. They hurried me away with scant ceremony, and in spite of my protests at thus being made a victim of barbarous force. People who were going to work looked back at the procession and murmured: 'Ah, there goes poor M. Brunet. May the bon Dieu be merciful to him!' just as if it were my funeral. And this I felt it to be.

"I was marched into the large hall of the mairie, and there I found the maire, dragged from a sick bed; also the worthy Pottier, and the rest of the municipal council, each under an escort of bayonets. It was then, by-the-way, as we waited in silence and suspense our fate, that I entrusted to my brave friend the secret of the exact spot where my strong box was buried. Soon after a fierce white-headed general appeared, and snapped out a rude address in his native tongue; rude and malevolent we felt it to be, and even when softened by translation into our own language it appeared sufficiently truculent. Last night, or early this morning rather, it seemed that a sentry had been killed at his post. The culprit must be found, and handed over to the military authorities with sufficient evidence to justify his being shot. 'Disperse, and use every effort to discover the doer of this dreadful crime, and meet me here at noon with the culprit, or by Him in heaven one of you shall die for it—settle among you which.'

"This was the conclusion of the address, and we looked at each other in wonder and dismay. Then we were marched out into the ante-room to view the body of the dead sentry. There he lay, stiff and stark, a fine tall soldier, killed by a knife driven into his heart. The knife lay by his side—one of the pieces of evidence—and I recognised it in a moment as my own—the silver-mounted dagger that Ernest had appropriated.

whom arms are hateful, I felt a fierce throb of joy as I saw this proof of my brother's prowess. He had not died altogether in vain, and it was now for me to justify the deed, and take the burden of it.

"Tell your general," I said, turning to the officer who had us in charge, "that I know the man who did the deed; he was my brother, but it was no assassination, but a fair blow struck for the lives of five good Frenchmen. The knife that did the deed is mine, and if another victim is required—"

"No," cried the brave Pottier, "he was mine, my son; it is my right to suffer for him."

"Settle it among you," cried the officer roughly.

"And we were thrust into the street, with orders to come back at noon precisely. Pottier walked back with me to my house. There we saw two female figures, in deep mourning, and closely veiled, waiting for us in the passage. Madame Pottier had risen from a bed of sickness to bring her daughter down to visit the body of her fiancé, which, owing to the kindness of my German friends, had been brought to my house.

"You will be glad to hear, dear brother," whispered Thérèse, who bore up with a fortitude quite marvellous in one so young, "that poor Ernest did not sacrifice himself in vain. The five others got safely across the river, and were seen to plunge into the forest beyond."

"They had disposed of the glorious tricolour about the body, and someone had laid a sprig of laurel across the breast. I went reverently to uncover the face of the corpse. It was not Ernest's—the face of a brave man sternly compressed, and yet composed, in death, but not Ernest's."

"I turned to Thérèse, who had followed me into the darkened room. 'It is not he! He lives; he has escaped!'"

"Thérèse fell fainting into my arms. I gave her to her mother's care and left the house. My task seemed easy now; I could picture to myself the future. Ernest and his wife—their children clustered about them, as he tells them the story of the good old uncle who was killed by the Prussians. The sacrifice was not so hard, after all; but I thought a little regretfully of the unfinished monograph—how it would be, one day, swept up among the rubbish of my library, and consigned to perdition. And I wandered out to my

favourite spot just below the Villa Pottier, where a sweet panorama of hills and broad plains and winding river gleamed softly under a ray of winter sunshine. Farewell to all this!

"At noon I presented myself at the mairie, passed through a file of soldiers to the grand salon, and found that my colleagues of the municipal council—all, except Pottier—were already assembled. My resolution to offer myself as a victim, if one were demanded, was generally applauded, and a resolution accepting it passed without a dissentient voice. It was promised that my name should be inscribed on the records of the town as one of its noblest citizens. All very well, no doubt, in its way.

"There was a general crash of arms as the general entered the salon, accompanied by an officer whom I recognised as the Prince L. Pottier, at the same moment, slipped in behind us, and gave my arm a reassuring squeeze.

"There was no victim to be offered up, after all. Pottier had appealed to his distinguished guest, Prince L., telling him the whole affair, and the prince had spoken to the general; and the latter now announced in somewhat surly, disappointed accents: 'That the penalty of death to a municipal councillor was commuted into a fine on the commune of twenty-five thousand francs.'

"Soon after we had news of the armistice, and in a little while Ernest was once more among us. Lucky fellow, to have a Thérèse to welcome him home and fête him as the greatest hero of the war! They were married soon after, and removed to Paris, where Ernest is now practising at the bar. It seems that it was not Ernest himself who killed the sentry, but the brave fellow who was shot, to whom Ernest had entrusted the chart and the knife. Ernest would have done the same, he says, had he been in the way of it; but I think Thérèse is rather glad that it was not so. I hope I shall never see my two German friends again, although we parted on excellent terms. They accepted from me a case of champagne, as a memorial—which I did not care should be too lasting—of their occupation of my humble dwelling; and the other day I had in return sundry bottles of the veritable Kirschenwasser of the Black Forest, which, I hope, is to your taste. And now let us talk about the Exposition."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXVI. GOING INTO EXILE.

TWO hours later the carriage was at the door, and Violet Tempest was ready to start. Argus was by her side, his collar provided with a leather strap, by which she could hold him when necessary. Captain Winstanley was smoking a cigar in the porch.

Mrs. Winstanley came weeping out of the drawing-room, and hugged her daughter silently. Violet returned the embrace, but said not a word till just at the last.

"Dear mother," she whispered earnestly, "never be unhappy about me. Let me bear the blame of all that has gone amiss between us."

"You had better be quick, Miss Tempest, if you want to be in time for the boat," said the captain from the porch.

"I am quite ready," answered Vixen calmly.

Phoebe was at the carriage door, tearful, and in everybody's way, but pretending to help. Argus was sent up to the box, where he sat beside the coachman with much gravity of demeanour, having first assured himself that his mistress was inside the carriage. Mrs. Winstanley stood in the porch, kissing her hand; and so the strong big horses bore the carriage away through the dark shrubberies, between banks of shadowy foliage, out into the forest-road, which was full of ghosts at this late hour, and would have struck terror to the hearts of any horses unaccustomed to its sylvan mysteries.

They drove through Lyndhurst, where the twinkling little lights in the shop-windows were being extinguished by

envious shutters, and where the shopkeepers paused in their work of extinction to stare amazedly at the passing carriage; not that a carriage was a strange apparition in Lyndhurst, but because the inhabitants had so little to do except stare.

Anon they came to Bolton's Bench, beneath a cluster of pine-trees on a hilly bit of common, and then the long straight road to Southampton lay before them in the faint moonshine, with boggy levels, black furze-bushes, and a background of wood on either side. Violet sat looking steadily out of the window, watching every bit of the road. How could she tell when she would see it again—or if ever, save in sad regretful dreams?

They mounted the hill, from whose crest Vixen took one last backward look at the wide wild land that lay behind them—a look of ineffable love and longing. And then she threw herself back in the carriage, and gave herself up to gloomy thought. There was nothing more that she cared to see. They had entered the tame dull world of civilisation. They drove through the village of Eling, where lights burned dimly here and there in upper windows; they crossed the slow meandering river at Redbridge. Already the low line of lights in Southampton city began to shine faintly in the distance. Violet shut her eyes and let the landscape go by. Suburban villas, suburban gardens on a straight road beside a broad river with very little water in it. There was nothing here to regret.

It was past eleven when they drove under the old bar, and through the high street of Southampton. The town seemed strange to Vixen at this unusual hour. Down by the docks everything had a grey and misty look, sky and water indistinguish-

able. There lay the Jersey boat, snorting and puffing, amidst the dim greyness. Captain Winstanley conducted his charge to the ladies' cabin, with no more words than were positively necessary. They had not spoken once during the drive from the Abbey House to Southampton.

"I think you had better stay down here till the vessel has started, at any rate," said the captain, "there will be so much bustle and confusion on deck. I'll take care of your dog."

"Thanks," answered Vixen meekly. "Yes, I'll stay here—you need not trouble yourself about me."

"Shall I send you something? A cup of tea, the wing of a chicken, a little wine and water?"

"No, thanks; I don't care about anything."

The captain withdrew after this to look after the luggage, and to secure his own berth. The stewardess received Violet as if she had known her all her life, showed her the coach allotted to her, and to secure which the captain had telegraphed that morning from Lyndhurst.

"It was lucky your good gentleman took the precaution to telegraph, mum," said the cordial stewardess; "the boats are always crowded at this time of year, and the Fanny is such a favourite."

The cabin was wide and lofty and airy, quite an exceptional thing in ladies' cabins; but presently there came a troop of stout matrons with their olive-branches, all cross and sleepy, and dazed at finding themselves in a strange place at an unearthly hour. There was the usual sprinkling of babies, and most of the babies cried. One baby was afflicted with unmistakable whooping cough, and was a source of terror to the mothers of all the other babies. There was a general opening of hand-bags, and distribution of buns, biscuits, and sweeties for the comfort and solace of this small fry. Milk was imbibed noisily out of bottles, some of them provided with gutta-percha tubes, which made the process of refreshment look like laying on gas. Vixen turned her back upon the turmoil, and listened to the sad sea waves plashing lazily against the side of the boat.

She wondered what Rorie was doing at this midnight hour? Did he know yet that she was gone—vanished out of his life for ever? No; he could hardly have heard of her departure yet awhile, swiftly as all tidings travelled in that rustic world of the Forest. Had he made up his mind

to keep faith with Lady Mabel? Had he forgiven Vixen for refusing to absolve him in treachery against his affianced?

"Poor Rorie," sighed the girl; "I think we might have been happy together."

And then she remembered the days of old, when Mr. Vawdrey was free, and when it had never dawned upon his slow intelligence that his old playfellow, Violet Tempest, was the one woman in all this wide world who had the power to make his life happy.

"I think he thought lightly of me because of all our foolishness when he was a boy," mused Vixen. "I seemed to him less than other women, because of those old sweet memories—instead of more."

It was a dreary voyage for Violet Tempest—a kind of maritime purgatory. The monotonous thud of the engine, the tramping of feet overhead, the creaking and groaning of the vessel, the squalling babies, the fussy mothers, the dreadful people who could not travel from Southampton to Jersey on a calm summer night without exhibiting all the horrors of sea-sickness. Vixen thought of the sufferings of poor black human creatures in the middle passage, of the ghastly terrors of a mutiny, of a ship on fire, of the Ancient Mariner on his slimy sea. She wondered in her weary soul whether these horrors, which literature had made familiar to her, were much worse than the smart white and gold cabin of the good ship Fanny, filled to overflowing with the contents of half-a-dozen nurseries.

Towards daybreak there came a lull. The crossrest of the babies had exhausted its capacity for making its fellow-creatures miserable. The sea-sick mothers and nurses had left off groaning, and starting convulsively from their pillows with wild shrieks for the stewardess, and had sunk into troubled slumbers. Vixen turned her back upon the dreadful scene—dimly lighted by flickering oil-lamps, like those that burn before saintly shrines in an old French cathedral—and shut her eyes and tried to lose herself in the tangled wilderness of sleep. But to-night that blessed refuge of the unhappy was closed against her. The calm angel of sleep would have nothing to do with a soul so troubled. She could only lie staring at the port-hole, which stared back at her like a giant's dark angry eye, and waiting for morning.

Morning came at last, with the skirmishing toilets of the children, fearful struggles for brushes and combs, towel

fight, perpetual clamour for missing pieces of soap, a great deal of talk about strings and buttons, and a chorus of crying babies. Then stole through the stuffy atmosphere savoury odours of breakfast, the fumes of coffee, fried bacon, grilled fish. Sloppy looking cups of tea were administered to the sufferers of last night. The yellow sunshine filled the cabin. Vixen made a hasty toilet, and hurried up to the deck. Here all was glorious. A vast world of sunlit water. No sign yet of rock-bound island above the white-crested waves. The steamer might have been in the midst of the Atlantic. Captain Winstanley was on the bridge, smoking his morning cigar. He gave Violet a cool nod, which she returned as coolly. She found a quiet corner where she could sit and watch the waves slowly rising and falling, the white foam-crests slowly gathering, the light spray dashing against the side of the boat, the cataract of white roaring water leaping from the swift paddle-wheel and melting into a long track of foam. By-and-by they came to Guernsey, which looked grim and not particularly inviting, even in the morning sunlight. That picturesque island hides her beauties from those who only behold her from the sea. Here there was an exodus of passengers and of luggage, and an invasion of natives with baskets of fruit. Vixen bought some grapes and peaches of a female native in a cap, whose patois was the funniest perversion of French and English imaginable. And then a bell rang clamorously, and there was a general stampede; and the gangway was pulled up, and the vessel was steaming gaily towards Jersey; while Vixen sat eating grapes and looking dreamily skyward, and wondering whether her mother was sleeping peacefully under the dear old Abbey House roof, undisturbed by any pang of remorse for having parted with an only child so lightly.

An hour or so and Jersey was in sight, all rocky peaks and promontories. Anon the steamer swept round a sudden curve, and lo, Vixen beheld a bristling range of fortifications, a rather untidy harbour, and the usual accompaniments of a landing-place, the midsummer sun shining vividly upon the all-pervading whiteness.

"Is this the bay that some people have compared to Naples?" Violet asked her conductor, with a contemptuous curl of her mobile lip, as she and Captain Winstanley took their seats in a roomy

old fly, upon which the luggage was being piled.

"You have not seen it yet from the Neapolitan point of view," said the captain. "This quay is not the prettiest bit of Jersey."

"I am glad of that, very glad," answered Vixen acidly; "for if it were, the Jersey notion of the beautiful would be my idea of ugliness. Oh, what an utterly too horrid street!" she cried, as the fly drove through the squalid approach to the town, past dirty gutter-bred children, and women with babies, who looked to the last degree Irish, and the dead high wall of the fortifications. "Does your aunt live hereabouts, par exemple, Captain Winstanley?"

"My aunt lives six good miles from here, Miss Tempest, in one of the loveliest spots in the island, amidst scenery that is almost as fine as the Pyrenees."

"I have heard people say that of anything respectable in the shape of a hill," answered Vixen, with a dubious air.

She was in a humour to take objection to everything, and had a flippant air curiously at variance with the dull aching of her heart. She was determined to take the situation lightly. Not for worlds would she have let Captain Winstanley see her wounds, or guess how deep they were. She set her face steadily towards the hills in which her place of exile was hidden, and bore herself bravely. Conrad Winstanley gave her many a furtive glance as he sat opposite her in the fly, while they drove slowly up the steep green country lanes, leaving the white town in the valley below them.

"The place is not so bad, after all," said Vixen, looking back at the conglomeration of white walls and slate roofs, of docks, and shipping, and barracks, on the edge of a world of blue water, "not nearly so odious as it looked when we landed. But it is a little disappointing at best, like all places that people praise ridiculously. I had pictured Jersey as a tropical island, with cactuses and Cape jasmine growing in the hedges, orchards of peaches and apricots, and melons running wild."

"To my mind the island is a pocket edition of Devonshire, with a dash of Brittany," answered the captain. "There's a fig-tree for you!" he cried, pointing to a great spreading mass of five-fingered leaves lolloping over a pink plastered garden-wall—an old untidy tree that had swallowed up the whole extent of a

cottager's garden. "You don't see anything like that in the Forest."

"No," answered Vixen, tightening her lips; "we have only oaks and beeches that have been growing since the Heph-tarchy."

And now they entered a long lane, where the interlaced tree-tops made an arcade of foliage—a lane whose beauty even Vixen could not gainsay. Ah, there were the Hampshire ferns on the steep green banks! She gave a little choking sob at sight of them, as if they had been living things. Hart's-tongue, and lady-fern, and the whole family of osmundas. Yes; they were all there. It was like home—with a difference.

Here and there they passed a modern villa, in its park-like grounds, and the captain, who evidently wished to be pleasant, tried to expound to Violet the conditions of Jersey leases, and the difficulties which attend the purchase of land or tenements in that feudal settlement. But Vixen did not even endeavour to understand him. She listened with an air of polite vacancy which was not encouraging.

They passed various humbler homesteads, painted a lively pink, or a refreshing lavender, with gardens where the fuchsias were trees covered with crimson bloom, and where gigantic hydrangeas blossomed in palest pink and brightest azure in wildest abundance. Here Vixen beheld for the first time those preposterous cabbages, from whose hyper-natural growth the islanders seem to derive a loftier pride than from any other productions of the island, not excepting its grapes and its lobsters.

"I don't suppose you ever saw cabbages growing six feet high before," said the captain.

"No," answered Vixen; "they are too preposterous to be met with in a civilised country. Poor Charles the Second! I don't wonder that he was wild and riotous when he came to be king."

"Why not?"

"Because he had spent several months of exile among his loyal subjects in Jersey. A man who had been buried alive in such a fragmentary bit of the world must have required some compensation in after life."

They had mounted a long hill which seemed the pinnacle of the island, and from whose fertile summit the view was full of beauty—a green undulating garden-world, ringed with yellow sands and bright blue sea; and now they began to descend

gently by a winding lane where again the topmost elm-branches were interwoven, and where the glowing June day was softened to a tender twilight. A curve in the lane brought them suddenly to an old gateway, with a crumbling stone bench in a nook beside it—a bench where the way-farer used to sit and wait for alms, when the site of Les Tourelles was occupied by a monastery.

The old manor-house rose up behind the dilapidated wall—a goodly old house as to size and form—overlooking a noble sweep of hillside and valley; a house with a gallery on the roof for purposes of observation, but with as dreary and abandoned a look about its blank curtainless windows as if mansion and estate had been in Chancery for the last half-century.

"A fine old place, is it not?" asked the captain, while a cracked bell was jingling in remote distance, amidst the drowsy summer-stillness, without eliciting so much as the bark of a house-dog.

"It looks very big," Violet answered dubiously, "and very empty."

"My aunt has no relatives residing with her."

"If she had started in life with a large family of brothers and sisters I should think they would all be dead by this time," said the girl, with a stifled yawn that was half a sigh.

"How do you mean?"

"They would have died of the stillness and solitude and all-pervading desolation of Les Tourelles."

"Strange houses are apt to look desolate."

"Yes. Particularly when the windows have neither blinds nor curtains, and the walls have not been painted for a century."

After this conversation flagged. The jingling bell was once more set going in the distance; Vixen sat looking sleepily at the arched roof of foliage chequered with blue sky. Argus lolled against the carriage door with his tongue out.

They waited five minutes or so, languidly expectant. Vixen began to wonder whether the gates would ever open—whether there were really any living human creatures in that blank dead-looking house—whether they would not have to give up all idea of entering, and drive back to the harbour, and return to Hampshire by the way they had come.

While she sat idly wondering thus, with the sleepy buzz of summer insects and melodious twittering of birds soothing her senses like a lullaby, the old gate groaned

upon its rusty hinges, and a middle-aged woman in a black gown and a white cap appeared—a woman who recognised Captain Winstanley with a curtsy, and came out to receive the smaller packages from the flyman.

"Antony will take the portmanteaux," she said. "The boat must have come in earlier than usual. We did not expect you so soon."

"This is one of Miss Skipwith's servants," thought Vixen; "rather a vinegary personage. I hope the other maids are nicer."

The person spoken of as Antony now appeared, and began to hale about Violet's portmanteaux. He was a middle-aged man, with a bald head and a melancholy aspect. His raiment was shabby; his costume something between that of a lawyer's clerk and an agricultural labourer. Argus saluted this individual with a suppressed growl.

"Sh!" cried the female vindictively, flapping her apron at the dog; "whose dog is this, sir? He doesn't belong to you, surely?"

"He belongs to Miss Tempest. You must find a corner for him somewhere in the outbuildings, Hannah," said the captain. "The dog is harmless enough, and friendly enough when he is used to people."

"That won't be much good if he bites us before he gets used to us, and we die of hydrophobia in the meantime," retorted Hannah; "I believe he has taken a dislike to Antony already."

"Argus won't bite anyone," said Vixen, laying her hand upon the dog's collar; "I'll answer for his good conduct. Please try and find him a nice snug nest somewhere—if I mustn't have him in the house."

"In the house!" cried Hannah. "Miss Skipwith would faint at the mention of such a thing. I don't know how she'll ever put up with a huge beast like that anywhere about the place. He must be kept as much out of her sight as possible."

"I'm sorry Argus isn't welcome," said Vixen proudly.

She was thinking that her own welcome at Les Tourelles could hardly be more cordial than that accorded to Argus. She had left home because nobody wanted her there. How could she expect that anyone wanted her here, where she was a stranger, preceded, perhaps, by the reputation of her vices? The woman in the rusty mourning-gown, the man in the

shabby raiment and clod-hopper boots, gave her no smile of greeting. Over this new home of hers there hung an unspeakable melancholy. Her heart sank as she crossed the threshold.

ROYAL HIDE AND SEEK.

WHEN Alfred the Great brought down upon his devoted head the wrath of the herdman's wife for allowing the oaten cakes to burn upon the hearth, he was doing that which many an English king and prince has since done—keeping his real rank concealed for a time, under peril of discovery by enemies. In the present altered condition of society and government among us, this kind of strategy appears strange and undignified; but in the stormy days of old there were ample reasons for kings and princes playing occasionally and unwillingly the game of hide and seek.

Alfred had no bed of roses to lie upon when a Saxon prince. In one of his early struggles with the Danes he met with defeat, and sought refuge in Somersetshire; where an islet, or small island, in the middle of a marsh received in consequence the name of Athelney, or Ethelney, Prince's Island. We fear that one part of the cake story sadly needs confirmation, to the effect that Alfred, remembering in after years the faithfulness of Denulf the swineherd (with whom he had remained in concealment about three months), had him educated up to the level of those times, and made him Bishop of Winchester. Denulf had prudence enough to keep the secret of the prince's incognito from the gudwife; but this, it must be admitted, seems only a small step towards earning a bishopric.

Another concealment of Alfred was in the Danish camp. Wishing to know what his enemies were about in Wiltshire, he resolved on ascertaining the fact for himself. Trusting to his skill as a harper, and to his store of lays and legends, which formed the lore of the minstrels in those days, he attired himself accordingly, and gained access to the camp of Guthrum the chief. The Danes, pleased with the performance of the gleeman or minstrel, invited him to a tent wherein some of the leading men were feasting. He overheard their conversation, and learned thereby their plans for a renewed attack. Of course, they were not Moltkes, else we

might marvel at military leaders being so indiscreet in the presence of a wandering minstrel. Alfred contrived to quit the camp undiscovered, and made prompt use of the knowledge he had gained in this singular way by giving the Danes a severe defeat at the battle of Ethandune—supposed to be the present Wiltshire town of Yatten.

Richard Cœur de Lion, a favourite with most young readers of history, who admire brilliant achievements without scanning very narrowly the moral characters of heroes, was one among our English kings who resorted to disguises. In the year 1192, when matters were going unfavourably with the crusaders in the Holy Land, Richard, with his queen, his sister, and many English barons and knights, set sail from Acre to return to England. He had a doubtful journey before him; seeing that some of the sovereigns and princes, through whose territories he would have to pass, were, on various grounds, hostile to him. The galley which conveyed the royal ladies and their suite reached Sicily and Marseilles in safety. Richard and his retainers voyaged by way of Corfu, Ragusa, and Zara, and then travelled inland through the dominions of the Archduke of Austria. This was an unlucky proceeding; for the archduke was one of his deadliest enemies. Richard disguised himself as a pilgrim, Hugh the merchant, returning from Jerusalem; and with long hair and beard, hoped to travel onward without being discovered. But he was too free with his wealth. A ruby ring was sent as a present to the governor of Goritz, as a means of obtaining a free pass for Richard and his companions. The beauty and value of the ruby led Maynard, the governor, to suspect that the apparent pilgrim was some great personage, and the English wayfarers galloped on distrustfully, without waiting for a passport. His attendants were captured one by one; and he himself, with one knight, and a boy who spoke the language of the country, arrived at Erpurg, a village near Vienna, worn out with hunger and fatigue. A worse place he could hardly have lighted upon to seek rest; but nature could hold out no longer. He sent the boy to the Vienna market-place to buy food; this was often repeated; and the dealers marvelled at the freedom with which money seemed to be forthcoming. This led to such interrogations and threats that the boy at length revealed the truth; and in a few hours the king was

a prisoner in the hands of the Archduke Leopold. The emperor, Henry the Third, bargained with Leopold for a transfer of the person of Richard, who was equally feared and disliked by both of them.

Here it would be pleasant to give credence to the romantic story of Blondel the minstrel. This story was fully believed during many centuries, and some writers still hold to it; but close examination has led the majority of recent authorities to discredit it. Blondel or no Blondel, however, Richard was certainly imprisoned for more than a year in one or more German castles.

The attempted escape of Mary Queen of Scots from Loch Leven was a case of royal disguise. She knew that if she could once quit the castle, and cross the lake, friends would be on the opposite shore awaiting her; but she was strictly watched, and had need of every precaution. One morning her laundress came to her, and exchanged dresses with the royal lady; attired in humble weeds, muffler, and fardel, Mary was conveyed across the lake by boatmen who did not suspect her to be other than she seemed to be—or rather, they did suspect something, on account of a certain elegance of form and deportment of a gentlewoman not usual among laundresses. One of them, in merry mood, endeavoured to remove the muffler from her face, to see what sort of a dame she might perchance be. "She put up her hands," said Sir William Drury in a letter to Secretary Cecil, "which they espied to be very fair and white; where-with they entered into suspicion whom she might be, beginning to wonder at her enterprise. Whereat she was a little dismayed, but charged them, on danger of their lives, to row her over to the shore; which they nothing regarded, but straightway rowed her back again." She was, of course, more closely watched after this; nevertheless, she really effected her escape five weeks afterwards. Sir William Douglas, governor of Loch Leven Castle, had a son, William, about seventeen or eighteen years of age. Whether through love of adventure, or sympathy for Queen Mary, he connived at a scheme for her escape. One evening, when Sir William and Lady Douglas were at supper, the youth obtained possession of the keys of the outer gates from the keeper's chamber. Mary, her maid, and William passed safely out of the castle, sufficiently muffled to ward off attention. They entered a boat,

which the maid helped William to row; he having locked the castle gates after him, and thrown the keys into the lake. Mary safely reached the opposite shore, where numerous well-armed adherents awaited her. How short-lived was her freedom it is not here to tell.

Charles the Second was a famous example of hide-and-peek royalty, at one period of his career. Good reason had he for concealment; seeing that his life would not have been worth many days' purchase had he been captured by the Puritans. He had just passed his twenty-first birthday when his army was defeated by Cromwell at the decisive battle of Worcester. The young king's military strength was at once broken up, and he fled—few but himself knew whither. The Parliamentarians offered one thousand pounds to any person who would find him, and threatened death to anyone who harboured him; the country was scoured by pursuers, and the magistrates were ordered to detain all doubtful persons. Immediately after the battle, Charles and some of his officers planned a retreat to France or Holland, but were put to their wits' end for the means of accomplishing it. Making the best of their way towards London, their guide failed them on Kinver Heath. After a brief consultation, Charles, with a small retinue, galloped off to Boscobel on the borders of Staffordshire. By early morn they reached an old deserted convent called White Ladies, where he put on his first disguise; that of a peasant labourer. With cropped hair, discoloured face and hands, and wood-bill on his shoulder, he sallied forth as a woodman. Two peasants guided him to Madeley, where he rested that night, and next day reached Boscobel House, the residence of a faithful adherent named Giffard. Remaining only a brief time, Charles set off on foot towards London. He wore a pair of ordinary grey cloth breeches, a leathern doublet, and a countryman's green jerkin; his only companion being a husbandman named Richard Penderel. No sooner had they reached the edge of Boscobel Wood, than they saw Puritan soldiers hunting about in all directions; and it was by a very narrow chance that a hiding-place was found. Matters looked so serious that Charles changed his plan; he resolved to try for some Welsh port instead of venturing towards London. Baffled in two or three new attempts, he returned to Boscobel House; where

Colonel Careless, who knew the neighbourhood well, offered to be his guide. After spending a quiet Sunday in the house, the king and the colonel climbed into a fine old oak in the park, taking up a little plain food with them. Peeping down cautiously between the trees, the two fugitives more than once saw Puritan soldiers beating the woods in search of them. The anxious day came to an end without disaster. The King's Oak, or Royal Oak, at Boscobel, became in more peaceful times so famous, and, indeed, so revered by the cavaliers, that they left scarcely a scrap of it untouched, carrying it away piecemeal to carve into relics. A few years ago it was stated that on the north side of the Serpentine, in Hyde Park, stood the stem and a few branches of an old oak, which had sprung from a sapling of the Royal Oak.

To return to the crownless fugitive. Descending cautiously from the tree at night, the king and Careless, disguised as servants, rode forth at break of day. Meeting with Lord Wilmot, a Royalist, they agreed to place themselves under the guidance of Colonel Lane, who lived at Bentley. A scheme was planned between them for taking ship, if possible, at Bristol. But how to get there, with Parliamentary troops all over the western counties? Mrs. Norton, a kinswoman of Lane, was residing near that city; and a pass was, with some difficulty, obtained for Miss Lane and a servant to go and visit her during an illness under which she lay. The servant was King Charles, behind whom Miss Lane rode on a pillion. When they arrived at Norton's, the king was at once recognised by Pope, the butler, who promised to keep his secret—and he did so: for Charles had a greater number of faithful adherents than his subsequent profligate life showed him to have deserved. Another check, however, occurred. It was found that no ship would sail from Bristol, either to France or to Spain, for nearly a month. A delay for so long a time being perilous, Charles opened communications with Colonel Windham, a Dorsetshire Royalist. Travelling cautiously, and often sleeping at night in the Priest's Hole (a secret chamber which many old mansions contained in those troubled times), the king reached Colonel Windham's house, where he was deferentially received and well sheltered. So carefully was the secret kept, that the king's friends, in most parts of England, were quite ignorant of his

movements, and anxious for his personal safety.

The difficulties were not yet brought to an end. How to set sail from the Dorset coast was a problem to solve. The young king travelled from place to place, assuming one disguise after another, and incurring numerous risks of discovery: now from Windham House to a considerable distance, and back again; now to Sherborne; and, at length, to Lyme Regis, where he tried in vain to hire a vessel for a nobleman and his servant—the king, of course, being himself the servant. He was very nearly detected by the ostler of an inn at Bridport, who had seen him many years earlier; another escape was from the suspicions of a farrier, who noticed that the shoes of the king's horse were of north-country make, not such as were usually seen in the south of England. Frustrated at all points in Dorset, the wanderer next tried Hampshire, but failed again. Advancing cautiously along the Sussex coast, and varying his disguises frequently, he came at length to Shoreham, where success rewarded him. The master of a small vessel agreed to take him over to the coast of France. Charles, to avoid any appearance of rank or distinction, supped at the skipper's small house that night. Here, again, he had a narrow escape; for the skipper remembered having seen him with the royal fleet in the days of the late king. Faithful, as so many others had been, the skipper kept the secret, and on the next day landed Charles safely at Fécamp in Normandy. The wanderer, who had been for six weeks engaged in these adventures, and had been recognised by forty or fifty persons without being betrayed, did not again see England until he returned in the triumph of the Restoration.

Just within a century after the battle of Worcester another English prince had to play at hide and seek. In 1688 the only son of James the Second was born, a prince who lived to be known as the Pretender, and who made a few fruitless attempts to regain the throne which had been denied to his father. The seventy-seven years of his life were spent mostly abroad; and Mr. James Misfortune, as a Scottish writer quaintly called him, disappeared from the scene. His son, Prince Charles Edward, became known, for the sake of distinction, as the Young Pretender; and it is to him that so many romantic stories attach. Landing on a lonely part of the Inverness coast, in 1745, he collected a

small band of resolute and faithful adherents, and determined (in a spirit more heroic than prudent) to fight for the crown—hoping that his forces would grow in strength as he advanced. How he marched from the Western Highlands to Edinburgh, and captured it; how he won the battle of Preston Pans; how he pushed on to the very centre of England, and, turning north, marched back to Scotland; how he won another battle at Falkirk; and, finally, how his hopes were utterly crushed by the disastrous defeat at Culloden—are matters known to every reader of Scottish history.

The Young Pretender had his full share of disguising and hiding after these disasters had befallen him. The enormous sum of thirty thousand pounds was offered for his apprehension; but the faithfulness of the Highlanders to the unlucky Stuarts was proof against even this temptation. Clad in the humblest garb, he was sheltered for six weeks in South Uist, one of the most lonely of the Hebrides. Then, when the English authorities got an inkling of his lurking-place, he wandered from one island to another, crossing firths and straits at the imminent peril of his life. By far the most absorbing romance of his career was connected with Flora Macdonald, a heroine whom the world will not let die. The daughter of one of the chiefs of the clan Macdonald, she determined to aid the young prince to escape, at whatever hazard to herself. She dressed him up in the linen gown, apron, and coif of Betty Burke, an Irish girl in search of work as a spinner. Flora and this assumed Betty made a perilous voyage by night from South Uist to Skye, meeting many boats filled with soldiers in search of the fugitive prince, and narrowly escaping detection. When in Skye, the masculine stride of Betty Burke set some persons wondering who the strapping damsel could be. Shortly afterwards the prince exchanged this garb for a Highland male attire. Flora Macdonald conducted him safely to the presence of other faithful adherents, who received him, guarded him, disguised him, and concealed him, until he was at length enabled to effect his escape to France. Pity that Charles Edward, the "Bonnie Prince Charlie" of song and story, did not show himself more worthy of such fidelity!

Were we to notice the hide and seek tribulations of foreign emperors, kings, and princes, this article would spread to un-

manageable dimensions; we confine ourselves to our own land, or at least our own royal personages, as illustrative examples.

REGIMENTAL NICKNAMES.

THERE are few regiments in the British service to which a sobriquet, occasionally bad, is not attached, recalling some reminiscence of its origin, some peculiarity in its dress, or some incident memorable in its career. Private Thomas Atkins is proud and fond of these titles—unrecognised by the Army List—often prouder and fonder of them than of those which legitimately belong to his corps, and are accredited to it in official print; and sticklers for tradition hold that these titles should not be allowed to fall into oblivion. Mayhap they are right; though it might be rank treason to say so above a whisper, now that brigade depots have been substituted for the county recruiting centres; now that local ties have been severed, as in the case of that poor Twenty-fourth, so sadly maltreated at Isandula, which, though called the Second Warwickshire, has its nursery in Mid-Wales; and now that civilian reformers are improving even the very buttons and badges off the tunics of our glorious Line. These little tokens cost much blood to gain, and mean much to the man accustomed to wear them. It is a pity that they should be done away with. Tommy does not like to be reduced to a cipher; he is not so madly in love with the Prussian system of flattening out regiments to an undistinguishable sameness, that he burns to rub away the insignia on his pouch, and dye his facings the exact tint of his uniform. He has, too, much individuality in him; and this individuality, transmitted to the regiment which is his, makes what military leaders admire as *esprit de corps*. He likes to gossip over the doings of the gallant Onety-oneth in guard-room in the garrison, and by camp-fire in the field, and to tell the newly-joined recruit what great things the regiment did in other days, where this honour was won, and what that emblem signifies.

Tommy clings to the pet names, and when he meets a former comrade of the regimental family, he prefers to hail him by the pet name—there is more of brotherly familiarity in it—that is, when the name has not been given by way of derision. Some such exist; but you are not recom-

mended to betray your acquaintance with them if you wish to be a welcome guest in the mess-room. For instance, it would be considered "excessively bad form" to remind Anak of the First Life Guards of the blue-blooded fogies who sneered at a certain body of cavalry as Cheeses, and turned up their noses at the idea of accepting a commission in it; alleging that, after being remodelled in 1788, it was no longer composed of gentlemen, but of cheesemongers. Nor would it do to call the King's Dragoon Guards the Trades Union, or the Nineteenth Hussars the Dumpies. The names would hardly apply now, though once they might, as there is many a tall fellow in the light horse, and those in the heavies know little of strikes or striking, except what they learn in the riding-school.

Some of the nicknames of our regiments are borrowed from the uniform or facings; some, in the mounted branch, from the colour of the horses, and some from the patronymics of former colonels. Thus, the Royal Horse Guards are more generally known as the Blues; the Third Foot, as the Buffs; the Seventeenth, as the Lilywhites; the Fifty-first, as the Brickdusts; the Fifty-sixth, as the Pompadours (the facings being purple—the favourite hue of Madame de Pompadour); and the Fifty-eighth as the Black Cuffs. The Second Dragoon Guards is commonly called the Bays; and the Seventh, the Black Horse; while the Second Dragoons is more famous as the Scots Greys. The Third Hussars was once known as Lord Adam Gordon's Life Guards, from that officer having detained it so long in Scotland when he commanded there; the Fourth Hussars, as Paget's Irregular Horse, on account of its loose drill on its return from India after the former Afghanistan war; and the Seventeenth Lancers, as Bingham's Dandies, from its colonel, Lord Bingham, causing the men's uniforms to fit so well. But the Seventeenth are more attached, as well they may be, to their appellation of the Death or Glory Boys.

Taking up the roll of the British Army, it will be interesting to go through it seriatim, noting such regiments as have acquired sobriquets, and giving the reasons, where known, for which they were granted. The Fourth Dragoon Guards was called the Blue Horse on account of their facings, as the Fifth is called the Green. The Sixth, be it spoken in accents low, is sometimes designated, for obvious cause,

Tichborne's Own. The Seventh has been known indifferently as the Black Horse, because of its facings, and as the Virgin Mary's Guard; but its more popular pseudonym is the Straw Boots. The Seventh Hussars rejoices in the title of the Old Saucy Seventh, a souvenir of its reputation in the Peninsula. Another Peninsular nickname is that of the Cherry Pickers, bestowed on the Eleventh Hussars, from some of the men having been captured by the French while despoiling a fruit-garden. The trim sabreurs of this corps are likewise recognised as the Cherubim. The Twelfth Lancers are more fortunate, in being styled the Supple Twelfth; but the Thirteenth Hussars are quite as conceited over the inelegant epithet of the Ragged Brigade, for their clothing was frayed, not so much by slovenliness as by downright hard work. During the terrible struggle in the early part of the century they were present in thirty-two affairs, besides general actions, and lost two hundred and seventy-four men and over a thousand horses. The Royal Engineers are dubbed the Madlarks, from their beaver-like work in sap and parapet-making. One regiment of the brigade of Guards, the Grenadiers, is blessed or cursed with a by-name. It is yclept the Sand Bags and also Old Eyes. But surely the First Foot carries away the palm from all its fellows, for it insists on its antiquity in proclaiming itself Pontius Pilate's Body Guard. Kirke's Lambs, from its badge of the paschal lamb and the name of its colonel from 1682 to 1691, is the nom de guerre of the Second; but the regiment is not so anxious to own that it was stigmatised as the Sleepy Queen's, from its carelessness at Almeida in allowing Brennier to slip through its fingers. The Buffs are called in addition the Nutcrackers and the Resurrectionists, from having reappeared at Albuera after having been scattered by the Polish lancers. The Fourth are the Lions, from their badge; the Fifth—as well as the Fourteenth—the Old and Bold, from their courage, and the Shiners from their neatness; the Sixth, the Saucy Sixth; and the Ninth, the Holy Boys, from their thirsty impiety in having bartered Bibles for commissariat rum in their wild fighting days in Spain. The Tenth are the Springers—a name common to the Sixty-second; the Eleventh, the Bloody Eleventh, in remembrance of Salamanca, where they were chopped to mincemeat; while the Fourteenth was

humorously distinguished as Calvert's Entire, from its having three battalions when commanded by a colonel of that name. The Seventeenth is nicknamed the Bengal Tigers, from its badge; the Twentieth, the Two Tans; the Twenty-second, the Two Twos; and the Welshmen of the Twenty-third the Nanny Goats, from the custom of one of these well-known Alpine climbers being kept on the regimental strength, and being led before the band on the march. The brave but luckless Twenty-fourth are known as Howard's Greens, from their grass-green facings and the name of an officer who led them for twenty years in the last century. It is a popular fallacy to imagine that the Twenty-eighth borrow their designation of the Old Braggys from the exhibition of a spirit of boasting or braggadocio. Bragg was their colonel from 1734 to 1751, whence the sobriquet. They are also known as the Slashers, but wherefore is uncertain. Some authorities believe they got their title from their dash at the passage of the River Braxx, in the American War of Independence; others say it arose from a party of the officers having disguised themselves as Indians, and having cut off the ears of a magistrate who had refused quarters to the women of the regiment during a trying winter. The Thirty-first are denominated the Young Buffs, having been mistaken for the Third at the Battle of Dettingen. The whimsical cognomen of the Havercake Lads is conferred on the Thirty-third, from a habit of the Serjeant Snaps of the corps to entice recruits by displaying an oat-cake spitted on their swords. The Thirty-fifth need to be termed the Orange Lilies; the Thirty-sixth, the Saucy Greens; the Thirty-eighth the Pump and Tortoise, on account of their sobriety and the slowness of their movements when stationed once at Malta; and the Thirty-ninth, Sankey's Horse, from the circumstance of their having been once mounted on mules on a forced march when commanded by Colonel Sankey; they are also called the Green Linnets, from their pea-green facings. A punning version of its number, XL, namely, the Excellers, is fixed on the Fortieth. The renowned Forty-two retains its designation of the Black Watch, the independent Scotch companies from which it was formed having been so called on account of their dark tartans. The phrase, Light Bobs, marks out the Forty-third, albeit it is claimed by all light infantry

soldiers. The Forty-fourth swell with natural vanity over their distinction as the Old Stabborns, gained in the Peninsula. The classical epithet of the Lacedemonians was an alias of the Forty-sixth, a pedantic officer having harangued his brave boys on the beauties of Spartan discipline while shot and shell were flying round. It would be hard to discover the Forty-seventh under its cognomen of the Cauliflowers; and assuredly no friend of the gallant Fiftieth would ever dream of referring to it either as the Blind or the Dirty Half Hundred. Similar to the Excellers in the mode of origin of their soubriquet are the Kolis, as the Fifty-first are called from the initials of the title, King's Own Light Infantry. "Die hard, my men, die hard," cried the heroic Inglis to the Fifty-seventh, at Albuera, and ever since the plucky West Middlesex is the Die Hards. Why the Sixty-third should be burdened with such a grim by-name as the Bloodsuckers one is puzzled to conjecture. Prettier is the Faithful Durhams, designing the Sixty-eighth; as coarse, but more explicit, the Pigs, designing the stout Seventy-sixth, who bear an elephant for badge—was it the artist's fault, or was it ignorance of zoology in spectators, that the monarch of Ceylon forests was mistaken for a porker?—but surely a schoolboy brain was at work when the figures on the shakoos of the Seventy-seventh were twisted into the Pot-hooks. The Seventy-eighth Highlanders are the King's Men, from their Gaelic motto—*Cuidich'n Rìgh* (Help the King); the Eightieth, the Staffordshire Knots; the Eighty-fifth, the Elegant Extracts; the Eighty-seventh, the Old Fogs or the Faugh-a-Ballagh Boys, from their Irish war-cry of *Fag an Bealach*—"clear the way"—at Barossa; and the Eighty-eighth, the Devil's Own Connaught Boys, from their troublesomeness to friend and enemy. The Eighty-ninth were nicknamed Blayne's Bloodhounds, from their eagerness in tracking Irish insurgents, but we would much rather salute them as the Bollickers. When the Ninety-fourth was raised at Glasgow, the Garvies—"sprats," so called from an island in the Firth of Forth near which they are caught—was the piece of slang contempt flung at it, so emaciated were the laddies that poured into its awkward squads. The regiment is mostly composed of Irishmen now, and the recruits no longer resemble Pharaoh's lean kine. To their sky-blue facings, not to any association with China, do the

mortals of the Ninety-seventh owe their exalted appellation of the Celestials; and to their rough and ready style of going into action at the siege of Delhi without their tunics is due to the Hundred-and-first the by no means dishonourable name of the Dirty Shirts. As hats are doffed to the Sweeps and the Jollies—the active and intrepid lads of the Rifle Brigade and the Marine Light Infantry—our review of regimental nicknames closes.

THE YOUNG DEAF AND DUMB, AT LESSONS.

WHEN little scholars can hear when they are spoken to, and can speak when their teachers want to hear; when little scholars, ticking at their slates, or swinging back their feet into the enticing area underneath a form, can be silenced by a "Tch!" and brought into motionlessness by a tap upon a desk; the science of teaching them has been submitted to so many experiments, that the application of it has very nearly reached perfection.

When little scholars, however, have no power to hear when they are spoken to, and no power to speak when their teachers want to hear; when little scholars are "nudging" their elbow-to-elbow companions into open exasperation, or tipping them right off their seats into that just-mentioned enticing form-area altogether; and they are yet never to be silenced by the shrillest admonition ever uttered, and never to be recalled to propriety by the best-levelled ferule or regulation "pointer" in the world; experiments upon them have been nothing like so plentiful, and things are changed. It is absurd to hope that a word to one is a word to a whole schoolful; it reaches none. It is absurd to hope that a lesson carefully once said is out and over; the carefulness of it is a blank to all. So is it absurd to hope that a gentle hint somewhere will work better reformation than a straight command all round; for hints are emptiness, example (of tone or style) a waste. And there comes up the question, what about the science of teaching such little scholars then?

To grasp it, let the condition of a deaf and dumb child, its young experience, its small attainments, be considered. Alas, it has no experience—from the stand-point of such experience being groundwork for the accepted routine of education; it has no attainments. It has never heard its mother's lullaby—that soft crooning that begins its

work, in the earliest days, on baby-ears, to teach the quieting influence of gentleness and hushing. It has never heard babies near about itself, its kin, or its companions, coin its baby-name and baby-toys into baby-talk and chatter; getting initiation that way into knowledge and endearment that never loses its close association. It has never known the sanctity of a baby-prayer, the tenderness of a baby-whisper; nor the merriment of a baby-song and rhyming, of baby-fun, that make up, all of them, the higher half of baby-life, and are the best of preparation for lifting the little mind and memory to higher efforts still. Nor has it had the power to relate its little terrors, its little fears, its hesitations, its efforts, its ambitions; its conviction after arguments kindly pressed, its surrender when unwillingness was still strong with it, and doubts were not a bit removed; its consciousness, at times, that reproof had been given undeserved, its resolve, at others, never to incur reproof again. Then there is a deaf and dumb baby's inability to show what it knows, or what it fails to know, of a tithe of the objects it has seen; there is its debarment, thus, from demanding an object again if it wants it, and it is not in sight to be pointed at, or of the sort to be described by signs; its debarment, too, from describing how its little soul has been impressed, and from meeting with the sympathy it would be met with if this keen impression could be conveyed. And there is not only the isolation that all this is, of itself—the dreariness, the baldness and bareness; there is the total cutting-off it implies from entrance on the avenues that lead, no matter with what baby-steps and tottering at the commencement, to the successful attack of higher things. For the child in whom is lacking all this delicacy of definition is the child who must be lacking, eventually, in accuracy, in attention, in wide speculation, in clear discovery; for the child who has never felt the strong tie of confidence, or of trust, or obedience, or self-renunciation, is the child who can never recognise things as they stand when they are massed—the abstract. And is it thought, on the first blush, that these faculties (to which only too many, as is manifest, could too easily be added) are over-lofty to be found in an infant, to use the scholastic term, or in a child, to come down to the familiar naming? If so, the tree is not traced back to the small seed from which it had

its spring. This shall be demonstrated. A child who cannot be told (by lip, because he cannot hear; by gesture, because it is impossible), "You may not have this toy to-day, it is put away for next week," is not only unable to be told this much, but is unable to have the distinction explained to it between the abstract sense of now and of then; and when the common circumstances of living (such as the expected recurrence of meals, of sleeping, of waking, and so on) have given a deaf and dumb child the perception, from its own experience, that some things are being absolutely had, at the moment, and some are going to be had in a period by-and-by, the child cannot disclose that it perceives this much, or that it comprehends that there are short futures, which will come, say, at the completion of a task, and long futures, as far distant as a season of the year. Again, for an example that shall hit things that have a different scope: The child that cannot have conveyed to it, by means of words or actions it can understand, that buttercups are called golden, and sister's curly locks called golden also, or better still, that sister has a little golden head, not for the reason that each is made of gold, as doctor's heavy watch-chain is, or mother's wedding-ring, but for the reason that each has some of the blaze of yellowness and brilliance to be seen, in a different force, in the precious metal, is a child that will never get to the path that will enable it to form such phrases as "gems of thought," as "a chain of circumstances," as an "adamantine will." Finally, a child unable to be told that he may pluck a rose from a rose-branch overhanging his own side of a garden-wall, but, according to strict law, may not pluck a rose, though it is on the same tree, if it is growing as little as an inch on the side that is part of the premises of his neighbour, is a child unable to arrive, eventually, at the comprehension of nice discrimination in the application of treaties, of covenants, of agreements; is a child unable to decide as to the rights of nations and individuals, as to other uttermost and delicate principles involved in the highest moral and political decrees.

And now, surely, it is time to ask the grave and deeply compassionate question: Is it any wonder that the deaf and dumb are looked upon, very very often, as only half-endowed with brain-power? Since they are here, alive, with all means of ingress into their minds, of egress from their minds, limited to coarse, that is, to

Unmistakable gesture (such as hands raised, for pity; hands and head fallen, for shame; food seized, if there be hunger; treasures concealed, if it be desired they should not be taken away), it follows that they must be, perforce, deficient in brain-power, must be, perforce, what they were born—babies; with babies' aims; with babies' methods; with all growth, except that purely of the body, arrested at that baby-period, and thoroughly incapacitated from getting a stroke beyond. As they cannot be approached—it is a truism—they cannot give out; as their wits (the word is good; it shall be used) cannot be seized or grappled, their wits are fain to lie by, idle and weakened. Bred with other children, the deaf and dumb, if these other children are gentle-mannered, will be gentle-mannered also; if these other children are headstrong, slatternly, artful, and ungovernable, the deaf and dumb will be headstrong, slatternly, artful, and ungovernable, the same. For the rest, unless mothers have the leisure to watch every manifestation of their afflicted children and stop it or encourage it as is required, and have the leisure to give baby-lessons (practically, physically; such as counting baby-toes and fingers, and counting buttons or cakes to match, for recognition; at the same time, setting down figures for proper, ready, and scholastic association); and unless mothers further have the leisure to point from things to their representative words, and from pictures to their words, and from persons to their words, putting short words to connect them, such as Tom and John, as the two stand together, and so on; and have the leisure to do this, patiently and perpetually, for the first years of a child's life, enabling it, this way, to learn some part of what a hearing baby in its growth up to becoming a hearing scholar learns with its little voice and ears, unconsciously, of itself; then, it must be maintained, every such an afflicted little baby can only remain an afflicted little baby, no matter how many years it has been fed and clothed and tended. Then, it must be maintained, does such an afflicted little baby go into school entirely unprepared for school, with all standards, sections, classes, rules, by-laws, that have been framed for children who cannot help receiving some elementary instruction every minute in the day, thrown into helpless confusion and anarchy, and utterly unhinged and out of application.

If it be established, this—and possibly

it required no illustration, only there was the necessity, for the present purpose, of bringing it into mind—it accounts for the education of the very young deaf and dumb (those under nine years of age) never having been undertaken publicly in England at all, till the Rev. W. Stainer, comparatively recently, saw the urgent need of such an undertaking, and originated those labours that are effecting so much of the good that was his desire. Seconding, or, as it were, keeping abreast of his efforts, is some good newly-commenced action from the School Board for London. This body, standing committed, as it does, to see that the poor children of the metropolis are schooled, whether they can speak, or whether they cannot speak, has established four deaf and dumb Centres, under the superintendence of Mr. Stainer, one each for the north, south, east, and west districts. This body is endeavouring, thus, to place the instruction it can give within reach of all corners of the metropolis; it has gathered together, in these four Centres, a total of one hundred and thirty-four scholars; the lowest number, twelve, being at the west Centre, the highest number, fifty-six, at the east; it is giving fair trial to both the advocated methods of deaf and dumb communication, namely: that by signs and finger-spelling, called the dactyl, and that by the lip and throat, called the oral; and this new and momentous fact makes it a national, or, at any rate, a taxpayer's enquiry: Has the philosophic method of touching or getting at the young deaf and dumb yet been searched for and discovered? To judge, it is best to see; to judge, it is best that some deaf and dumb teaching should be carefully watched and considered; and the East Deaf and Dumb Centre of the School Board, at the Wilmott Street Schools, Bethnal Green, shall be visited, when, to a more or less extent, judgment can be formed.

On our entrance we come upon a little room with about two dozen little scholars in it. They are seated at desks in the usual manner; they are displaying (also in the usual manner) every variety of childish characteristic. For a few instances, here is a little girl, clean and gentle, with delicately-refined features, lifting the hand of another girl sitting beside her to get her to feel her hot-red cheeks; here is the indignation of a dilatory boy, when his sharp neighbour sees that his pencil is being motioned for, and snatches it up from his flat slate for him; here is the extra speed

of another boy, who dives after a pencil that has rolled and dropped; here is the military imitativeness of a third, who stalks off, when marching-time comes, the very burlesque of a Hector; here is the fighting disposition of a burly youngster, who hits with heat and vigour at another; and here is the watchful humanity of a child onlooking, who holds up his hand to attract the teacher, that the hitting, with proper authority, may be corrected and brought to an end. Turning to the course of instruction of these poor scholars, it comprises Kindergarten amusements; drill-exercises—such as hands up, hands out, hands behind, hands fluttering, and so on, in exact imitation of the action of the teacher; it comprises drawing on slates, writing on slates (or in copy-books, if old enough to be entrusted with pen and ink), numerals, and articulation. A collective drawing-lesson being about to commence ("collective," meaning a lesson given to all the little divisions of the little school alike), the teacher has massed her little flock before her at their desks, gives each a small bundle of Kindergarten sticks and a slate and pencil, chalks on a black-board the form the children are to put their little sticks into, and then leaves them to put them, and afterwards to make a drawing of how they have been put. The whole is so simple, it barely deserves the art-appellation of drawing, however much it may be the real first step that must be footed to mount to that that lies at the head of the whole flight. Yet, simple as it is, it tasks several of these young deaf and dumb scholars to the utmost, leaving about as many of them wrong as right, when their little exercise is concluded. The lesson is excellent, however; since, through the most easily available part of these poor children, their eyes, it gets to their imitativeness, their obedience (which is discipline), their neatness (which is accuracy), their power of concentration; and since it is a lesson that places them on an exact equality with hearing-children, and which they could receive, if occasion required (and possibly to their great advantage) at the same time with the hearing-children. The writing-lessons that follow are good, also; they, too, bringing in their wake imitativeness, neatness, a certain amount of discipline and concentration; and since the finest sense of hearing would not make writing a whit worse or better, nor would the most delicate and musical speech. And also,

and for many of the same reasons, are all of the physical exercises profitable. To begin them, the teacher stamps her foot upon the floor, vibrating it, which the children feel. This secures each one's close attention; and then their affliction does not hinder them from folding their little arms when the teacher folds hers; from rolling their little arms round, wheel-way; from leaping out from their benches, at a sign; from leaping back again, at another sign; from sitting; standing; turning at a wave of the pointer; facing; turning once more; clapping; bowing; sitting; standing again; from marching, as the teacher points, right through the opened door, straight into the play-ground, for five minutes' play. Once at their play, though, and the poor children's deafness and muteness are sadly prominent again. There is no shout of joy from them at meeting the open air; there is only the jump of it. There is no linked ring of little people, instantaneously formed, dancing round to the rhythm of a merry doggerel song. Yet there is life, happily; and a world of young delight. This is shown in the mounting of little fellows swiftly on to other little fellows, for a gay trot off round the ground, pig-a-back; in the touch and race between child and child; in the efforts to climb a post or column; in the quick extrication of a ball from a jacket-pocket, for a high toss; in the rapid disappearance of a whole score behind a colonnade, that yet brings their deafness into touching realisation again, when the teacher cannot have recourse to bell or whistle to call them in, but is compelled to go round for individual collection, and to drive back one little laggard after another, to take its place, for orderly re-marrying, against the school-room wall.

After this, there can be no school-song, however, for further recreation. The poor scholars cannot sing; the poor scholars cannot hear any other scholars sing; and the art of talking to the deaf and dumb has not yet had sufficient literary attention drawn to it for there to have been any song-substitutes invented, stringing innocence and nonsense into metre of another fashion, merely to interest and to amuse. It is a blank, this; though it can scarcely remain for long so, with the Government, i.e. the country, involved as it is being shown that it is involved, and with this fact the best warrant for stimulus to invention and good remedy. Of object lessons there can be none, either; since, if

a teacher were to hang an object, or a picture, up, there would be no means of asking the young and uninstructed deaf and dumb to define its hardness, softness, value, danger, grace, or plain utility. Then there can be no school-geography, for the same reason; there can be no spelling; there can be no reciting. There is nothing left, indeed, but the absolute oral teaching; and when that is reached, the crucial point is there, and it can scarcely be watched and witnessed without anxiety and without pain.

The teacher takes a boy-scholar to stand beside her, and points to a letter of the alphabet on a book lying on her desk; then she catches up the child's small hands, and holds one of them to her throat, and the other to her lips.

"A," she brings out, with well-drilled force, with the utmost movement of which the utterance of the sound is capable. "A," she repeats, twice or thrice more, for better recognition. And then she rapidly transfers the boy's hands from her lips and throat to his own, repeats her prodigious letter, and nods and smiles to get the poor young scholar on to imitation.

There is a result, certainly. "Aa-aa-aa," is jerked out, after awhile, in a feeble, sad, slow length, and in a thin and toneless treble, the depth of piteousness.

It is taken to be success, though, considering the wonder of getting sound out of muteness, the few weeks there has been any endeavour to get sound out of this poor boy's muteness at all; and the teacher proceeds.

"B," she says, raising the child's hands to feel her throat and lips again, and again rapidly putting them up to his own. "B, B;" her emphasis enormous, her expenditure of her own strength lavish, her patience and earnestness touching.

The reward is less than before. "Wa-aa-aa-aa," is all of it; long, like a lamentation; toneless, aimless, un conveyable.

Alas! But the teacher knows there is likely to be failure, and she simply becomes more patient, more full of emphasis, more intent on her great big B, as she shuts her eyes, and shakes her head, and snatches up the small hands again to herself, that they may feel.

She gets something like a B out of her scholar, at last; she pats him on the shoulder encouragingly, she smiles and points to F.

It is only Wa-aa-aa again; thinner still, more pitifully; a second lamentation.

"No, no! Not waa-waa!" the teacher is stirred to, in repetition. "Not waa-waa! Efffff!" And she blows with an intensity that makes the poor child, with his intent eyes fixed upon her, produce "Ef," then, very fairly, and be taken backwards in triumph to letter E.

It is again Aa-aa, however, or it is near to Aa-aa, or near to some other heart-rending moan or woe-cry; and there is all of the patience to be repeated, there are the hands changing places again, there is the teacher mouthing and struggling to bring out an He-ee-e that shall have imitable action, and lead the scholar to fit conclusion.

He is led, eventually, and other letters follow. One of them is K, which is a hard, iron Ker, voiceless, as the boy puts it a long way off from his mournful and final Aa-aa. One of them is D, which is a hard, iron Der, voiceless again, no nearer the elongated and grievous Ke-er. Another of them is M, which is a terrible battle between lip and lip before there is courage to let them part. And another of them is Z, which is all an inward breathing, as the poor child grasps at his own throat, and feels at his own lips, helping his anxious utmost to do as he is bid. As a whole, it is painfulness that is not diminished when the poor young scholar is sent back to his desk, his instruction over, and when he continues his efforts voluntarily, showing them to one or two school-fellows next him, and he and they, all, grasp their own throats and lips as they sit, and moan and jerk out their poor hurlesques of letters, proudly.

Besides this, too, there is more of the same sort when the teacher beckons up the eldest division of her little children, numbering four, and clusters it round a black-beard. On this she has chalked a few such short words as woman, mat, lamp, paper; on it she has hung a picture-sheet representing the articles she has named; and each child is to "articulate" all of the letters of one of the chalked words, is to say it as a whole, is to find the picture of it. There come good letters—dub-bel-u, for instance; o, which is excellent; h, and p; there come bad letters—hard g, and z; there is a fair word—sofa is one, let is another; there are words that go back to the soulless Wa-aa-aa, and that, for all word purposes, are absolutely useless and unintelligible.

Let the oral lesson of numerals be noted also. For this there has been an effectual rubbing-out of the chalk words from the

board, and in their place the teacher has written, clearly, the names of figures up to twenty, and has hung up, underneath them, a ball and rod calculating frame, bright in its masses of attractive colour. The first boy is to watch the teacher's mouth as she says, voicelessly, "One;" he is to say it after her; to point to the figure and the word of it; to work one ball along the rod, to show that he understands. Pause shall come here—it will be but a moment—to note how the teacher, being an oral teacher, has been obliged to settle the spelling difficulty on her black-board peremptorily, according to oral law. One is one, in her bold fair writing, to be sure; but, underneath, in spirited phonetic fashion, there are the letters w-u-n. Then, two is two, to be sure; but, in an audacious parenthesis, the misleading w is discarded, and the word stands "too." The other revolutionary suggestions are "for" as the real method of four; "fiv" as five; "at" as eight; "nin" as nine; "tween-te" as twenty. In the Lord's Prayer, also (taught by writing to the first division), temptation is doubled by parenthesis into "tem-ta-shun," lead into "led," come into "com," and so forth. A sword and a Gordian knot come into the mind; phonetics are amusingly traced back to the deaf and dumb (the one is suited to the other, of a certainty); my lords and commons, philology and sweet habit and tradition are looked upon as being outwitted thus, on Board School premises, in very quiet and unsuspected fashion, all rules, analogies, and affections notwithstanding. But to the lesson.

"Thor-ee" is pronounced silently for the deaf and dumb scholars by their teacher, as she points to a mild three. "Taw-wel-ver," she goes on to, with the same vigour and intensity, for twelve; and she blows hard for the "f" of a four, and yawns hard for the "or" of it; and she performs every vehement facial and labial and guttural contortion that conscientiousness and understanding and determination can invent, to give her deaf and dumb pupils, as she points from figure to figure, some tangible acquisition and enticement. And the end? Well, in the end she has presented to her a *suv-vun-tun* like protracted sobs; a *faw-tun*, having a long resonance of the *tun-n-n* to disqualify it; a good twenty; a good five; a good six; she has all of the other figures just *aw-aw*, *baw-waw*, a one not to be known from a nine, a two not to be known from a ten, the

outcome neither comprehended nor comprehensible.

To come at last to the pity of it, there is a passage in the little Christmas story, *The Battle of Life*, which it will be well to let have short quotation:

"Clemency Newcome," the book says, "made some eager signs to her husband and moved her mouth as if she were repeating with great energy, one word or phrase to him, over and over again. As she uttered no sound, and as her dumb motions were of a very extraordinary kind Mr. Britain followed her pantomime with looks of deep amazement and perplexity—followed the motions of her lips, guessed, half aloud, 'milk and water,' 'monthly warning,' 'mice and walnuts,' only became conscious of her meaning when she cried out at last, almost in a shriek, 'Mr. Michael Warden.'"

It is the best illustration that can be given of oral teaching to the young deaf and dumb in a board-school. It is the best illustration, it is very much to be feared, that can come of any oral teaching to any deaf and dumb, in any school, anywhere. Not that there must be any misunderstanding about this statement. As a fact, words can be produced by the deaf and dumb; they were heard in Wilmott Street. As a fact, sentences can be produced by the deaf and dumb; they were heard in Wilmott Street, though not from a child. As a fact, the deaf and dumb can watch a speaker's lips, and be able to tell what he is saying, as was seen in Wilmott Street, also; and the successful efforts of Mr. Van Praagh and others, in all of these directions, are far too well-known for any denial of accomplishment to be possible, even if such a denial were desired. But, when these words and sentences are produced, ordinarily, by anybody, anywhere, on casual occasions, is it a certainty that it can be told what they are? Also, when an ordinary speaker's lips are watched, on casual occasions, by anybody, anywhere, is it a certainty that the watcher will be able to read them rightly? Of this last enquiry, proof can be obtained at the easiest. Let any person "mouth" a sentence to another, and there it will be. Michael Warden will often be just as much mice and walnuts, monthly warning is just as likely to be mistaken for milk and water; evidence, surely, that the best trained deaf and dumb could not be present at an ordinary sermon, an ordinary lecture, an ordinary dramatic performance,

and be able to glean anything in the world about it; evidence, surely, that mousing, after all, must be very slow, very distinct, absolutely special — since all persons do not “mouth” alike, and since the movements, for instance, of the mouths of men who wear moustaches cannot be seen at all. And, to go back to the first of these two enquiries, proof came of it even at the Wilmott Street School itself; where a child was asked her name, and the only sound that came, even with her pleased and smiling endeavour, was, “Wha-y Wha-y.” Which was evidence, surely, that though some deaf and dumb may have well-formed vocal ability, and can be readily trained to be heard and fairly understood, this vocal ability is as exceptional as the gift of song, and can no more be created by training than a music-teacher can create a singing voice in a pupil who has only a hoot or a wheeze.

For all of which, where the vocal gift is, it will here be very quickly conceded that it should be cultivated to the full. It can be tested for by mothers (just as the patient teacher at Wilmott Street was testing for it) long before a child is old enough for schooling; and, by all manner of means, let the afflicted be lifted out of their affliction, even though it can only be a few of the afflicted, and if it can only be done partially. But, let the world be open to the fact that there is certain to be important outcome, in time, from this new experiment of Deaf and Dumb Centres among the Board Schools of London. The complete circle of knowledge on this point has not yet been described, whether on the oral or the dactyl system. And it will be wise as well as interesting to look forward searchingly to the future.

MY LAND OF BEULAH.

A STORY IN FIFTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

BLACK-WINGED rooks sailing across the blue sky, and cawing lazily as they go; a wide expanse of fields, not level fields, but fields that are like small hills, extending and undulating far away to the left. Peeping up above the farthest one, the square tower of Bromley Church, a very jack-in-the-green of a tower, that the ivy has clasped and clung to, leaving nothing but the clock face visible.

Sweetly ring out the chimes from that old church tower on a Sunday evening, and I have a childish fancy that my friends the rooks hush their cawing to listen.

You must please to understand that I, a small, very small child, am supposed to be standing in the wide old-fashioned garden of Summerfield and telling you of these things. The trees above me are so tall, that in trying to watch therein the gymnastics of the rooks and their large and ever increasing families, I have more than once fallen ignominiously backwards on the soft green grass, and with an inward conviction that the impudent birds are laughing at me, had to scramble to my feet in no pleasant frame of mind.

Summerfield stands well back from the high road, along which, in the days that my memory is now recalling, stage-coaches ran to and fro between London and our county town. The carriage-drive from the big white gates upon this road slopes gradually down to the dear old-fashioned, irregularly-built house, that belongs to no particular style of architecture, but is full of delightful surprises in the way of unexpected gables, and casemented windows coming upon you unawares, just where it seems most unlikely that a window should be.

Bromley is the village, dominated by the church that I have already mentioned, and containing only one house of any pretensions at all, and that is the vicarage. The other tenements of the settlement are white-washed cottages, with great black bars crossing them in every direction, and thatched roofs, whereon grow many lichens and a golden-green plant called house-leek, that—so I was informed—brought good luck to the inhabitants if it flourished, and boded evil if it withered away.

There is only one shop of any pretension in Bromley, and drawing upon the store of my personal recollections, I should say that steel pens, and sweetstuff of various kinds, were the chief merchandise therein displayed; however, this seems improbable, therefore it may be that the nature of my own purchases flavours these reminiscences, and that Mr. Twinkler provided more substantial articles than those above named to the primitive inhabitants of Bromley village. Burglars cannot be a production of the country neighbourhood that I am trying to describe, for in summer-time the hall door of the old manor-house stands wide open “from early morn to dewy eve,” and one can see the red and white roses bobbing their heads in the breeze round the doorway, and now and again flinging a shower of scented petals ever so far across the hall.

This hall, like all the rooms at Summerfield, is low and broad. On either side the door is a high, narrow window, arched at the top and filled in with coloured glass. The subject of the one on the right is the Prodigal's departure, that on the left that individual's return. In the first of these the hero of the story is setting out, with a jaunty step and self-confident air generally, to riot in the pleasures of the world; in the second, he is coming drooping home, while in the extreme corner stands the fatted calf, looking uncomfortably on at the preparations for his own decease. I remember wondering many times and oft why the Prodigal was depicted with a green face, and being so sorry for the solemn-faced calf, that I stood a tip-toe and tried to stroke it. Two huge carved chairs further ornament the hall, and between these is a low stand, whereon stands the golden cage of a grey parrot, reputed to be a traveller of vast experience.

No sooner does anyone enter the hall than Polly, with her head held knowingly on one side, questions them as to their intentions: "What d'ye want? What d'ye want?" and then, taking it for granted that their intentions are evil, adds promptly: "Fie, for shame! fie, for shame! Oh, you naughty girl!" If opportunity offers she then proceeds to ruffle her grey poll against the bars of her cage, looking up sideways in a most knowing manner, and saying suggestively: "Isn't it nice? Oh, Polly, isn't it nice? Ha, ha, ha!" This means that she would be glad to have her head gently scratched; a process during which she lolls out her black tongue in lazy rapture, and whispers hoarsely to herself: "Isn't it nice? Oh, Polly, isn't it nice?"

I can look back, as I write, and see myself, a small mite of five years old, in a dress so short and stiff that it stood out pretty nearly at right angles all round me, and a sash so large that I must have looked like a butterfly whose wings were too big for it, standing by Polly's cage, and trying ever so hard to solve the mystery of a bird being endowed with the power of speech. Then I see the little figure tripping onwards, stopping at a doorway on the right, pushing the door gently open, glancing admiringly at the reflection of a child with big brown eyes; a mane of hair to match tied back with a blue ribbon, and tiny feet with blue rosetted shoes, and so making its way into the wide bay-window, where sits a lady with drooping curls of mingled grey and black, bending over a work-frame.

"Is that you, Nellie?" says a kind, loving voice; while Polly outside, less affectionately inclined, calls out: "Fie, for shame! fie, for shame! Oh, you naughty girl!"

"I wonder who has left the door open?" says the worker at the frame; and with a penitent air I trot across the room and shut it close. Then I come back and climb up on to the seat that runs all round the window; not, however, until I have had a good stare at the sampler that is stretched tightly across the frame. It represents Elisha fed by the ravens. There is a marvellous background of shrubs and trees, all being done in the finest tent stitch; and beside a stone (in shades of orange) lies the recumbent figure of the prophet. A flock of birds, each laden with what is generally known as a "two-penny pan-loaf," are gracefully approaching from the left-hand corner of the canvas.

As I look upon this striking picture two ideas rise to the surface of my innocent mind:

"Dem do be my dee-ar rookses," pointing to the ravens. "Him haven't dot no node," pointing to the prophet. In fact, Elisha has two prominent eyes of the deepest cobalt blue, and a red stitch or two by way of mouth, but of nose hath he none.

To the sensitive mind of the worker my last remark savours of irreverence, and a grave look upon her gentle face makes me so conscious of some fault, that I am glad to creep away into the corner of the window-seat and leave the features of the good Elisha an open question.

It is summer-time. Could it have been always summer at that old manor-house, or is it that in the record of my memory the winter days have been forgotten, and only the happy sunshine of my childhood, and the scented air coming in from the rambling pleasaunce, where all old-fashioned flowers grow and flourish exceedingly, have made a lasting impression? I cannot tell. In each life is recorded the memory of some dear "Land of Beulah," where "they heard continually the singing of the birds, and saw every day the flowers appear on the earth," and where the air was "very sweet and pleasant;" and my Land of Beulah was, and ever has been, the many-gabled, rose-wreathed, ivy-clad home among the meadow-lands, called "Summerfield."

But I have drifted sadly from the little figure crouched upon the window-seat, and the grey-haired woman with

her sad dark eyes fixed upon the tapestry that grows beneath her deft fingers. It is summer-time: and I—happy, I scarce know why—am fain to draw a deep sigh of content, and sing a little song softly to myself as I look out upon the green upland lying in the glow of the sunlight, and the myriad daisies starring the lawn whereon Flick, the hairy terrier, rolls in an ecstasy, crushing their white flower-faces mercilessly. The wealth of roses, red, and white, and creamy yellow, peeping at me as they cluster round the open window, the cawing of the rooks in the tall fir-trees, and the gurgle of the thrushes in the hawthorns, all add to my content. A plump robin, too, hops along the walk, and after glancing at me with his round shining eyes, hides himself in a rose-bush, where his ruddy breast makes him look like a living rose among the green.

All these things give me a keen sense of happiness, child as I am, and added to them all are other secret and inner sources of delight. The Rev. Daniel Girdstone, Vicar of Bromley, and his sister, Miss Theodosia, are coming to drink tea at Summerfield this evening, and I am to share the festivities in the "best drawing-room." I have, in fact, donned my best sash and shoes in honour of the event; and I know that the steel-grey silk and large cameo brooch of my companion also mean company apparel and company manners. Mr. Girdstone is an old bachelor, with an old maiden sister of such grim and starved propriety of demeanour, that I constantly lose myself in speculations as to what effect the sudden overturning of the tea-pot on her best tabinet dress—ground invisible green, pattern apparently small orange-coloured beetles at distances—would have? I also tremble when I notice that Polly is not awed by Miss Girdstone's martial carriage and deep bass voice, but salutes her with the disrespectful adjuration: "Oh, yeu naughty girl!" just as if she were anyone else. When this happens I look to see some convulsion of nature take place; but Miss Girdstone only says, "Oh, what a rude bird!" and takes my hand in hers, to lead me away from possible contamination, I suppose.

Miss Girdstone's hand is not a comfortable hand to hold: it feels like a bundle of little sticks, and does not close on mine, but just lets itself be held. On one of these occasions, very much afraid, but still determined to put a bold face on matters,

I looked up at her, and said, the while my heart beat so fast I wondered it didn't unfasten my sash: "Why does your hand be so nassy, Miss 'Dosh?"

In thinking over this occurrence subsequently in the light vouchsafed by added years and experience, I have come to the conclusion that Miss Theodosia considered it the part of true dignity to ignore my unlucky remark altogether. At all events, I cannot remember that she took any notice of it, beyond putting on a stony stare that half frightened me out of my young wits, and ever afterwards caused me to connect the idea of the vicar's sister with a certain milliner's block in a little room upstairs—a hideous thing with vacant countenance and hairless scalp, used, as I afterwards discovered, for making up caps upon.

Again I am guilty of a divergence from the thread of my story; but it is a needful one, since it will explain the fact that sitting in the window-seat among the roses, in all the glory of my best sash and shoes, and happy in the glory of the summer-day outside, my joy held a dash of awe, as one who, having greatness thrust upon her, knew the consequeness.

Still this cloud of dread, Miss Girdstone's grimness, and the trial of having to touch—perhaps hold in mine, who knows?—those wooden fingers, was one "with a silver lining," if so poetical an idea may be fitly used to indicate the conviction—founded on the evidence of my olfactory sense—that Sarah, the buxom cook of the establishment, had been baking cakes all day, and that the savoury results of her labour would presently appear on the round table that stood in the corresponding bay-window to the one in which I sat and meditated upon these things.

Of the vicar himself I had no fear; indeed, he and I were great friends. He was a little man, with a shining bald head, encircled by a fringe of grizzled curly locks. He had a way of putting this head on one side, and trying to look knowing when he said anything funny, that set me wondering whether, if I watched it, he would say, like Polly: "Isn't it nice? isn't it nice?" I think I knew that these thoughts savoured of irreverence, and would have been considered shocking by every well-regulated person, for I kept them to myself; as, indeed, I did many strange and weird imaginings that, I know now, were eerie guests for the chamber of a young child's heart.

Somehow, I know not how, it was borne in upon me in these days, that Mr. Girdstone enjoyed himself more thoroughly and unreservedly at our tea-table on the occasions when Miss Theodosia was "laid by," as she called it, with "her rheumatics." She always laid a personal claim to these mysterious ailments, and appeared to put on a certain air of distinction in doing so; once telling me that "they" had been in the Girdstone family for centuries.

Be this as it may, I was well assured that the kindly vicar told his old jokes, and repeated his old puns with a keener zest when his sister was absent from our weekly tea-drinkings, and I am ashamed to say that in my own mind I accused him of some hypocrisy in saying, as he greeted us: "Theodosia is mending nicely, I am glad to say."

Well, where was I?

Sitting in the window-seat in my best sash and shoes, watching the rooks sailing across the sky, and Flick rolling upon the daisies.

My companion is very silent. She has looked sadly all day. I know quite well that she often looks like that when she gets a letter from a country that is a long way off—the country Polly came from, Sarah says. Those letters cost a great deal of money, and things more precious than money, too, I know, for I have seen the tears roll down the face that is shaded by the grey ringlets, and fall upon the closely-written paper. More than this, I once came creeping in, and found her weeping—oh, how bitterly!—with her face hidden in her hands. The vicar was standing by her, speaking in that soft low voice of his, that is such a contrast to his sister's. When he saw me, he just lifted me in his arms, and carried me away—out into the sunshine in the garden. "See, Nellie, dear," he said, "gather the daisies, and make me a chain to take to a poor sick child over in the village—a little child that cannot play about like you." Now, looking furtively at the sad face bending over the work-frame, I call to mind that day. "Why," I think, "do the big, naughty letters come from the place where Polly used to live, and make Miss Mary sad and sorry, I should like to know?"

But, outside, a new claimant for my thoughts now appears; a big burly bee bungling about among the roses, and buzz, buzz, buzzing, as he creeps into their open chalice, and drinks the nectar therein stored.

He is a beautiful fellow—barred gold and black—and the fancy takes me to prison him in one of the half-blown roses.

Quick of hand as of thought, I grasp rose and bee and all; and then, with a sharp cry of pain, draw back my hand, spring from my seat in the window, and fling myself, sobbing loudly, into the arms of my companion. At the first sound of my distress she has pushed back her frame, and now she cuddles me up against her breast, and tenderly touching the wounded hand that I thrust upon her notice, tries the old receipt of "kissing the place to make it well."

But my hurt is beyond kissing.

Not only has a cruel thorn torn my finger, but the insulted bee has stung my little pink palm, the pain of the wound increasing every moment, in a ratio with which the loudness of my lamentation keeps pace.

"My pet, my dearie!" croons the pitying voice in my ear. "Oh, the poor wee handie!" Then, as a figure, also in grey silk and a cameo brooch, is seen sauntering along the garden path, she bears me in her arms to the open window, and calls: "Sister Jane! Sister Jane! come to the child; a bee has stung her!"

What a fuss they make over me. How many cures they try to stay the burning of my wound!

As the smart moderates I yield myself up to the soft delight of being looked upon as an interesting sufferer.

I find the position delightful, and screw my little mouth up and cry, "Oh, oh!" thus drawing new drafts upon that exhaustless bank, the sympathy and tenderness of the two spectators. I do more than this, for with the ingenuity of my sex I take advantage of my position as an invalid, and sitting on Miss Mary's knee, overshadowed by the drooping ringlets that are bent above me, I take heart of grace, and pointing with my uninjured hand to the sketchy prophet, reiterate the irreverent comment made before:

"Him dot no node."

I look up in the face of my comforter with unabashed eyes. She can't scold me when the naughty bee has stung me so cruelly, and I am still now and then shaken by a sob.

She doesn't. She only silences my presuming lips with a kiss, while Sister Jane, standing by, actually smiles at my naughty ways.

Oh, dear and gentle friends, I look back

now across the vista of the years, and know that all your love and all your tender care given to a little motherless child is written in the Book of God, there entered by the Recording Angel with a smile upon his radiant face. For know, my reader, that Summerfield is no ancestral home of mine, but only my school, while Sister Mary and Sister Jane are only my school-mistresses. My lines had fallen to me in truth in pleasant places in that dear Land of Beulah, whither, in the weary days to come, my eyes looked back with tender love and longing.

Before the expected visitors arrive I have fallen asleep upon Miss Mary's lap, and soon upon my drowsy ear falls the unwelcome sound of a voice I know to be Miss Theodosia's:

"How you two do spoil that child!"

And then another voice—the voice that once bade me make the daisy-chain for the sick child—replies:

"Tut, tut, tut! spoiling's good for little girls, isn't it, Miss Jane?"

CHAPTER II.

THERE is great sadness about the idea of a child that is motherless; but to me, Eleanor Maud Vansitart, otherwise called Nellie, this was not so. We cannot mourn over the loss of what we have never known, and as my mother gave her life for mine, I had no indistinct memories, like broken, fitful shadows in a pool, to look upon with yearning eyes. To me the word "mother" was a blank; and the clearest association in my mind with Hazledene, my father's place near the Cumberland coast, was of the big mastiff, Roland, with his drooping jowl, who ever so much taller than myself, represented to me a whole tribe of elephants, and more than once haunted my baby-dreams as a sort of avenging and pursuing monster.

Inconsolable at the loss of his young wife, my father for a time had seemed to forget—or rather, perhaps, shrank from remembering—the fact of my existence. But time, that soothes all sorrows, even against the will of the sufferer, soothed his, and he began to take a fond delight in his baby-girl. Being wise, as well as fond, he did not, when my mind began to open to those first impressions on which so much of the future character depends, leave me to the companionship of servants; but hearing of Summerfield, a school kept by three maiden sisters, the daughters of a clergyman, made due enquiries, visited the quaint old manor-house himself, and

then confided his treasure to the keeping of "the Misses Sylvester," as their school prospectus had it.

I have said that, like the Graces, they were three, Miss Maria, Miss Mary, and Miss Jane.

The first of these, why, I know not, was never called Miss Sylvester; but always "Miss Maria." She was stout and florid, with a hearty, bustling way of managing things in general, and a basket made of bonnet straw, and shaped like a boat, without which, never in the memory of man, had she been seen, save and except in church, at which times the basket, keys and all, was imprisoned in a certain cupboard. Miss Maria looked after the house-keeping, kept the accounts, took the arithmetic class, and superintended the "department" of the young ladies; beyond these matters her duties did not extend.

I must not, however, forget to say that, as a rule, she received any visitors who chanced to arrive at Summerfield, and was reported by our elder girls to have what they called "a fine manner." After having heard this comment I watched her closely and gravely, as is the manner of a child, but never discovered anything particularly "fine" about her, save and except a hearty, genial way of making people welcome, which I have since learnt to be the very "best" manner in the world.

I have already hinted that in my beautiful Land of Beulah dwelt that ghastly inmate of a household, a family skeleton; and it has always seemed to me, that at such times as he rattled his bones, and stalked abroad along the low broad galleries, haunting the dreams of those three sisters, the only shield they had against their terror of him was that close, indissoluble bond of love between them, that made the smallest sorrow of one the sorrow of all. Miss Maria wore spectacles, and had a bunch of little, stiff, round, snow-white curls on either temple. The spectacles had rims of gold, and I noticed that the eyes they covered had many times and oft red rims, too, on the days when the letter that cost so much postage came from the land that was honoured by being Polly's birthplace. Indeed, that astute bird herself had some connecting link with the family skeleton, for I once heard Miss Jane say, with the tears stealing down her face: "But then, remember, Sister Mary, he has good impulses, for he sent Polly to us, you know."

"Who has good impulses sometimes? Who sent Miss Polly over the sea in a

boat, I should like to know?" thought I to myself that day, as I gathered golden cowslips, and made them into balls that never would be round, but persisted in having nasty, square, uneven sides, as if they were badly-made boxes.

At that time I had been nearly two years at Summerfield, and considered myself quite an "old girl," so many new pupils had arrived since my first appearance.

When first papa brought me to my new home among the Cheshire hills I was a perfect mite of a thing. I was so small, that my dear instructresses had a board made to fit on to the side of my little bed, so that I might not fall out upon the floor with a crash in the night. I could not very well have managed to fall out on the other side of my bed, since it stood alongside Miss Mary's; indeed, sometimes, beset with those childish fears that come and go in the misty realms of sleep, I used to crawl across into her bed, and fall asleep encircled by her arm. It was delightful to wake up in the morning, and investigate the mysteries of the little three-cornered paper cases in which she was wont to prison each one of the grey ringlets, and pin it there with a hair-pin.

Miss Theodosia might well say those dear ladies "spoil me sadly."

I was at times imbued with the very spirit of mischief; as on the never-to-be-forgotten occasion upon which, awaking one summer morning with the earliest little birds that began to twitter under my window, I stole out of my cot into the long dormitory into which Miss Mary's room opened, and standing in its midst, with my white night-gown gathered up in one hand lest its length should trip me up, shouted at the top of my clear, ringing voice:

"Det up, zoo naughty durls!" thus disturbing the repose of twelve young damsels, none the best pleased to be roused from their slumbers at four a.m. by a mite, who—to quote the elegant Miss Amelia Staveley's own words—"ought to have been well whipped."

Perhaps the said mite ought to have received that chastisement; all I can say is, I know she didn't, but was instead gravely reasoned with upon her sin to such an extent by Miss Mary and Miss Jane, in one combined burst of eloquence, that she shed bitter tears upon her pinafore, and had an uncomfortable feeling that Polly knew all about it, and cried out more jeeringly than usual as she went slinking

through the hall: "Fie for shame! fie for shame! Oh, you naughty girl!"

During the first three years of my sojourn at Summerfield, my father, Sir Charles Vansitart, of Hazledene, lived abroad. When I say lived, I mean wandered; for he never settled down anywhere for long together, and his yacht, the Ladybird, carried him from this fair land to that, in search of peace and forgetfulness. Meanwhile an old family servant, Terence Mabaffy by name, reigned supreme at Hazledene, and doubtless Roland guarded well the gate of his absent lord. That was the one thing connected with my home that I used to dream about—the deep, mellow baying of the old hound, as Terence carried me into the yard to look at him, chained beside the big kennel, and looking so wistfully at us both, as much as to say: "Do let me loose, and give me a run all about the place." Roland had belonged to my father from the day he was a blundering, staggering pup, with soft feet many sizes too big for him, and a marvellous attachment existed between the two. When the hound lay with his big head resting on his outstretched paws, and his golden-brown eyes fixed upon the gateway, Terence would say: "It's watching for the master, he is—is Roland."

I could remember this, and the sudden bound of the loving creature, as papa's step was heard—the sharp, peculiar bark of rapture that was quite different from Roland's voice at other times.

Was it any wonder that anyone or anything should love papa?

Why, when he came back after his long wandering, and standing in the hall at Summerfield—with Polly looking on critically all the time—caught me in his strong arms and held me close, when he cried out, "Is this my little girl?" how glad I was: how my little heart swelled within me to think that I could answer "Yes;" to think that of all the little girls in all the wide wide world, I, Nellie Vansitart was his—his very own! Oh, the rapture of that golden day when first he came to see me, and I led him—he so big and tall, and I so small beside him—into the long, low drawing-room, where the very roses at the window seemed blooming to do him honour.

He sat in the seat that I loved, because there you could smell the sweet breath of the flowers; he looked at me with such dear loving eyes; he bent and

touched my long locks, drawing them through his fingers, and a sudden shyness coming over me, was constrained to throw my hands about Miss Mary's neck, and hide my face upon her kindly breast! Oh, happy, golden day! Well might the sun shine; well might the birds sing: I could not walk staidly at papa's side. I held his hand; and danced along. And then how droll it was, after we had passed through the corn-fields, where the grass stood tall and green on either hand, rustling softly in the gentle summer wind, to escort him to Mr. Twinkler's shop, and watch the embarrassment of that good man as he did up a packet of sweets for me. He answered papa's courteous remark upon the fineness of the season with a "Quite so, my lord;" that made me run out of the shop to have my laugh outside, where papa found me sitting among the buttercups that were making the banks golden. I got up as he approached, spread out my dress, and made him a reverence like the one that Monsieur José, our dancing-master, had taught me, crying gleefully: "I hope I see my lord well!"

I was glad that day to see my school-fellows, of whom there were five-and-twenty, peeping through the school-room windows at papa; and held myself more erect, giving a proud look up at the tall figure beside me. Miss Staveley's papa had been to see her only the week before, and he was short and squat, and chuckled to himself after every sentence. He called us the "lassies," too, which I did not think at all genteel, though he was a barrister; indeed, I confided to my companion in our walk next day that he must look very ugly in his wig, with which criticism she agreed as fluently as our halting school-girl French permitted.

After this visit from my father I was in a very effusive state of mind, and treated all the girls of my own class to sweets and a new steel pen each: pens, be it known, of rare and curious construction, the which, as I have never seen any like them since, must have been a patent of Mr. Twinkler's own.

"Beg pardon, miss; I trust his lordship is in good health?" said that worthy, on the occasion of this reckless and wholesale expenditure on my part; and I think I liked the other girls to hear this remark of Mr. Twinkler's, and was a little condescending in my manner during our walk home. Pride, they say, must have a fall, and on this occasion mine met with such disaster as no tumble of less magnitude

than complete head-over-heels can typify; for we met Miss Theodosia in one of her most uncompromising and acrid humours. This good woman was in the habit of visiting with ceaseless energy the poor of her brother's parish, and investing the unhappy little bodies of the children thereof in flannel garments of so harsh and raspy a nature, that their tender skins were frayed, and their young lives rendered miserable thereby. It was said that on one occasion she made with her own fair hands, for a girl who promised to be the village beauty some day, a bonnet of such awful proportions and general outline that that young damsel wept copiously from "Dearly beloved brethren" to the conclusion of the second lesson, when, her grief becoming uncontrollable, she was led forth sobbing by Mr. Tapper, the sexton, and set upon a nice cold tombstone to "bring her to."

Indeed, Miss Theodosia hated anything like personal adornment, and had waged such a life-war against beauty of every kind, that it was a wonder she let the flowers grow in the vicarage garden, and didn't have the robins shot for wearing red waistcoats.

Seeing us—six of us—chattering and laughing, and making as much noise as a flock of starlings, coming towards her, I suppose that all her nature rose in protest against our light-heartedness. The path through the fields was narrow, and we could only walk two abreast; I, as the heroine of the hour, being one of the first couple.

I am inclined to think that there was always something peculiarly aggravating to Miss Theodosia in my appearance, and peculiarly antipathetic to her ideas of the training suitable to youth in the way in which the gentle sisters, Jane and Mary, spoilt me. Now, as I noted the extra rigidity of her always upright figure, and the stony stare of her colourless eyes, despair claimed me for its own.

"Out walking by yourselves, young ladies, eh?" she said, standing there right in our way, and looking, in her hideous tea-green dress and granny bonnet, like a blot upon the beauty of the fair summer day.

"We're allowed to walk by ourselves through the fields any time out of school," said I, feeling by the sudden grip of my companion's hand on mine that she was rendered incapable by cowardice of holding parley with the enemy.

"Umph! I shouldn't let you go out alone if I had the management of you," said Miss Theodosia.

The body of the force following in my

wake now huddled one against the other, listening eagerly to what was going on; and glancing back, I felt that the credit of the Vansitarts was at stake.

"But, you see, you haven't the care of us," said I, showing a bold front to the enemy, though I could feel my heart beating to my finger-ends for all that.

"You are a very rude little girl," said Miss Theodosia, getting as unwholesomely green in the face as the shade of her bonnet-ribbons; "and a very untidy one too," she added. "If you were my little girl I should have all this cut off, and done up in a crop."

"This" was my brown mane, that Miss Mary had never yet had the heart to turn up high with a comb, or prison in a net, after the hideous fashion of that day; and oh, horror! the bony fingers of the vicar's sister clutched a bunch of the locks that papa's dear hand had touched so lovingly only a day ago.

"But I'm not your little girl," I cried, struggling against the loathing of her touch that possessed my soul; "you haven't got any little girl, not one, if you had she wouldn't love you—not a bit," I added, with that air of entire conviction that is beyond words exasperating to the subject of it.

Indignation held Miss Theodosia silent from sheer breathlessness, while with me fear began to take the place of courage; and yielding to the impulse of flight I sped by her like a lapwing, the upper class of the lower division of Summerfield Academy for Young Ladies following in much haste and dire disorder.

In all my life at school I had never yet had a concealment from Miss Mary. Even when, in days that now seemed long ago, I plucked some little tempting bright green balls from the fruit-trees on the kitchen-garden wall, and was straightway overwhelmed by a sense of my wrong-doing, my first impulse was to seek out that dear instructress, and lay upon her lap a little guilty hand, upon whose open palm lay the unlawful spoil. Now conscience warned me that I had broken the laws of courtesy, that I had been less than a gentlewoman—that good old-fashioned title that meant so much, and that all our training at Summerfield strove to make us worthy of. Well, it was all told before I had been home an

hour, and if the secret sympathies of the mother confessor were inclined to side with the penitent, that fact—of which I was furtively and tenderly conscious—was allowed to avail me nought as to the reckoning to be paid.

Which heart I wonder was the heavier, Miss Mary's or mine, as hand in hand we went upon our way towards the vicarage, with its many gables, and its marvellous old yew-tree, pruned into the semblance of an arch above the gateway?

Whose eyes were most prone to grow misty with tears, hers or mine, I wonder, as the moment of my self-abasement drew nigh?

I almost fancy as I write that I can hear her sweet low voice, trembling a little, yet—as I know—full of resolve that I shall do what is the only right thing, as she leads me to Miss Theodosia's side, and says:

"I have brought a little girl to tell you how sorry she is for her rude words yesterday."

The pride of the Vansitarts was not in a very flourishing condition, as I stood there blushing up to the parting of the hair Miss Theodosia so highly disapproved of, and down to my chin that shook with nervousness; but the clasp of the hand that held mine gave me courage. I looked the offended dame in the face, and spoke out clearly enough as I owned myself wrong.

How well I remember it all; and the good vicar coming in, seeing me in tears—for when the ordeal was over I melted into limp distress—saying, as he patted my little hot hand:

"Tut, tut, tut! what's all this, eh?"

Papa came to see me many times after that, and the "golden days" in my life came round in happy succession. I hardly thought then, dearly as I loved him, how their memory would shine one day with a new and exquisitely tender light—the light that shines for all of us on the things that we have "loved and lost;" but I was very happy, and grew tall and stately with the passing of the years.

At last I was considered old enough to go home to Hazledene for the summer holidays, and when I got there, found that Roland was not by any means so big as he had seemed to be in the days when Terence carried me into the yard to look at him.

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CHAPTER XXXVII. MISS SKIPWITH.

OH, what a neglected, poverty-stricken air that garden at Les Tourelles had, after the gardens Violet Tempest had been accustomed to look upon! Ragged trees, rank grass, empty flower-beds, weeds in abundance. A narrow paved colonnade ran along one side of the house. They went by the paved way to a dingy little door—not the hall-door, that was never opened—and entered the house by a lobby, which opened into a small parlour, dark and shabby, with one window looking into a court-yard. There were a good many books upon the green baize table-cover; pious books mostly, Vixen saw, with a strange revulsion of feeling, as if that were the culmination of her misery. There was an old-fashioned work-table, with a faded red silk well, beside the open window. A spectacle-case on the work-table, and an arm-chair before it, indicated that the room had been lately occupied. It was altogether one of the shabbiest rooms Vixen had ever seen—the furniture belonged to the most odious period of cabinet-making, the carpet unutterably dingy, the walls mildewed and mouldy, the sole decorations some pale engravings of naval battles, which might be the victories or defeats of any maritime hero, from Drake to Nelson.

"Come and see the house," said the captain, reading the disgust in his step-daughter's pale face.

He opened a door leading into the hall, a large and lofty apartment, with a fine old staircase ascending to a square gallery.

The heavy oak balusters had been painted white, as had the panelling in the hall. Time had converted both to a dusky grey. Some rusty odds and ends of armour, and a few dingy family portraits decorated the walls; but of furniture there was not a vestige.

Opening out of the hall there was a large long room with four windows, looking into a small wilderness that had once been garden, and commanding a fine view of land and sea. This the captain called the drawing-room. It was sparsely furnished with a spindle-legged table, half-a-dozen arm-chairs covered with faded tapestry, an antique walnut-wood cabinet, another of ebony, a small oasis of carpet in the middle of the bare oak floor.

"This, and the parlour you have seen, are all the sitting-rooms my aunt occupies," said Captain Winstanley; "the rest of the rooms on this floor are empty, or only used for storehouses. It is a fine old house. I believe the finest in the island."

"Is there a history hanging to it?" asked Vixen, looking drearily round the spacious desolate chamber. "Has it been used as a prison, or a madhouse, or what? I never saw a house that filled me with such nameless horrors."

"You are fanciful," said the captain. "The house has no story except the common history of fallen fortunes. It has been in the Skipwith family ever since it was built. They were Leicestershire people, and came to Jersey after the civil war—came here to be near their prince in his exile—settled here, and built Les Tourelles. I believe they expected Charles would do something handsome for them when he came into his own, but he didn't do anything. Sir John Skipwith stayed

in the island and became a large land-owner, and died at an advanced age—there is nothing to kill people here, you see—and the Skipwiths have been Jersey people ever since. They were once the richest family in the island. They are now one of the poorest. When I say they, I mean my aunt. She is the last of her race. The Skipwiths have crystallised into one maiden lady, my mother's only sister."

"Then your mother was a Skipwith?" asked Violet.

"Yes."

"And was she born and brought up here?"

"Yes. She never left Jersey till my father married her. He was here with his regiment when they met at the governor's ball. Oh, here is my aunt," said the captain, as a rustling of silk sounded in the empty hall.

Vixen drew herself up stiffly, as if preparing to meet a foe. She had made up her mind to detest Miss Skipwith.

The lady of the manor entered. She shook hands with her nephew, and presented him with a pale and shrivelled cheek, which he respectfully saluted.

She was an elderly and faded person, very tall and painfully thin, but aristocratic to the highest degree. There was the indication of race in her aquiline nose, high narrow brow and neatly cut chin, her tapering hand and small slender foot. She was dressed in black silk, rustier and older than any silk Vixen had ever seen before: not even excepting Mrs. Scobel's black silk dresses, when they had been degraded from their original rank to the scrubbery of early services and daily wear. Her thin grey hair was shaded by a black lace cap, decorated with bugles and black weedy grasses. She wore black mittens, and jet jewellery, and was altogether as deeply sable as if she had been in mourning for the whole of the Skipwith race.

She received Miss Tempest with a formal politeness which was not encouraging.

"I hope you will be able to make yourself happy here," she said; "and that you have resources within yourself that will suffice for the employment of your time and thoughts. I receive no company, and I never go out. The class of people who now occupy the island are a class with which I should not care to associate, and which, I daresay, would not appreciate me. I have my own resources, and my life is fully employed. My only complaint is that the days are not long enough. A

quiet existence like mine offers vast opportunities for culture and self-improvement. I hope you will take advantage of them, Miss Tempest."

Poor Violet faltered something vaguely civil, looking sorely bewildered all the time. Miss Skipwith's speech sounded so like the address of a schoolmistress that Vixen began to think she had been trapped unawares in a school, as people are sometimes trapped in a madhouse.

"I don't think Miss Tempest is much given to study," said the captain graciously, as if he and Violet were on the friendliest terms; "but she is very fond of the country, and I am sure the scenery of Jersey will delight her. By-the-way, we ventured to bring her big dog. He will be a companion and protector for her in her walks. I have asked Doddery to find him a kennel somewhere among your capacious out-buildings."

"He must not come into the house," said Miss Skipwith grimly; "I couldn't have a dog inside my doors. I have a Persian who has been my attached companion for the last ten years. What would that dear creature's feelings be if he saw himself exposed to the attacks of a savage dog?"

"My dog is not savage, to Persians or anyone else," cried Vixen, wondering what insuspicious star had led the footsteps of an oriental wanderer to so dreary a refuge as Les Tourelles.

"You would like to see your bedroom, perhaps?" suggested Miss Skipwith, and on Violet's assenting she was handed over to Hannah Doddery, the woman who had opened the gate.

Hannah led the way up the broad old staircase, all bare and carpetless, and opened one of the doors in the gallery. The room into which she ushered Violet was large and airy, with windows commanding the fair garden-like island, and the wide blue sea. But there was the same bare poverty-stricken look in this room as in every other part of the manor-house. The bed was a tall melancholy four-poster, with scantiest draperies of faded drab damask. Save for one little islet of threadbare Brussels beside the bed, the room was carpetless. There was an ancient wainscot wardrobe with brass handles. There was a modern deal dressing-table skimpily draped with muslin, and surmounted by the smallest of looking-glasses. There were a couple of chairs and a three-cornered washhand-stand.

There was neither sofa nor writing-table. There was not an ornament on the high wooden mantel-shelf, or a picture on the panelled walls. Vixen shivered as she surveyed the big barren room.

"I think you will find everything comfortable," said Mrs Doddery, with a formal air, which seemed to say, "and whether you do or do not matters nothing to me."

"Thank you, yes, I daresay it is all right," Vixen answered absently, standing at one of the windows, gazing out over the green hills and valleys to the fair summer sea, and wondering whether she would be able to take comfort from the fertile beauty of the island.

"The bed has been well aired," continued Mrs. Doddery, "and I can answer for the cleanliness of everything."

"Thanks! Will you kindly send one of the maids to help me unpack my portmanteau?"

"I can assist you," Mrs. Doddery answered. "We have no maid-servant. My husband and I are able to do all that Miss Skipwith require. She is a lady who gives so little trouble."

"Do you mean to say there are no other servants in this great house—no housemaids, no cook?"

"I have cooked for Miss Skipwith for the last thirty years. The house is large, but there are very few rooms in occupation."

"I ought to have brought my maid," cried Vixen. "It will be quite dreadful. I don't want much waiting upon; but still, I'm afraid I shall give some trouble until I learn to do everything for myself. Just as if I were cast on a desert island," she said to herself in conclusion; and then she thought of Helen Rolleston, the petted beauty in Charles Reade's "Foul Play," cast with her faithful lover on an unknown island of the fair southern sea. But in this island of Jersey there was no faithful lover to give romance and interest to the situation. There was nothing but dull dreary reality.

"I daresay I shall be able to do all you require, without feeling it any extra trouble, unless you are very helpless," said Mrs. Doddery, who was on her knees unstrapping one of the portmanteaux.

"I am not helpless," replied Vixen, "though I daresay I have been waited on much more than was good for me."

And then she knelt down before the other portmanteau, and undid the buckles of the thick leather straps, in which

operation she broke more than one of her nails, and wounded her rosy finger-tips.

"Oh, dear, what a useless creature I am," she thought; "and why do people strap portmanteaux so tightly? Never mind, after a month's residence at Les Tourelles I shall be a Spartan."

"Would you like me to unpack your trunks for you?" enquired Mrs. Doddery, with an accent which sounded slightly ironical.

"Oh no, thanks, I can get on very well now," answered Vixen quickly; whereupon the housekeeper opened the drawers and cupboards in the big wainscot wardrobe, and left Miss Tempest to her own devices.

The shelves and drawers were neatly lined with white paper, and strewed with dried lavender. This was luxury which Vixen had not expected. She laid her pretty dresses on the shelves, smiling scornfully as she looked at them. Of what use could pretty dresses be in a desert island? And here were her riding-habit and her collection of whips—useless lumber where there was no hope of a horse. She was obliged to put her books in the wardrobe, as there was no other place for them. Her desk and workbox she was fain to place on the floor, for the small dressing-table would accommodate no more than her dressing-case, devotional books, brushes and combs, pomatum-pots and pinboxes.

"Oh, dear," she sighed. "I have a great deal too much property for a desert island. I wonder whether in some odd corner of Les Tourelles I could find such a thing as a spare table?"

When she had finished her unpacking she went down to the hall. Not seeing anyone about, and desiring rather to avoid Captain Winstanley and his aunt than to rejoin them, she wandered out of the hall into one of the many passages of the old manor-house, and began a voyage of discovery on her own account.

"If they ask me what I have been doing I can say I lost myself," she thought.

She found the most curious rooms—or rather rooms that had once been stately and handsome, now applied to the most curious purposes—a dining-hall, with carved stone chimney-piece and painted ceiling, used as a storehouse for apples; another fine apartment in which a heap of potatoes reposed snugly in a corner, packed in straw; there was a spacious kitchen, with a fireplace as large as a moderate-

sized room—a kitchen that had been abandoned altogether to spiders, beetles, rats, and mice. A whole army of four-footed vermin scampered off as Vixen crossed the threshold. She could see them scuttling and scurrying along by the wall, with a whisking of slender tails as they vanished into their holes. The beetles were disporting themselves on the desolate hearth, the spiders had woven draperies for the dim dirty windows. The rustling leaves of a fig-tree, that had grown close to this side of the house, flapped against the window-panes with a noise of exceeding ghostliness.

From the kitchen Vixen wandered to the out-houses, and found Argus howling dismally in a grass-grown court-yard, evidently believing himself abandoned by the world. His rapture at beholding his mistress was boundless.

"You darling, I would give the world to let you loose," cried Vixen, after she had been nearly knocked down by the dog's affectionate greeting; "but I mustn't just yet. I'll come by-and-by and take you for a walk. Yes, dear old boy, we'll have a long ramble together, just as we used to do at home."

Home, now she had left it, seemed so sweet a word that her lips trembled a little as she pronounced it.

Everything without the house was as dreary as it was within. Poverty had set its mark on all things, like a blight. Decay was visible everywhere—in the wood-work, in the stone-work, in hinges and handles, thresholds and lintels, ceilings and plastered walls. It would have cost a thousand pounds to put the manor-house in decent habitable order. To have restored it to its original dignity and comeliness would have cost at least five thousand. Miss Skipwith could afford to spend nothing upon the house she lived in; indeed, she could barely afford the necessaries of life. So for the last thirty years Les Tourelles had been gradually decaying, until the good old house had arrived at a stage in which decay could hardly go farther without lapsing into destruction.

A door opened out of the court-yard into the weedy garden. This was not without a kind of beauty that had survived long neglect. The spreading fig-trees, the bushes of bright red fuchsia, and the unpruned roses, made a fertile wilderness of flowers and foliage. There was a terrace in front of the drawing-room windows, and from this a flight of crumbling moss-grown

stone steps led down to the garden, which was on the slope of the hill, and lay considerably below the level of the house.

While Vixen was perambulating the garden, a bell rang in a cupola on the roof; and as this sounded like the summons to a meal, she felt that politeness, if not appetite, demanded her return to the house.

"Three o'clock," she said, looking at her watch. "What a late hour for luncheon!"

She made her way back to the small side-door at which she had entered with Captain Winstanley, and went into the parlour, where she found the captain and his aunt. The table was laid, but they had not seated themselves.

"I hope I have not kept you waiting," Vixen said apologetically.

"My aunt has been waiting five minutes or so; but I'm sure she will forgive you, as you don't yet know the ways of the house," replied the captain amiably.

"We have early habits at Les Tourelles, Miss Tempest," said the lady of the manor: "we breakfast at half-past seven, and dine at three; that arrangement gives me a long morning for study. At six we drink tea, and if you care for supper, it can be served for you on a tray at half-past nine. The house is shut, and all lamps put out, at ten."

"As regularly as on board ship," said the captain. "I know the customs of the manor of old."

"You have never favoured me with a long visit, Conrad," remarked Miss Skipwith reproachfully.

"My life has been too busy for making long visits anywhere, my dear aunt."

They took their places at the small square table, and Miss Skipwith said grace. Antony Dodderly was in attendance, clad in rusty black, and looking as like a butler as a man who cleaned windows, scrubbed floors, and hewed wood could be fairly expected to look. He removed the cover of a modest dish of fish with a grand air, and performed all the services of the table with as much dignity as if he had never been anything less than a butler. He poured out a glass of ale for the captain, and a glass of water for his mistress. Miss Skipwith seemed relieved when Violet said she preferred water to ale, and did not particularly care about wine.

"I used to drink wine at home very often, just because it was put in my glass,

but I like water quite as well," said Vixen.

After the fish there came a small joint of lamb, and a couple of dishes of vegetables; then a small custard pudding, and some cheese cut up in very minute pieces in a glass dish, some raw garden-stuff, which Doderly called salad, and three of last year's pears in an old Derby dessert-dish. The dinner could hardly have been smaller, but it was eminently genteel.

The conversation was entirely between Captain Winstanley and his aunt. Vixen sat and listened wonderingly, save at odd times, when her thoughts strayed back to the old life which she had done with for ever.

"You still continue your literary labours, I suppose, aunt," said the captain.

"They are the chief object of my existence. When I abandon them I shall have done with life," replied Miss Skipwith gravely.

"But you have not yet published your book."

"No; I hope when I do that even you will hear of it."

"I have no doubt it will make a sensation."

"If it does not I have lived and laboured in vain. But my book may make a sensation, and yet fall far short of the result which I have toiled and hoped for."

"And that is——?"

"The establishment of a universal religion."

"That is a large idea!"

"Would a small idea be worth the devotion of a life? For thirty years I have devoted myself to this one scheme. I have striven to focus all the creeds of mankind in one brilliant centre—eliminating all that is base and superstitious in each several religion, crystallising all that is good and true. The Buddhist, the Brahmin, the Mahomedan, the Sun-worshipper, the Romanist, the Calvinist, the Lutheran, the Wesleyan, the Swedenborgian—each and all will find the best and noblest characteristics of his faith resolved and concentrated in my universal religion. Here all creeds will meet. Gentler and wiser than the theology of Buddha; more humanitarian than the laws of Brahma; more temperate than the Moslem's code of morality; with a wider grasp of power than the Romanist's authoritative Church; severely self-denying as Calvin's ascetic rule; simple and pious as Wesley's scheme of man's redemption;

spiritual as Swedenborg's vast idea of heaven;—my faith will open its arms wide enough to embrace all. There need be no more dissent. The mighty circle of my free Church will enclose all creeds and all divisions of man, and spread from the northern hemisphere to the southern seas. Heathenism shall perish before it. The limited view of Christianity which missionaries have hitherto offered to the heathen may fail: but my universal Church will open its doors to all the world—and, mark my words, Conrad, all the world will enter in. I may not live to see the day. My span of life has not long to run—but that day will come."

"No doubt," replied Captain Winstanley gravely. "There is a slovenliness, so to speak, about the present arrangement of things, and a great deal of useless expense; every small town with its half-a-dozen churches and chapels of different denominations—Episcopalians, Wesleyans, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Primitive Methodists. Now on your plan one large building would do for all, like the town-hall, or the general post-office. There would be a wonderful economy."

"I fear you contemplate the question from an entirely temporal point of view," said Miss Skipwith, flattered but yet reproachful. "It is its spiritual aspect that is grandest."

"Naturally. But a man of the world is apt to consider the practicability of a scheme. And yours seems to me eminently practical. If you can only get the Mahomedans and the Brahmins to come in! The Roman Catholics might of course be easily won, though it would involve doing away with the Pope. There was a prophecy, by-the-way, that after the ninth Pius there would be only eleven more Popes. No doubt that prophecy pointed at your universal religion. But I fear you may have some difficulty about the Buddhists. I fancy they are rather a bigoted sect."

"The greatest bigots have but to be convinced," said Miss Skipwith. "St. Paul was a bigot."

"True. Is your book nearly finished?"

"No. There are still some years of labour before me. I am now working at the Swedenborgian portion, striving to demonstrate how that great man's scheme of religion, though commonly supposed to be a new and original emanation of one mind, is in reality a reproduction of spiritual views involved in other and older

religions. The Buddhists were Swedenborgians without knowing it, just as Swedenborg unconsciously was a Buddhist."

"I begin to understand. The process which you are engaged in is a kind of spiritual chemistry, in which you resolve each particular faith into its primary elements: with a view to prove that those elements are actually the same in all creeds; and that the differences which heretofore have kept mankind apart are mere divergencies of detail."

"That, crudely and imperfectly stated, is my aim," replied Miss Skipwith graciously.

This kind of conversation continued all through dinner. Miss Skipwith talked of Buddha, and Confucius, and Mahomet, and Zuinglius, and Calvin, and Luther, as familiarly as if they had been her most intimate friends; and the captain led her on and played her as he would have played a trout in one of the winding Hampshire streams. His gravity was imperturbable. Vixen sat and wondered whether she was to hear this kind of thing every day of her life, and whether she would be expected to ask Miss Skipwith leading questions, as the captain was doing. It was all very well for him, who was to spend only one day at Les Tourelles; but Vixen made up her mind that she would boldly avow her indifference to all creeds and all theologians, from Confucius to Swedenborg. She might consent to live for a time amidst the dulness and desolation of Les Tourelles, but she would not be weighed down and crushed by Miss Skipwith's appalling hobby. The mere idea of the horror of having every day to discuss a subject that was in its very nature inexhaustible, filled her with terror.

"I would sooner take my meals in that abandoned kitchen, in the company of the rats and beetles, than have to listen every day to this kind of thing," she thought.

THE OLD FRENCH STAGE.

MADEMOISELLE MARS.

A PERFECT actress of high comedy has always been a rarity, not only on the French stage but on every other; the manifold requisites for the faultless interpretation of a "premier rôle" being seldom found united in the same individual. It is not uncommon to meet with a combination of beauty and talent, of personal charm and great dramatic excellence; but

to these indispensable elements of success must be added a far more important item, namely, the tact and consummate ease of a woman of the world, "free," as has been well observed, "from the slightest tinge of conventionality, and stamped with that real elegance of *bonne compagnie*, which, if not innate, can never be acquired." All these various and essential qualities were possessed in an eminent degree by the incomparable artist whose glorious career we are about to review; during the space of half a century her supremacy in the different lines of characters successively adopted by her was uncontested and unquestioned, and in the time-honoured annals of her theatre no brighter pages are recorded than those inseparably associated with the name of Mars. No more convincing proof of her superiority is needed than the simple fact that a considerable portion of her repertoire has virtually died with her; those delightful creations, invested by her with that peculiar and subtle charm of which she alone knew the secret, no longer vivified by the graceful piquancy of her delivery and the magic of her voice, are now mere shadows of the past; occasionally serving to display the incompetency of some ambitious ingénue, but more frequently neglected and forgotten. More than thirty years have elapsed since she was taken from us, and in the course of that long interval the place of the "diamond" of the *Comédie Française* has remained empty; many an *Elmire*, many a *Célimène* have essayed their powers in emulation of their matchless predecessor, and have all been more or less found wanting. Like our own Shakespeare, Molière still lacks a fitting representative of his immortal heroine; *Célimène* has as effectually disappeared with *Mlle. Mars* as *Lady Macbeth* with *Sarah Siddons*.

Anne Françoise Hippolyte Boutet was born in Paris, February 5th, 1779; her father, Jacques Marie Boutet, better known under his assumed name of Monval, was one of the most remarkable comedians of the *Théâtre Français*, and her mother an actress of some provincial celebrity.* She was the younger of two daughters; her sister, after a brief career on the stage retired altogether into private life, and

* Monval was fond of saying by way of pleasantry, that our heroine's birth had been announced to the world in general by a discharge of cannon; the fact being that exactly at the same hour a salute was fired by the royal artillery in celebration of the churching of Marie Antoinette.

died about 1843, leaving everything she possessed to the subject of our notice. Why the name of Mars was selected for the youthful votaries of Thalia has not transpired; it is, however, certain that in 1792, when scarcely thirteen years of age, Mdlle. Mars the younger commenced her dramatic apprenticeship at the Théâtre Montansier, where she performed in a variety of children's parts with such grace and vivacity as completely to justify her father's opinion that his lessons—for she had had no other instructor—had not been thrown away. She had every opportunity of improving herself, and profited by it; the company of the Théâtre Montansier was at that period an unusually good one, including among many other actors of note Damas and Baptiste the younger, and Madame Baroyer, afterwards for many years the leading "old woman" at the Variétés. In 1795, a considerable fraction of the members of the Théâtre Français having temporarily seceded from the society, and opened the Théâtre Feydeau on their own account, Monvel availed himself of so favourable an occasion, and presented his daughter to Mdlle. Contat, by whose influence the young actress was engaged to "double" Mdlle. Lange and Mdlle. Mézeray. Three years later, on Mdlle. Lange's final retirement from the stage, she succeeded to the vacant post, and became, conjointly with Mdlle. Mézeray, the titular representative of the line of characters technically called "les amoureuses."

Up to this time it would appear that the talent displayed by her, although highly promising, was not sufficiently developed to give any idea of the excellence to which it subsequently attained; her health was extremely delicate, and her voice, notwithstanding its enchanting sweetness, so weak and uncertain in its intonation, that, while the possession of a rare natural intelligence was unanimously accorded her, it was doubted whether her want of physical strength might not prevent her from aspiring to anything beyond a secondary position in the theatre. In 1799, the Comédie Française having been reorganised on a new basis, Mdlle. Mars was received a member of the society; and from that epoch became legitimately entitled to the right of precedence over all the younger actresses of the company, with the single exception of Mdlle. Mézeray. Her first signal success dates from 1803, in which year the revival of Bouilly's *Abbé de l'Épée* afforded her the opportunity she had long

wished for of appearing in a part especially suited to her, that of the deaf and dumb boy, originally created by Madame Talma. A short absence from Paris had recruited her strength, and enabled her not only to support without fatigue the exigences of the current répertoire, but also to study the character she was about to assume; and the result was one of the most decisive triumphs on record, a complete revelation, in short, of a great and hitherto unsuspected dramatic genius. The effect of her performance was so striking as entirely to obliterate from the memory of the spectators the admiration they had formerly expressed for Madame Talma; the theatre was crowded night after night by eager multitudes attracted thither by the prestige of the rising star, thus laying for her the foundation of a popularity as unexampled as it was destined to be lasting.

Mdlle. Mars was now fairly before the public, not as a mere actress of promise, but as an established favourite from whom great things were to be expected, and whose progress was henceforth an object of interest to every lover of the art; the encouragement readily held out to her was an additional incentive to exertion, and she spared no pains to render herself worthy of the approbation which, without a dissentient voice, had been cordially and deservedly bestowed upon her. The retirement of Mdlle. Contat in 1809 opened a new field to her ambition; the place left vacant by the departure of this renowned artist could only be efficiently filled by herself or by Mdlle. Leverd; and the claims of each being equally incontestable, it was decided by the management that the much coveted inheritance should be divided between them. Hence arose endless bickerings and disputes; the choice of certain parts, alike insisted on by the two rivals and their respective partisans, was a source of perpetual discussion,* and it was finally resolved, as the only means of settling the question, that they should play them alternately. Harmony being thus restored, a further modification in the interest of both actresses was soon after

* Both were extremely tenacious of their rights, and their mutual jealousy was a fertile topic of conversation in the theatre. "They say I am ill-natured," remarked Mdlle. Mars one evening to the dramatist Hoffmann, a great admirer of Mdlle. Leverd; "you know very well it is not true." "Ill-natured!" exclaimed the author of *Le Roman d'une heure*, "you are the best creature in the world—from the back of the stage to the foot-lights!"

agreed to; Mdle. Leverd reserving for herself the leading characters in comedy, while the "jeunes premières" and the "ingénues" became the exclusive property of Mdle. Mars. Occasionally they performed together in the same piece; for instance, in "Le Philosophe sans le Savoir" Mdle. Mars personated Victorine, and Mdle. Leverd the Marquise; and this arrangement proving highly advantageous to the treasury, the experiment was frequently repeated. Among the principal parts which derived new lustre from their interpretation by our heroine, were Henriette in *Les Femmes Savantes*, Lucile in *Les Dehors Trompeurs*, Charlotte in *Les Deux Frères*, and Suzanne in *Le Mariage de Figaro*; the latter especially, one of the most difficult in the whole range of comedy, afforded her full scope for the display of that extraordinary fascination of tone, look, and manner, which Mdle. Contat—notoriously her inferior in personal attraction—had never possessed; and which, combined with an irresistible piquancy and a complete identification of herself with the lively soubrette, caused the revival of Beaumarchais's masterpiece to be welcomed with an enthusiasm scarcely surpassed even in the palmy days of its original production. "Anything more perfect, more harmonious in its ensemble," says Madame Fusil, an eye-witness of one of these performances, "could not be imagined than this brilliant conception of the dramatist embodied with such admirable reality by Mdle. Mars." Nor were poetical tributes wanting to celebrate her triumph; perhaps the prettiest effusion inspired by her Suzanne being the following lines addressed to her on the morning after her first appearance in the character:

Qu'il sied bien à tes jolis doigts
Le sceptre de la comédie!
Ta voix est une mélodie,
Et ton regard est une voix.
Belle Mars, le charme ineffable
De tes accents pleins de douceur
Nous rappelle ce vers aimable:
'L'oreille est le chemin du cœur.'

Until 1823 the agreement entered into with Mdle. Leverd had necessarily prevented Mdle. Mars from personating even a solitary specimen of that important line of parts, the right to which, according to the regulations of the Comédie, belonged exclusively to her rival, namely, the "grandes coquettes"; the serious illness, however, of the latter in that year placed at her absolute disposal both Molière and Marivaux, Araminte of the *Fausse Confidences*

as well as Elmire and Célimène. The task was arduous, but she was more than equal to the occasion; for the first time she felt herself free from the restrictions hitherto imposed upon her, and able to test her powers to their fullest extent; and it is needless to add that "ses premiers coups d'essai furent des coups de maître." No such exponent of high comedy had been seen since Mdle. Contat; the admirers of Mdle. Leverd forgot their allegiance while listening to the faultless delivery and exquisite intonation of her successor, and each revival of a classic masterpiece brought with it fresh laurels to its charming interpreter. Nor was she content with the opportunities afforded her of exhibiting the versatility of her talent in the ancient répertoire. Pieces written expressly for her by the most distinguished authors of the day were in turn accepted and produced, the most noteworthy, both from its intrinsic merit and the success obtained by it, being the *Ecole des Vieillards* of Casimir Delavigne, played by Talma and Mdle. Mars. Shortly after they again performed together in *Le Cid de l'Andalousie*, the actress's first and last attempt in tragedy.

In 1828, a young secretary of the Duke of Orleans, as yet almost a novice in literature, presented his earliest dramatic production to the Théâtre Français, and, thanks to the influence of his princely patron, was not refused admittance into the sanctuary; the piece, the principal female character in which (the Duchesse de Guise) was entrusted to Mdle. Mars, was Henri Trois, and the name of its author, Alexandre Dumas. This essay of a comparatively unknown writer was received with tumultuous approbation, and has ever since maintained its popularity; we remember to have seen it many years later, towards the close of the great actress's career, and her shriek of agony, her intensely pathetic "Henri, vous me faites mal! vous me faites horriblement mal!" still rings despairingly in our ear. Five months before the revolution of 1830, the struggle between the classic and romantic schools fairly commenced, and the evening selected by both parties for the display of their respective strength was that appointed for the first representation of Victor Hugo's *Hernani*. It was no mere wordy warfare; blows were freely exchanged by the occupants of the pit, coats were torn off the backs of their wearers, and the excitement was finally so great that the latter part of the drama

was almost inaudible. Victory, however, remained with its supporters, and at the conclusion of the fifth act, Mdlle. Mars, the Dona Sol of the night, was called before the curtain, and received an enthusiastic ovation from her triumphant partisans. Scarcely inferior was the sensation caused by her performance of Tisbé in the same author's *Angelo*, tyrant de Padoue, Madame Dorval playing *Catarina*;* nor were her *Louise de Lignerolles* and Mdlle. de Belle-Isle (her last creation, and one of the happiest efforts of Dumas), less effective or less profitable to the theatre. She had previously given a striking proof of versatility by her personation of Scribe's *Valérie*, and had formed her conception of the part by a constant intercourse with Mdlle. Sophie, sister of *Minette*, of the *Vaudeville*, and blind from her birth. After the success of the comedy, her instructress received a handsome bracelet, on which was engraved the following inscription: "Valérie à Sophie."

It would be superfluous to dwell upon the extensive range of characters which, at one period or other of her career, contributed to augment the celebrity and popularity of this delightful actress. To those who have not seen her, any verbal description of her admirable qualities would convey but a faint idea of the reality; and the few who still remember her need no additional stimulus to their memory. To the last she retained that indefinable charm, those softly penetrating tones which fell like sweet music on the ear; even at an age when the graces of youth had long since disappeared, her smile was as seductive, as irresistible as of yore; and but a few years before her death, when summoned to give evidence in a court of justice, and asked by the president how old she was, she with pardonable feminine weakness replied, "Forty-five," one can hardly wonder at the exclamation of a bystander: "I should have thought her younger!"

Her final appearance took place April 15th, 1841, and the pieces chosen for the occasion were *Le Misanthrope* and *Les Fausses Confidences*; the theatre was crammed to suffocation, every available corner of standing-room being occupied immediately after the opening of the doors. Never had *Célimène* been more deliciously coquettish, nor *Araminte* more provokingly charming; and when, at the

close of the performance, the act-drop once more rose, and the popular favourite, surrounded by the entire *Comédie Française*, vainly endeavoured to conceal her emotion while bidding farewell to the scene of her triumphs, the excitement of the audience knew no bounds. Cheer succeeded cheer, hats were waved, and bouquets showered from every part of the house upon the stage; again and again the acclamations burst forth, nor ceased until the curtain had slowly fallen, and separated for ever the greatest and best representative of comedy from the public who had loved her so well. Scarcely six years later, March 22nd, 1847, a long and imposing procession, headed by the principal artists of every Parisian theatre, and followed by an immense multitude of sympathising mourners, accompanied her remains to their last resting-place in *Père la Chaise*.

No more exact description has ever been given of Mdlle. Mars than in the annexed passage extracted from Macready's *Autobiography*, and dated 1822: "Her voice was music, and the words issuing from her lips suggested to the listener the clear distinctness of a beautiful type upon a rich vellum page. It was a luxury to the ear to drink in the 'dulcet and harmonious breath' that her utterance of the poet gave forth. Nor was this her only charm; in person she was most lovely, and in grace and elegance of deportment and action unapproached by any of her contemporaries." In private life she was simple and modest in her tastes, averse to publicity, and content to enjoy the society of a small circle of intimates, to whom she was sincerely attached. "Her salon," says one who knew her well, "was one of the last strongholds of intelligent conversation." For some time after her retirement she occupied a pretty *hôtel* in the *Rue Larochevoucauld*, which she ultimately quitted for an apartment in the *Rue Lavoisier*. One of the reasons which induced her to change her abode was the discovery of two successive attempts—in both cases planned by her own servants—to rob her of her jewels; by the advice of her friends these were eventually deposited in a place of security, a precaution playfully alluded to in the following lines:

En confiant et diamants et bijoux
Aux solides caveaux de la Banque de France,
Vous n'avez pas caché le plus prisé de tous,
Votre rare talent d'une valeur immense.
Avec tous vos voleurs pour couper court enfin,
Et pour qu'un trésor rien ne manque,
Il faut, charmante Mars, ainsi que votre écrivain,
Aller vous loger à la banque!

* The receipts of the first fourteen nights of *Angelo* exceeded 60,000 francs.

Mindful of the favour constantly shown her by Napoleon, she never attempted to disguise her Imperialistic sympathies, and shortly after the Restoration of the Bourbons appeared on the stage one evening in a dress trimmed with violets, the Bonapartist symbol. Naturally, this bravado was highly distasteful to the audience, exclusively composed of adherents to the reigning dynasty; and she was summoned by some of the ardent spirits in the pit to say: "Vive le roi!" She remained silent, and the tumult increased, accompanied by a storm of hisses. Fearful lest she should expose herself to further insult, her comrade Baptiste whispered in her ear to comply with the general demand; upon which she stepped forward, and with the air of naïveté peculiar to her enquired of the spectators whether they wished her to say, "Vive le roi?" "Yes, yes," resounded from all sides of the house. "Very well," she coolly replied, "I have said it," and quietly resumed her part. On another occasion, hearing that the gardes du corps intended making a demonstration against her in return for her well known devotion to the fallen family, she exclaimed contemptuously: "The gardes du corps! who and what are they? What can they possibly have in common with Mars?" However, in course of time, the partiality of Louis the Eighteenth for her talent, and the grant of an annual pension of thirty thousand francs, somewhat reconciled her to the new order of things, and she henceforward wisely kept her political opinions to herself.

In 1828, she acted with great success in London, but does not appear to have been entirely satisfied with the conduct of the manager (Laporte), if we may judge from the subjoined passage in an unpublished letter to him, dated July 5th, in that year. Expressing her surprise at the tone of his last communication, she hints that all her dealings with him seem destined to be disagreeable. One of the articles in the contract proposed to her stipulates that she is not to play at any theatre or in a private drawing-room, either gratuitously or otherwise; this she has never been accustomed to, and if he insists upon it, will cancel her engagement at once. "You think, perhaps," she adds, "that because I am a stranger here, I shall find no one to support me, but you are mistaken."

An extract from a letter to Bouilly, respecting the revival of his comedy,

Madame de Sévigné, for her approaching benefit, is in a livelier tone. "Messieurs de Rémusat and Montesquieu have given the requisite permission, and I only wait for yours. Say 'yes,' and provided that my new satin body fits me as charmingly as it ought to do, neither you nor I will have any reason to complain."

Her taste in dress was proverbial, any fashion adopted by her becoming immediately the rage; and of her supposed infallibility in all matters relating to the toilet an instance is recorded in the following anecdote. During a professional stay at Lyons, she received one morning the visit of a manufacturer of that city, who requested permission to offer her a sample of his stock, producing at the same moment a magnificent piece of velvet of a bright yellow colour. "Take this, mademoiselle," he said, "be kind enough to wear it as a dress, and my fortune is made." "Monsieur," replied Mdlle. Mars, "you will excuse me for saying that no one ever dreams of wearing a yellow dress." "I am perfectly aware of it," he answered, "and that is why I implore you to set the fashion. Do not refuse me, I entreat." Seeing no other means of getting rid of her importunate visitor, the actress gave the required promise, without, however, having the slightest intention of keeping it, and the manufacturer went his way rejoicing. On her return to Paris, while inspecting the show-room of her dressmaker, "A propos," she said, "I brought a piece of velvet from Lyons, admirable in quality, but unfortunately yellow. What can I do with it? It was given me for a dress." "A yellow dress!" exclaimed the horrified couturière; "such a thing was never heard of!" "Suppose we try it for once," suggested Mdlle. Mars; "if it looks too ridiculous, I am not obliged to wear it." "Madame is certain to look well whatever she wears," was the obsequious reply; so the dress was made. A few days later, Sedaine's Gageure imprévue being announced in the bills, Mdlle. Mars determined to try the effect of her new costume, but the result did not satisfy her. "If I wear this," she said to her maid, "I shall be the laughing-stock of the whole house. Tell the stage-manager to substitute some other piece where I am not wanted for the Gageure, for positively I dare not show myself as I am." Up came the embarrassed functionary, and tried all his eloquence to persuade her that she had

never looked better, but in vain; she persisted in her refusal, and as a last resource he bethought himself of consulting Talma, who was at that moment in the foyer, and who had made theatrical costume his especial study. On his entering her dressing-room, he started back in amazement. "You may well stare," she observed; "I look exactly like a canary in this horrible yellow dress." "If you had said like a topaz," he answered, "you would have been nearer the mark; it would be impossible to imagine anything more becoming. It sets off your dark hair and sparkling eyes to perfection, and I guarantee that the public will be of my opinion." Half reassured, but still uneasy in her mind, she finally yielded, and prepared to make her entrée; hardly had she appeared on the stage when a low murmur of approbation ran through the theatre, and the words "exquisite" and "delicious" were distinctly audible. Talma had judged rightly; the success of the yellow dress was already an accomplished fact, and before another week had elapsed the demand for the fashionable colour was universal, and the manufacturer's fortune, as he himself had predicted, was made.

Among the many portraits existing of this delightful actress, the following may be mentioned as giving the most correct idea of her at various periods of her life: an engraving by Normand after the Baron Gérard; a lithograph—an excellent likeness—in *La Femme Juge et Partie*; and a sketch, engraved by Godefroy, representing her as Betty in *La Jeunesse de Henri Cinq*; nor should a beautifully finished miniature be omitted, painted by Bouchardy, and sold, subsequently to the decease of that artist about five-and-twenty years ago, for the inadequate sum of two hundred francs.

THE MAID AND THE LEAF.

A JAPANESE IDEA.

A DEAD leaf drifted along the snow,
 A poor brown leaf with edges torn;
 Now here, now there, blown high and low,
 An outcast, and a thing of scorn.

Alas! Alas!

So life drifts on to hearts forlorn.

Once in a bower, fresh and bright,
 Kissed by the sun-rays and the dew,
 A maid to flee the hot sun's might
 Prone on the ground her fair limbs threw,
 To sleep, to sleep,
 And dream of someone that she knew.

She slept and dreamt a horrid thing—
 That he she loved from her would stray;
 And starting up, deep sorrowing,
 Resolved to seek him out that day.

Alas! Alas!

'Twas all too true—he'd fled away.

Her last love token—just a leaf
 Of sycamore—love's emblem bright,
 She threw away, then prayed that grief
 Might bear her off from mortal sight.

Alas! Alas!

Whilst the dead leaf drifted through the night.

MR. BOWKER'S COURTSHIP.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

IT was Saturday afternoon, and it was summer-time. There could be no more excellent reasons given than these why Mr. Bowker should have engaged himself in the blissful works of idleness. Gay in a belcher handkerchief, which displayed itself in a flower-like knot of red and yellow at his throat; in trowsers of mole-skin, the more prominent parts whereof were patched with snow-white patches; in an unstarbed shirt of something like canvas; a billycock hat, utterly unconservative as to form; and a pair of huge boots, the tongues of which lolled with a thirsty and a gaping look over the dusty dryness of the laces; Mr. Bowker lay upon his back on a green bank and listened to the twittering of the birds, and smoked his pipe, and was at peace with all mankind. His coat was rolled up and placed beneath his head for a pillow; the cool wind played about his face, and bore to him the scent of many green and flowering things; the brook murmured opposite, and beyond the brook the hay meadow dozed in the sunshine. Beyond the hay meadow, right away on the verge of the landscape, certain pit-frames were visible, and certain mounds of mine refuse, and two or three tall chimneys. They smoked so lazily that afternoon, and looked so slim and delicate in the distance, that Mr. Bowker, though he knew them well, had visions of a cluster of giants lying in a rough semicircle, smoking enormously long and thin cigars. For the day was so peaceful and so full of rest there, where Mr. Bowker lay in shadow, that it seemed impossible to fancy that anything was working. Mr. Bowker was by nature of a literary turn. He was by force of circumstance a coal-miner. He was a thorough, good, whole-hearted fellow too, as most of his tribe are, despite the roughness of their exterior. Mr. Bowker had no love for solitude as a rule, but that day

he shunned his fellows. He had a fine palate for beer, yet that afternoon the Rosy Lass had opened her arms to him in vain. The Rosy Lass was a public-house in those parts, and at that hour, as Mr. Bowker knew, many of his chums sat in solemn circle round the kitchen, holding high debate on "whummers" and "game uns," and other holiday matters. Mr. Bowker himself was a keen pigeon-flyer, and his word was of authority on the breeding of game ones, yet he willingly held aloof from his companions, and aired himself in solitude. The plain truth about the matter was that William was in love.

The place has changed sadly since I knew it, but a score of years ago there were few lovelier spots in England than that in which Mr. Bowker lay that summer Saturday. Its beauty was of a very gentle type, and had no dazzling surprises in it. To walk straight out of that circle of ashes and smoke and fire, which men call the Black Country, into the green lanes and tranquil fields which lay about it, was like walking out of the howling noises of Ludgate Hill on a week-day into the sacred quiet of St. Paul's; was like going home to see one's silver-haired, tranquil-minded mother, after a year's grind in the City; was like a quiet dream in the midst of fevered fancies. It was like none of these things to Mr. Bowker, for he had never seen Ludgate, and never knew his mother, and had never been troubled with any fevered fancies. Yet he felt the benediction and the rest of it quite as completely, perhaps, as he would have done if he had been able to find a thousand similes for his enjoyment.

He was a well-made young fellow at this time, with a look of sturdy manliness and rough good-nature. Not love itself could quench the native humour of his soul, and he grinned behind his pipe in serio-comic derision of his own forlornness.

"It's a rum thing—lav," said he to himself. "It's a sort o' complaint like, summat arter the measles an' the hewpin' cuff, a sort o' thing as a mon's got to have some day or another. I'n got it bad an' no mistake. I suppose I'n got it about as bad as a mon ever had it. But Lord bless thee, Willy-yum, it's a sickness as wo't kill nobody. But it wo't do for me to be a lyin' here all arternoon a doin' nothin'. I mote go whum empty-honed. I'll tak' some flowers wi' me."

Therewith Mr. Bowker arose, and tying the sleeves of his coat loosely about his

neck, strayed along the lanes, and got together, in the course of the next hour, a presentable nosegay of late may, early dog-roses, and white foxgloves. These, backed by a dozen or so, prodigious ferns, he bound about with rushes from the brook, and then set out for home. Love's purposed offering was some three feet in height, and wide and dense enough to screen the bearer from recognition from the side on which he carried it. It is the Black Country fashion to do everything on a large scale, and Mr. Bowker might have passed, behind his bouquet, as one of the supernumeraries in the army which marched against Macbeth from Birnam Wood. Straying up Dead Man's Lane, he climbed Jacob's Ladder, and passed merrily along Stevenson's Hills, encountering here and there a friend and a friendly salute. The nosegay made it evident to the meanest observer that the bearer was "goin' a courtin'," and William endured a good deal of more or less pointed chaff as he took his homeward way. This was inevitable, and he was, of course, prepared for it, and generally gave a good deal better than he got.

"Hello, Willy-yum," said one, par exemple, "a cove ud think as yo' took the second o' June for May-day."

"Why, so I did," responded William cheerfully, "an' I'n been a getherin' some green stuff for yo' to play the fule in."

This was quite a home-thrust of wit after the manner of the district. They who looked on at the brief tournament guffawed right joyfully.

"Yo' had him theer, Willy-yum," quoth one youth approvingly.

"Not me," returned Willy-yum complacently. "I wouldn't have him nowbeer, not at a gift."

Leaving the discomfited foe behind, Mr. Bowker pursued his way, and was encountered, in the region of Scott's Hole, by a certain retail bone-dealer and merchant in scrap iron. The retail dealer had a humorous eye, and a moist full mouth, and bore other evidence in his quaintly carven countenance of the power of comic perception.

"Arternoon, Willy-yum," said the retail dealer.

"Arternoon, Samyouwell," returned Mr. Bowker, with droll-eyed and expectant gravity.

"Goin' to plant them pretty things in the back garden, Willy-yum?" asked the retail dealer with a show of friendly interest.

"No," said Mr. Bowker placidly; "I gethered 'em to see how many fules ud ax me what I got 'em for."

"Arternoon, Willy-yum," said the retail dealer.

"Arternoon, Samyounwell," returned Mr. Bowker, and lit a fresh pipe with feelings of strong self-approval.

Mr. Bowker lived in Paradise Street, and had manifold opportunities for conference with the object of his desires, who lived next door, and was, indeed, no other than the daughter of the retail merchant of bone and iron. The genial war of wits and words in which these two indulged made no sort of difference in their friendship, unless, indeed, it tended to cement it. Paradise Street, in William's day, was something of a slum, and the fields which lay in front of his house, where the railway station now stands, were frowsy and neglected, and produced no other crop than one of brick-bats and hulking ends of timber. Here and there a broken and deserted shed, built for some forgotten purpose, went its way to ruin slowly, and added to the general desolation. Beyond those frowsy fields rose the gaunt frames and tall chimneys of many coal-mines, and down the hill, on the Oldbury road, the everlasting furnaces gave the summer evening sky an angry glare. You could hear their roar and the dead thud of the steam-hammer on any quiet night, and sometimes the clank of iron bars and pigs, as the boats beside the wharf were loaded, as though some great devilish Prometheus were bound there, breathing smoke and fire against imprisoning Jove, and shaking the chains that held him.

Etiquette reigns everywhere—even in the Black Country. Mr. Bowker dressed for the presentation of his nosegay. First of all he rolled his shirt-sleeves to his shoulders and blacked his boots. Then he took a copious bath under the pump in the yard, in view of his inamorata, who bade him a gracious good-evening from her bedroom window, and was there plainly visible in her bodice, in the act of removing her curl-papers. His bath completed, William laid by the scrubbing-brush and the yellow soap, and hung the jack towel upon the rack behind the kitchen door—for he was a lonely man at home as yet, and had in all things to shift completely for himself. Then putting on a false front with a pair of wonderful collars, which fastened with a string behind and obscured his ears, and donning a suit of

black and a very tall and shiny hat, he set forth for an evening with his love. Armed with his nosegay he tapped at the door and was admitted. In a second all was changed within him, and his hopes were chilled.

"Good night, Willy-yum, an' thank you," said Selina as she took the flowers. "I think thee know'st Aberahum."

Here she pointed to a young gentleman, who sat uneasily on the extreme edge of a sofa clothed in very crackly chintz. The young man sat, balancing his hat in his hands and blushing to the eyes. His false collars were even higher than Mr. Bowker's, and his black clothes were shinier and had more overlapping folds in them. Surrounding his neck was a woollen comforter of many colours, the ends of which trailed on the floor as he sat. His eyes wandered with uncertain glare about the room, and encountering Mr. Bowker's for a second, glided off and fixed themselves upon the ceiling. Mr. Abraham Gough worked in the same mine with Mr. Bowker. William had always rather looked down on this young man, and had sometimes used him as a chopping-block to try wit's edge upon—and now it was evident that the despised one was here as a rival.

"Be you gooin' to tek a walk to-night, Seliner?" Mr. Bowker asked, with such aspect of easy unconcern as he could wear.

"Why, yis, I be, Willy-yum," Selina responded. "Mr. Guff here's been good enough t' ax me to goo out wi' him."

William looked at Mr. Gough, and Mr. Gough, conscious of the gaze, looked harder at the ceiling than ever, taking the minutest interest in certain cracks which marked the plaster. The gaze continuing, Mr. Gough's glance wandered to the brass ornaments on the chimney-piece, and, finding no resting-place there, descended to the fire-irons, and with a growing air of discomfiture wandered about the walls. Mr. Bowker's expression grew more and more scornful as he gazed, and at last he turned upon his sweetheart and asked:

"Will you have a mon wi' you to tek care o' your new catch, Seliner?"

"If I could mak' sure of his bein' a gentleman," Selina responded, "p'raps I might."

"Oh!" said William with some bitterness. "If thee beest after gentlefolks I'n got nothin' more to say."

"I don't see," responded Selina, flushing a little, "as yo need say anythin' at all. I'll say good-night, Willy-yum."

"Good-night, Selina," responded William, "and good-bye."

"Good-bye, Mr. Bowker," said Selina.

"Good-bye, Miss Jukes," said Mr. Bowker.

Mr. Gough smiled at Mr. Bowker's dismissal. But I think it probable that, if Mr. Gough had known the tingling longing for his ears which just then possessed Selina's fingers, he would have smiled less broadly.

CHAPTER II.

BEFORE civilisation stepped in and spoiled things, there were few scenes in the world richer in picturesque and humorous elements than that presented by an out-of-doors Saturday night in the Black Country. There were always shows and stalls on the waste ground at the upper end of the High Street on Saturday nights in my time. The market, an unroofed square space surrounded by a wall, and entered by great gates which were only opened on Saturdays, might have found a student of Midland life a thousand themes for observation and discourse. Cheap Jack was outside the lower gate, hoarse, voluble, assured. There was the crock-merchant, with his stock-in-trade spread out on straw, shaking and jingling his little goods noisily together, and skilfully dropping a plate or a basin now and again to show how strong and unbreakable they were. There were the fried-fish stalls, and the oyster stalls, with genuine natives at five a penny, with as much vinegar and pepper as you chose to take thrown in for the money. Here were mountains of rock and other sweetstuffs—side by side with alps of new-baked rolls and seas of treacle. Here you might buy apples whereon had rained the ghastly dew of the naphtha lamps until they tasted and smelt like veritable fruit of Tophet. I tasted those apples once. How well I remember their Dead Sea flavour! Here was a gentleman in a cart, with awful diagrams of the human body suspended from a great framework in the rear—a gentleman who would sell you pills for a penny, and tell you for nothing, in five minutes, a variety of things about anatomy and medicine, which the whole staff of Bartholomew's or St. Thomas's would never dream of telling you at all, if you spent a lifetime with them. And amongst all these things the big Black Country men, and those strapping Black Country women, went slow, solid, stolid,

heavy—the men in creased and wrinkled suits of new and shiny black which fitted nowhere, and huge, many-coloured comforters dangling a yard and a half in front of them, and very glistening hats; and the women in green, and red, and blue, and yellow garments, with artificial roses in their bonnets, in size and hue resembling pickling-cabbages—cheapening here and there with the long deliberate drawl and stolid faces of the land. These things have faded and vanished. Civilisation is killing picturesqueness in cut and colour, and the accent of Cookney Brummagem is spoiling the only Saxon left us in the whole country.

Through and amongst all these delights and wonders roamed Selina and her cavalier. How she despised that sheepish and shamefaced youth as she walked about with him! How she almost grew to hate him for the minute, and quite grew to hate herself when she contrasted him with the absent William. Not that Abraham was guilty of any remissness in the performance of his duty. When he went into the Red Cow to get his pint, he brought Selina her half-pint into the street, and saw her drink it, and carried the jug back for her in the most gentlemanly manner. For in the Black Country it is not—or it was not—etiquette for a single young lady to enter a public-house. Married ladies could exercise their own discretion, but a decent young fellow abroad with his sweetheart would always bring a share of his beer to the door of the public-house, and there the good clumsy Phyllis and Damon drank together. Nor was Abraham in other matters unequal to his duties. He and Selina went into all the shows together, and if she had demanded all the rock and all the "humbags" in the market, she might have had them. But she was sickening for a cry all along, and she was right glad to get away from her escort, and to escape all question from her father, and unloose the flood-gate of her tears in her own bedroom. I daresay that when the young princess has too deeply wounded the young prince, her lover, she feels something of the same remorse. I daresay the pains of despised love were pretty much the same thing to the princely melancholic Dane as they were to Mr. Bowker. The Dane had a faculty of eloquence and a gift of scholarship which Mr. Bowker had not; but that young gentleman glaring disconsolate into his own fireless grate, by the light of one

candle, with his ears still obscured by the big collars, saw there pretty much what his more learned and polished fellow-sufferer looked at under similar circumstances—a miserable, foolish jumble of a world, namely, in which it was surely worth no sane man's while to hear fardels any longer. We are pretty much of the same flesh and blood all the world over, and share toothache and headache and other ills in a fairly equal manner.

There had been a little misunderstanding between the sweethearts the night before, but William knew that he had meant no quarrel, and had supposed Selina's ill-humour to be as transient as his own. Selina had put on a few small airs and graces, with a half unconscious intent to display and test her power. The moment chosen had been inopportune—the most charming creatures are not always wise. Therefore these two young people were now engaged in breaking their own hearts, sitting within half-a-dozen yards of each other—out of sight and hearing.

"They'm a queer sort, be womenfolks," mused the young man sadly. "But if S'liner wants to marry a creetur as is moor like a cross betwigt a she'p an' a bullock nor like a mon, it eent no affair o' mine. Tak your own road, wench, tak your own road!"

Therewith he took his way to bed, and lay down beside his love. The heads of their two beds touched the same wall, and the heads of the occupants of the beds were within a foot of each other. So near, and yet so far away. You will observe that William had that bitterest of all jealousy's draughts at his lips, which is brewed by a lover's contempt for his rival. Says the Laureate:

Having known me, to decline
On a range of lower feelings, and a narrower heart
than mine!

There's the rub! She has left me, me, me, for that fellow! Had he been handsomer, or richer, or cleverer, have we not all fancied that we could have borne it better? But a man every way my inferior, sir; a person with whom I would scorn to compare myself, physically, mentally, or spiritually—to prefer him to me—'tis unendurable! So, also, I have known Miss Jones speculate as to what her Wilkins could see to admire in that insignificant Miss Brown. William despised his rival, and in spite of that his rival triumphed. The young fellow tossed his stalwart limbs hither and thither in the bed, through the long sleepless night, and his

sweetheart cried miserably and quietly all night through, on the other side of the wall, within a foot of him.

"Her eent got as much 'eart as ud mak a pin's yed," mourned William to himself, unconscious of her tears.

"Oh, dear me, dear me," Selina lamented, "I've thrown him away. I'm a wicked, bad gell. He'll goo out to-morrer wi' Sally Rogers. I know he wull."

So the grey dawn rose on these two sleepless and unhappy people. William descended to the pump in the back yard, and had a wash in the half-light of four o'clock, and Selina got out of bed and took sly peeps at him through her tears. William, his ablutions over, went out for a dreary stroll, past the Hilly Piece, and over Stevensen's Hills, and down Jacob's Ladder, and Dead Man's Lane, and on to the brookside again. There, on June Bridge, he stood and watched the eddies circle round the great stones, and found that negative and bewildered comfort which trouble always finds in running water. Meantime Selina had gone back to bed, and had there renewed her tears, and was finding some comfort in running water also. And, at the moment when William stood upon June Bridge, Mr. Benjamin Gough, in a suit of flannels, was making his way to the day-shift in the Strip-and-at-it. Lest you should find yourself too much disturbed by the phrase, let me explain that the Strip-and-at-it was a coal-mine, so named, by its inmates, from the cant phrase of some "doggy" or ganger: "Now, lads, strip and at it."

Poor William regretted his holiday, and longed for the hour when work should begin again. He beguiled the heavy hours of the day by the composition of woe-begone verses, whereof fortune has preserved a fragment, which I here embalm:

The sun that shines so bright above,
Knows naught about my wrongful love;
The birds that sing in Wigmore Lane,
Bring nothing to my heart but pain.
It is a very dismal thing,
That in my ears the birds do sing,
While my Selina has gone off,
To walk with Mr. Abraham Gough.

William's muse is in the right. It is a very dismal thing to the wounded heart, grown egotistic through its pain, that nature should seem out of sympathy with it—that the sun should shine, and the birds should sing, just as brightly and as merrily as though Selina were still true and gentle.

William took his humble meal of bread and cheese and his pint or so of beer at a

little public-house in the aforesaid lane, and then strolled home again, still very miserable, but a trifle soothed by the verse-making process. He was due at the mine at six o'clock, and two hours before that time he was upstairs exchanging his Sunday costume for the work-day coaly flannels, when he became conscious of a bustle in the street. Looking through the window, he beheld men running hatless and coatless, and unbonneted unshawled women scurrying along as fast as their feet could take them. Everybody ran in one direction, and in the crowd he caught a moment's glimpse of Selina and her father. The girl's face was white with some strong excitement, and there was a look of the wildest imaginable fear in her eyes. Both hands were pressed to her heart as she ran. A Black Country collier's instinct in a case like this is pretty likely to be true. William threw his window open, and cried to the hurrying crowd:

"Wheer is it?"

"At the Strip-an'-at-it," some familiar voice called out as the straggling crowd swept by.

"What is it?" he cried again.

"Shaft on fire," cried another voice in answer, and in a second the street was clear. William Bowker dashed down stairs and hurled himself along the street.

"Anybody down?" he gasped, as he turned the corner, and passed the hindmost figure in the hurrying mass. The woman knew him.

"For God's sake, lend me thy hand, Willy-yum," she gasped in answer. "My Joe's in."

He caught the shrivelled little figure in his great arms as though the old woman had been a baby, and dashed on again. Ay, the tale was true! There belched and volleyed the rolling smoke! There were hundreds upon hundreds of people already crowded on the pit mound and about the shaft, and from every quarter men and women came streaming in, white-faced and breathless. William set his withered burthen down, and pushed through to the edge of the shaft. There was water in the up-cast, and the engines were at work full power. Up came the enormous bucket and splashed its two or three hundred gallons down the burning shaft, and dropped like a stone down the up-cast, and after a long long pause came trembling and labouring up again, and vomited its freight again, and dropped like a stone for more.

"Yo might just as well stand in a ring, an' spit at it," said Bowker, with his face all pale, and his eyes on fire. "Get the stinktors up, an' let a mon or tew go down."

"Will yo mak one, Bill Bowker?" said a brawny, coal-smeared man beside him.

"Yis, I wull," was the answer, given like a bull-dog's growl.

"I'll mak another," said the man.

"An' me," "An' me," "An' me," cried a dozen more.

"Big the bowk, somebody," said the love-lorn verse-maker, taking at once, and as by right, the place he was born for. "Bill—Joe—Abel—Darkey—come wi' me."

The crowd divided, and the five made for the offices, and found there, in a row, a number of barrel-shaped machines of metal, each having a small hose and a pumping apparatus attached to it. These were a new boon from the generous hand of science—a French contrivance, as the name affixed to each set forth—"L'Extincteur." Each of the men seized one of these, and bore it to the edge of the shaft, the crowd once more making way. A bucket, technically called "a bowk," some two feet deep and eighteen inches wide, was affixed to the wire rope which swung above the burning shaft. The self-appointed leader asked for flannel clothing. A dozen garments were flung to him at once. He wrapped himself up like a mummy, and bound a cotton handkerchief over his face. Then, with the machine strapped securely across his shoulder, he set one foot in the bucket, and laid a hand upon the rope. A man ran forward with a slender chain, which he passed rapidly round the volunteer's waist, and fixed to the rope which supported the bowk. Another thrust an end of rope into his hand, and stood by to reeve out the rest as he descended. Then came the word: "Short, steady." The engine panted, the rope tightened, the clumsy figure with the machine bound about it swung into the smoke, and in a death-like stillness, with here and there a smothered gasp, the man went down. His comrade at the edge dribbled the rope through his coal-blackened fingers as delicately as though it had been a silken thread. Then came a sudden tug at it, and the word was flashed to the engine-room, and the creak of the wheel ceased, and the gliding wire rope was still. Then for a space of nigh a minute not a sound was heard, but every eye was on the rope, and every cheek was pallid with suspense, and every heart was with the

hero in the fiery depths below. Then came another warning tug at the rope, and again the word flashed to the engine-room. The wheel spun round, the rope glided, quivered, stopped, the figure swung up through the smoke again, was seized, lowered, landed. When his comrades laid hands upon him, the flannel garments fell from him in huge blackened flakes, so near to the flames had he been. He cast these garments from him, and they fell, half tinder, at his feet. Then he drew off the handkerchief which bound his face, and, at the godlike, heroic pallor of his countenance, and the set lips and gleaming eyes, women whispered pantingly, "God bless him!" and the breath of those bold fellows was drawn hard. Then he reeled, and a pair of arms like a bear's were round him in a second. In ten minutes more he was outside the crowd, and a bottle of whisky, which came from nobody knew where, was at his lips as he lay upon the ground, and two or three women ran for water. And whilst all this was doing, another man, as good as he, was swinging downwards in the blinding smoke. So fierce a leap the flames made at this hero that they caught him fairly for a moment in their arms, and when he was brought to the surface, he hung limp and senseless, with great patches of smouldering fire upon his garments, and his hands and face cracked and blackened. But the next man was ready, and when he in turn came to the light, he had said good-bye to the light for ever in this world. Not this, nor anything that fear could urge, could stay the rest. Man after man went down. There were five-and-thirty men and boys below, and they would have them up or die. With that godlike pallor on their lips and cheeks, with those wide eyes that looked Death in the face, and knew him, and defied him—down they went! I saw these things, who tell the story. Man after man defied that fiery hell, and faced its lurid smoky darkness undismayed, until, at last, their valour won the day.

The love-lorn William had but little room in his heart for superfluous sentiment as he laid his hand upon the wire rope, and set his foot in the bowk again. Yet just a hope was there—that Selina should not grieve too greatly if this second venture failed, and he should meet his death. He was not, as a rule, devotionally inclined, but he whispered inwardly, "God be good to her." And there, at that second, he saw her face before him—so

set and fixed, that in its agony of fear and prayer it looked like marble. The rope grew taut, he passed the handkerchief about his face again, and with the memory of her eyes upon him, dropped out of sight. The man at the side of the shaft paid out the slender line again, and old hands watched it closely. Yard after yard ran out. The great coil at his feet snaked itself, ring by ring, through his coaly fingers. Still no warning message came from below. The engine stopped at last, and they knew that the foot of the shaft was reached. Had the explorer fainted by the way? He might, for all they knew above, be roasting down below that minute. Even then, his soul, newly released, might be above them.

Through the dead silence of the crowd the word flashed to the engine-room. The wheel went round, and the wire rope glided and quivered up again, over it. There was not a man or woman there who did not augur the same thing from the tenser quiver of the rope, and when, at last, through the thinner coils of smoke about the top of the shaft the rescuer's figure swung with the first of the rescued in his arms, there was heard one sound of infinite pathos—a sigh of relief from twenty thousand breasts—and dead silence fell again.

"Alive?" asked one, laying a hand on Bowker's arm. Bill nodded and pushed him by, and made his way towards that marble face, nursing his burthen still.

"Seliner," he said quietly, "here's your sweetheart."

"No, no, no, Bill," she answered. "There's on'y one man i' the world for me, Bill, if ever he forgives me an' my wicked ways."

Cheer on cheer of triumph rang in their ears. The women fought for Bill Bowker, and kissed him, and cried over him. Men shook hands with him, and with each other. Strangers mingled their tears. The steel rope was gliding up and down at a rare rate now, and the half-suffocated prisoners of the fire were being carried up in batches. Selina and her lover stood side by side and watched the last skipful to the surface.

"That's the lot," yelled one coal-smearing giant as the skip swung up. Out broke the cheers again, peal on peal. William stood silent, with the tears in those brave eyes. The penitent stole a hand in his.

"Oh, Bill," she whispered, "you didn't think I wanted him?"

"What else did you think I fetched him out for?" queried William, a smile of comedy gleaming through the manly moisture of his eyes.

She dropped her head upon his breast, and put both arms about him, and neither she nor he thought of the crowd in that blissful moment when Mr. Bowker's courtship ended, and soul was assured of soul.

EXPERIMENTS EXTRAORDINARY.

ON November 14th, 1666, Mr. Pepys wrote in his Diary: "Dr. Crone told me that at the meeting at Gresham College to-night, there was a pretty experiment of the blood of one dog let out, till he died, into the body of another on one side, while all his own ran out on the other side. The first died on the place, and the other very well, and likely to do well. This did give occasion to many pretty wishes, as of the blood of a Quaker to be let into an archbishop, and such-like; but, as Dr. Crone says, may, if it takes, be of mighty use to man's health, for the amending of bad blood by borrowing from a better." A year later the secretary was mightily pleased at making the acquaintance of a poor debauched man, who, having had twelve ounces of sheep's blood let into his veins, found himself a new man. The value of his testimony is somewhat discounted by Pepys remarking: "He is cracked a little in the head," while declaring him to be the first sound man that ever submitted to the operation in England, "and but one that we hear of in France;" that one being probably Dr. Denys, of Paris, who successfully transferred the blood of an animal into his own veins.

We rather wonder some enquiring spirit has not tested the truth of the fancy underlying Pepys's "pretty wishes." That, perhaps, is to come. The transfusion of blood, however, is a recognised resource in desperate cases, like that related in a London medical journal four years ago, in which the patient suffered so terribly that the nurse fainted and the doctors despaired. Still they persevered, and by making alkaline injections into an opened vein wrought a slight improvement, an improvement followed by a relapse threatening the worst. Then they opened a vein in the husband's arm, and injected his blood into his sinking wife. She began to rally from that moment, and in two months' time was almost herself again. Fortunately

for those who may be in as sad a plight with no near and dear one willing to bleed for love's sake, Dr. Brown-Séguard has discovered that warm milk injected slowly into a human artery is a potent reviver; a discovery already turned to good account by the physicians of the Dublin Provident Infirmary, who, finding an inmate of that institution apparently dying of exhaustion, promptly opened a vein, injected into it a pint of milk fresh from the cow, and had the satisfaction of seeing the patient rally at once, a prelude to perfect recovery.

Very different was the result of the rash experiment of a young Berlin doctor, who fancied cholera could be kept at bay by mingling tainted with untainted blood. He took some blood from a cholera patient, and introduced it into his own veins. In seven hours he was a dead man. Poor Oberndyker is not the only instance of a medical theorist falling a victim to a mistaken belief. Professor Walker, of Brooklyn, finding nothing allay an excruciating pain in the face, took it into his head that a certain deadly drug would serve his turn. His wife sat down by his bedside, pencil and note-book in hand, intent upon carefully taking down, from his dictation, every sensation produced by the action of the drug. Her task was not a long-lasting one. After swallowing the third dose of sixty minims, the unlucky experimentalist shrieked out: "Water! water! water!" and expired.

Somebody once pretended to have ascertained that the curse of Brazil was identical with a disease which the ancients cured with snake-venom. A patient at the Hospital dos Lazaros—an establishment near Rio de Janeiro devoted to the reception of persons affected with leprosy and elephantiasis—offered to submit to the hazardous experiment. A rattlesnake was put into his bed, but shrank from the companionship, until the desperate fellow, seizing it in his hands, squeezed the reptile so hard that in self-defence it struck him with its fangs, but so lightly that the man was unaware of the fact until the on-lookers told him that the snake had fulfilled his mission, and he saw a little blood oozing from the puncture; but in twenty-four hours there was a vacant bed in the ward.

When one of Pizarro's warriors received an ugly wound from an Omeguan spear, the Spanish leech took off the knight's coat of mail, put it upon an Indian prisoner, put him on a horse, and drove a

spear through the hole in the armour. Giving the Indian his quietus, the surgeon opened his body, and seeing the heart was not injured by the spear thrust, concluded the knight's hurt was not mortal; so he treated it as a common wound, and soon set the patient on his legs again. A similar method of diagnosis was practised by the French surgeons when the eye of Henry the Second was pierced by a splinter from Montgomerie's lance. In order to arrive at a knowledge of the injury inflicted, they cut off the heads of four condemned men, and thrust splinters into the eyes at the same inclination as that at which the fatal sliver had entered the king's eye.

It was common enough to utilise criminals in this way in the olden days. In the sixteenth century the College of Montpellier was allowed one criminal a year to dissect alive. Doctors were never so highly favoured as that in England, although the Barbers' Company and the Society of Surgeons were, by Act of Parliament, once privileged to receive an annual allowance of four bodies of executed criminals between them; and so late as 1731 we read in the Gentleman's Magazine that there was great talk about an experiment to be made upon a malefactor in Newgate, reprieved for the occasion, whose tympanum was to be cut in order "to demonstrate whether the hearing proceeds from the tympanum or the nerves that lie between it and the conception of the ear; it being the opinion of some that deafness is principally caused by obstructions on the said nerves."

The same magazine, recording the execution of a highwayman named Gordon, in 1733, says: "M. Chovet, a surgeon, having, by frequent experiments on dogs, discovered that opening the windpipe would prevent the fatal consequences of the halter, undertook Mr. Gordon, and made an incision in his windpipe; the effect of which was, that when Gordon stopped his mouth, nostrils, and ears for some time, air enough came through the cavity to continue life. When he was hanged he was perceived to be alive after all the rest were dead; and when he had been hung three-quarters of an hour, being carried to a house in the Tyburn Road, he opened his mouth several times and groaned, and a vein being opened, bled freely. It was thought if he had been cut down five minutes sooner he might have recovered." Seventy years afterwards, through the

intervention of Mr. White, Surveyor to His Majesty, leave was granted to Professor Aldine, "inheritor of the science from his uncle, Luigi Galvani," to make galvanic experiments on the corpse of a murderer—the first of the kind ever made in this country. What a hubbub there would be nowadays if the Home Secretary permitted anything of the sort!—although our New Zealand cousins were not at all shocked by the authorities there allowing the doctors to take possession of the bodies of three murderers, that they might satisfy themselves the spinal column was uninjured by hanging, and that strangulation, not dislocation, was the cause of death.

Sir Humphrey Davy was once tempted into playing an amusing practical joke by way of testing the curative power of the imagination. When the properties of nitrous oxide were discovered, Dr. Beddoes, jumping to the conclusion that it must be a specific for paralysis, chose a subject upon whom to try it, and Sir Humphrey consented to administer the gas. Before doing so, Davy, desiring to note the degree of animal temperature, placed a small thermometer under the paralytic's tongue. Thanks to Dr. Beddoes, the poor fellow felt sure of being cured by the new process, although utterly in the dark as to the nature of it. Fancying that the thermometer was the magical instrument which was to make a new man of him, he no sooner felt it under his tongue than he declared that it acted like a charm throughout his body. Sir Humphrey wickedly accepted the cue, and day after day for a fortnight went through the same simple ceremony, when he was able conscientiously to pronounce the patient cured. M. Volcicelli, a Roman physician, played a similar trick upon some of his hospital patients, who were greatly affected whenever powerful magnets were brought near them. Placing them under exactly the same conditions to all appearance, but taking particular care to exclude magnetic influence, he found that every one of them was disturbed in the same degree as when the magnets were actually employed.

One summer day in 1789, Deptford was crowded with old salts and curiosity-mongers of all ages eager to witness the launch of "an entire copper vessel," built at the suggestion of a Cornish mine-owner, in order to prove how far such a ship "would answer the purpose of sailing." The launch went off without a hitch, and the novel ship promised, we are assured, to answer

every purpose for which she was designed; a consummation devoutly to be wished as likely to prove of very singular advantage to the British navy. We have sought in vain for some account of the after fate of the copper ship. It is evident, however, that it did not equal its projector's expectations, and if there is to be a battle of metals, the issue will certainly be between iron and steel.

A year later saw the trial at Woolwich of some leathern cannons, made by a snuff-box manufacturer, anent which Peter Pindar wrote:

Richmond, watchful of the State's salvation,
Sprinkling his ravelins o'er the nation,
Now buying leathern-boxes up by tuns,
Improving thus the nature of great guns;
Guns blest with double natures—mild and rough—
To give a broadside or a pinch of snuff.

Our modern artilleryists would scout the notion of converting leathern boxes into monster ordnance, but they are credited with entertaining the scarcely less ridiculous idea of facilitating the operations of mountain batteries by converting mules into gun-carriages instead of mere gun-carriers. The story goes that the Ordnance Select Committee assembled one morning to test the feasibility of the time-saving plan. A mountain-gun was strapped fast to a cradle resting on a pack-saddle, so that the muzzle pointed over the mule's tail. The animal was then led into the marshes, followed by the committee, and sundry officers and civilians interested in artillery experiments. On arriving at the butt the gun was loaded, the mule turned till his tail-end threatened the earthen mound, a piece of slow match tied to the gun-vent and ignited, and the result impatiently awaited. Fizz! went the match, back went the astonished animal's ears, and then he deliberately turned himself round—a movement never anticipated by the experimentalists, who found their interest in the affair suddenly intensified by considerations regarding their personal safety. The secretary threw himself flat on the ground, the committee dispersed in divers directions, and the illustrious visitors executed impulsive strategic movements with more speed than dignity. Then came a bang! and away went the shot in one direction while the mule turned a summersault in the other, and prone on his back kicked defiantly against its unseen assailant.

That comical bit of gun-practice had been anticipated in actual warfare. In one of Sheridan's engagements with the Indians, his men, taken unawares by the redskins, had no time to remove their

mountain howitzer from the mule's back, so they accepted the alternative and blazed away, sending mule and gun tumbling together down-hill upon the Indians, who took fright and fled the scene. One of them, captured a few days afterwards, was asked why he ran away? He replied: "Me 'big Injun; me not afraid of little guns or big guns, but when white man fires whole mules at Injuns he don't know what to do."

A French doctor, desiring to learn how fowls would be affected by alcoholic drinks, administered some brandy and absinthe to his poultry, and found one and all take so kindly to their unwonted stimulants that he was compelled to limit each bird to a daily allowance of six cubic centimetres of spirits or twelve of wine. The result was an extraordinary development of cock's crests, and a general and rapid loss of flesh all round. He persevered until satisfied by experience that two months' absinthe-drinking sufficed to kill the strongest cock or hen, while the brandy-drinkers lived four months and a half, and the wine-bibbers held on for ten months ere they died the drunkard's death.

According to the Scientific American, a German lady, Fräulein Marie von Chauvin, is to be credited with showing the possibility of transforming an amphibious, gilled, double-breathing animal into a lung-breathing land creature. The lady obtained five strong Mexican axolotls and put them into shallow water. Finding they did not thrive, she adopted the bold measure of keeping them on land, giving them tepid baths three times a day to ensure cutaneous respiration, and packing wet moss between their bodies during the intervals between the baths. They were fed upon earthworms. A worm was inserted as far as possible in an axolotl's mouth, and its tail pinched until it wriggled itself so far down that the axolotl was obliged to finish the operation of swallowing, whether it liked it or not. Three of the curious creatures proved stubborn, and persisting in ejecting their food, died of starvation. The others quickly displayed signs of a coming change, their gill tufts and tail fins apparently shrivelling through the action of the air, and, when a little later on they were put into water, showed a dislike to their natural element and struggled to get out of it. By-and-by, further changes took place; they cast their skins repeatedly, their gill-clefts closed, their eyes became larger, and their skins, originally black and shiny, became of a brownish purple-black hue,

decorated with yellow spots. Finally, the axolotls assumed the complete form of the true land salamander, breathing only by the lungs, and in their new state developed an astonishing greediness.

In one of the southern districts of New South Wales a man discovered a fine soda spring. He opened a bush-inn close by, and soon drove a brisk trade in spirits and soda-water. One day some genius hit upon the idea that a great deal of time and trouble might be saved by converting the well into a huge effervescing draught. A lot of sugar and acid, with a due proportion of spirits, was thrown into the well and stirred about with a long pole; but to the infinite disgust of the thirsty operators, and something more than the disgust of the proprietor, the final outcome of their labour was the muddying of the water and the irremediable spoiling of the soda-spring.

Another unhappy experimentalist was Mr. Masse, of Brooklyn, a gentleman having great faith in science, but very little knowledge of it. Happening to come across an account of a method of horse-driving by electricity, by having an electro-magnetic apparatus placed under the coachman's seat worked by a little handle, one wire being carried through the rein to the bit, and another in like manner to the crupper, so as to send the current along the horse's spine, and by the sudden shock subdue any inclination to jib or bolt, Mr. Masse, a timid driver, resolved to avail himself of the invention, and soon had the horse-queller attached to his carriage. Thus prepared against equine vagaries, he started one morning for a drive. He was jogging along, when up dashed a fast roadster, drop went his horse's ears, and soon he was straining every muscle to keep the lead. Now was Masse's time. Grasping the handle of the machine, he gave it a turn. For an instant the astonished horse stood stock still, and then—then his driver thought earth and sky were about to meet. The animal jumped high in air, came down again, and dashed along the road as if bent upon making a never-heard-of "record;" his master holding on to the handle and administering shock after shock, and shouting the while: "Stop him! stop him!" The horse concluded to stop of his own accord, and set to kicking his hardest. "Why don't you jump out; do you want your idiotic head kicked off?" cried a passer-by. Masse jumped out and alighted unhurt. The horse, released from the electric current, quieted down, and was

led by his owner to the nearest livery-stable. "Sell him," said he, "for whatever you can get for him; I am not going to keep a horse that thinks he knows more about science than I do."

More successful was the stage-manager of the Baltimore Academy of Music in his application of electricity. Mr. Kelly was much annoyed by loungers congregating at the stage entrance. Taking advantage of the presence of a man in charge of an electric apparatus to regulate the lighting of the auditorium, the manager had a wire directed to the zinc-covered floor of the passage he wanted kept clear, and when it became blocked up, all the man had to do was to touch a knob and thereby communicate a lively current to the zinc, and the scared intruders took themselves off, "Their ridiculous antics resembling the jerky movements of those supple-jacks with which children amuse themselves," says the American journalist. "It would not be a bad idea to have a small electric battery connected with a strip of zinc fastened to one's doorstep, so that book-agents, soap-peddlers, and hucksters generally, could be disposed of effectually and without any annoyance."

MY LAND OF BEULAH

A STORY IN FIFTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

AMONG many other precious relics of the mother who gave her life for mine, were some paintings of exquisite finish and design. One, a landscape, with the reflected light of the hidden sun catching the edges of the hayricks in a farm-yard, and glancing on the figure of the goodman coming home to the low-roofed, rose-wreathed cottage where his wife and child were keeping watch at the open window; another, the sea sparkling beyond the hills, and a tiny craft, black and silver in the moonlight. These, and such-like kindred subjects, had once warmed into appreciative love the sensitive nature of Alice Vansitart, my unknown, unseen mother.

Not only these, for traced and coloured upon ivory, I had here a frond of fern crossed by a solitary heather-bell, there an autumn-tinted leaf, with ruddy berries, round and ripe; both flowers and leaves so skilfully drawn, that they almost looked as though some careless hand had dropped and left them lying where they fell.

They were to me the records of a beautiful mind—links between the dead mother and the living child; for had I not inherited

that passionate love of nature and of the beautiful that those dear records told of?

During the first days of my happy life at Summerfield, I discovered in the hedge that bordered our vast old rambling garden a gap—a most delicious gap—just wide enough to let my little body creep through—carefully guarding against thorns in the process.

This gap of mine led into a wood; a wood so lovely in its miniature hills and dales, its tiny, trickling, tinkling brook, that sped along its shallow bed as blithely as though it were laughing at the flowers upon its banks in rippling merriment, that I thought it quite a fairy-land.

There was such moss, too, in that wood: moss like spears, moss like caps, moss like miniature trees. For the spears, green and rose-tipped, my fancy called into existence a fairy-army; for the caps—white-chaliced, and green-stemmed, a host of fairy revelers. Great fungi, too, grew here and there, and these I thought must surely be the fairies' tents, under which they held nightly merry-makings, when I was fast asleep in my cot beside Miss Mary's bed.

How I loved my wood—with all its wild, uncultured loveliness! Now, looking back, I know that the joy that filled my heart as I looked upon these things was a heritage—part of that awful and mysterious sympathy that exists between the mother and the child, for good as for evil. Not only to love what was beautiful—but to love it blindly and passionately, was then a part of my nature; and here I use the word "beauty" as applying to moral as well as to physical perfection. I loved with devotion Miss Mary's placid gentleness. I saw and recognised, with marvellous intuition for so young a child, the tenderness of the three sisters for each other—the common sorrow, borne as a common burden. I was, in a word, like that unknown person who sent Polly to Summerfield, full of impulses—some good (as witness my devotion to the friends who made my motherless childhood full of sunshine), some evil, as witness my outbreak of passion to Miss Theodosia in the barley-field.

"That child has a terrible nature," I once overheard Miss Mary say to Miss Jane; "she will be prone to idolatry—all her days."

I had been talking to her about papa—about all I meant to be and to do for him when I should go to live always at Hazledene, and had worked myself up into a state of trembling excitement.

Soon after this, Mr. Staveley, the old gentleman whom I had laughed at and felt sure would look amusingly ugly in his barrister's wig, died suddenly. He was pleading a cause, when all at once he threw up his arms and fell back dead. His daughter was sent for that night, and it fell to Miss Mary's lot to break her sorrow to her. I saw the poor girl come out from this interview, her eyes swollen with weeping, her face pale and tear-stained. She went away, and, together with the blow that had befallen her, was soon forgotten by those who had been her companions. Not, however, by me; I went into my wood—the gap was a stile now, and there was no need to creep through it—and sat by the murmuring stream, thinking, pitying, sobbing to myself. It was not exactly Louisa Staveley that I was pitying thus, but rather myself, as a supposed mourner. "Whatever should I do if my papa were to die?" That thought was the root of all my sadness. I knew that mothers died, for had not mine? but hitherto I had hardly realised that fathers too were mortal.

"I should not be able to bear to see the flowers, or listen to the birds. I should lie down somewhere on my face where no one but God could find me."

And then with a rush of consolation, intense enough to hold an element of pain, the thought of papa's grand stature, hearty, ringing voice, and perfect health, came across me, and I felt so glad, oh, so infinitely glad, that such a sorrow as Louisa Staveley's was safe not to come near me.

I had now reached the age of thirteen years, and could lay claim to something like culture. My appetite for reading was insatiable; my love of music a passion. Miss Jane, herself a fine performer on the piano and harp, did not disdain to play duets and concerted music with me. The occasion of our annual examination-day and its attendant festivities was a triumph for me; the sweetness of which not even Miss Theodosia's sour visage, watching me from her place of honour beside our principal, could blight.

One source of satisfaction may have soothed her somewhat, for my long locks were no longer flowing about my shoulders as of yore, but decorously twisted into a coronal, that is, as decorously as their curly nature would permit of.

And now I come to an eventful period in my life, for a new influence, and one that was destined to be a fateful one for me, crossed my path.

Eulalie Le Breton came to Summerfield, and that love of the beautiful, that worship of perfection in any form, of which I have already spoken as being a salient characteristic of mine, led me to fling my heart into her lap, as it were, and to rejoice greatly in all the close companionship of a school friendship.

Hitherto, beyond my dear Miss Mary, I had had no chosen friend. Now I walked with Eulalie, talked with Eulalie, nay, dreamt of Eulalie.

Such girl-loves are but the shadows of coming loves still deeper and more absorbing; the outcome of the awakening romance of the awakening woman in the child's nature; but they are oftentimes leal and true, and full of the holiest lesson love in any form can teach, namely the lesson of self-forgetfulness, training the mind to think of and for another, and moulding the character that will one day find its highest development in wifehood, and the still more selfless love of the mother.

In these days few tasks would have seemed to me too hard to be undertaken for love of my school friend. I was more vain of her beauty than of any personal gifts of my own. For anyone to admire her was a passport to my goodwill; the hand that could have striven to injure her would have seemed my bitterest enemy. There even seemed a sort of shame to me in the thought that I was rich while she was poor; that I was a wealthy baronet's daughter, while she must one day face the world single-handed, and earn her bread before she ate it.

Have I not well said then, that in such attachments lies the very shadow of love in its fullest and deepest sense?

Eulalie was four years my senior, and had come to Summerfield partly as a pupil, partly as a teacher. She had had great sorrow, and known great reverses, my dear Miss Mary told me, with a tearful mist in her own dark eyes. These sorrows naturally enlisted my sympathies for the new pupil-teacher even before I looked upon that lovely face, of which, through all the years of my life, I have never yet seen the equal.

The first time I saw her she was sitting at the end of the long, low schoolroom by the window, through which came the level golden rays of a summer's evening; a child stood at her knee, who, by her aid, was stumbling through that first step to learning—the alphabet.

Small and finely cut as some rare cameo,

Eulalie's face had that appealing grace of expression that draws out the sympathies of the beholder in one look, a glance doing the work of years. Her eyes, dark and deeply fringed, were soft with a pathetic sadness; the close rolls of her ebon hair twisted into a classic knot low on her neck, the chiselled mouth, the finely-pencilled brows, all combined to form a perfect picture of the highest and most refined order of beauty; and when she spoke her voice was in keeping with the rest, soft and low. My own stature bade fair to be equal to the average height of woman, but Eulalie towered above me as the pine above the hawthorn in the garden. She was slight in figure, and her hands were a marvel—so were mine, but rather one of redness and roughness than of beauty. Eulalie's were exquisitely white, and each slender finger tapered to a tiny oval nail, rose-tinted.

"Oh, Miss Mary, how beautiful she is!" I said that night, still true to the old habit of telling every thought of my heart to that good friend.

"Yes, poor child!" said Miss Mary with a sigh, and said no more.

"Was it a sad thing, then, to be beautiful?" I wondered, as I lay awake and heard the swallows who lived beneath our wide eaves, disturbed by troubled dreams, twittering in their sleep. "How could it be a sad thing?"

At all events, in Eulalie's case, people seemed to think so; for, replying to some comment on the girl's exceeding beauty, I heard Miss Mary say: "It would be better for her if it were not so. Life is an easy enough thing for some women; indeed, it would be hard for them to step aside; but to others life is difficult, and of these, I fear, Eulalie will be one."

Later on I learnt that, through a train of sad misfortunes and still sadder sins, my school friend's father had made shipwreck of the chances fortune had given him. From one step of degradation to another had been an easy descent, and at last he had perished miserably by his own hand. Her mother, weak in health at all times, succumbed under this heavy load of trial; and thus my pretty Eulalie was left strangely alone in the world. Ever ready to help and comfort those in adversity, those three dear sisters, the joint mistresses of Summerfield, offered her the advantages of studying under their roof, in lieu of what aid she could give with the little ones of the household. More than this, between them they supplied her with

sundry luxuries, in the way of dress, that her slender purse could ill have afforded.

"We are glad to be able to help the dear child," I heard Miss Jane say to the vicar; "for her mother was once kind to poor, dear Charley."

The vicar only screwed up his mouth, and said, looking so like Polly, with his head held all on one side, "Just so," by way of reply. And I remember that I thought he might have been more expansive with advantage.

My letters home at this period of my life were like some song with an ever-recurring refrain of "Eulalie, Eulalie, Eulalie!"

When my birthday came round, papa sent me a dear little cross of massed turquoises, upon a gold chain of the finest workmanship.

"My cross is lovely," I wrote; "I send you a thousand kisses for it; but I should like it better if Eulalie had one too."

A day or two later the Misses Sylvester had a small and select tea-drinking, and there, to my unspeakable delight, was Eulalie, her slender throat encircled by a cross and chain so like my own, they could not be distinguished the one from the other when laid side by side.

Miss Theodosia, apparelled in a costume of scant proportions and mortified tint, gave a sort of snort through her long nose as she saw our dual ornaments.

"I believe, if she tried, she could trumpet through that nose of hers like the elephants do through their trunks," said I to my friend, as I stood, flushed and indignant, in the dormitory afterwards.

Eulalie sat on the edge of her bed in her pure white dress, looking, I thought, like a saint. She was not angry with Miss Theodosia in my hot, indignant, outspoken fashion; she only smiled as her pretty hand toyed with my gift, and raising two soft sweet eyes to mine, she brought calm common-sense to bear upon my unseemly warmth.

"What does it matter what she does, Nell, so long as she can't take our crosses and chains from us?"

Her placid gentleness so reproved me, that, mentally, I prostrated myself anew before her little slippered feet, and felt as though one of them might well be set upon my neck.

"How will she ever get through the world, poor, sweet, gentle Eulalie?" I thought,

as I unclasped my chain, kissed the cross for the giver's sake, and laid it in its velvet bed.

But in time to come I learned that there are other ways of opening that oyster, the world, than by main force; and that, by virtue of her very gentleness, Eulalie could mould others to her will far more certainly than I, with my headlong impulses and ready tongue.

That was not the only lesson either that the stern schoolmaster, Time, was to teach me. If anyone had told me in the days upon which I am now dwelling, that because I was a baronet's daughter, because I had wealth, position, and influence, the friend I loved set me one step higher in her estimation than otherwise she would have done, I should have scorned such base insinuations, and flung them back in the speaker's face with my wonted candour. Well, well, I am not the only mortal that has made an idol but to "find it clay."

Soon a golden day would dawn for me again. Not that all my days were not more or less glad and happy; but the occasions of papa's visits to Summerfield stood out in shining relief against the rest.

This next visit, too, was to be a memorable one; for had I not my new idol to display in all its loveliness before his wondering and delighted eyes? The night before he came I could not sleep for joy; a while I lay awake, wide-eyed, looking into the soft gloom of the summer night; then, setting school rules at defiance, I slipped from my bed, stole into the dormitory next to mine, and perched myself, like a little white owl, on Eulalie's.

She was fast asleep, the long dark lashes resting on her cheek, and a smile upon her mouth that made it look like an opening rose. How much I wanted to say to her! Half the happiness of pleasure is in anticipation—half the happiness of anticipation is in someone's sympathy in it; but I could not find it in my heart to rouse my friend from her calm and placid rest. Somehow, why or wherefore it was hard to say, I let myself glide gently to my knees, laid my hands palm to palm, as Miss Mary had taught me long ago, and—prayed.

Prayed for what? That Heaven would watch over Eulalie, and make the life that I heard it said would be full of difficulties, a happy one.

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VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. MAKING THE BEST OF IT.

WHEN dinner was over the captain went off to smoke his cigar in the garden, and this Vixen thought a good time for making her escape.

"I should like to take a walk with my dog, if you will excuse me, Miss Skipwith," she said politely.

"My dear, you must consider yourself at liberty to employ and amuse yourself as you please, of course always keeping strictly within the bounds of propriety," solemnly replied the lady of the manor. "I shall not interfere with your freedom. My own studies are of so grave a nature that they in a measure isolate me from my fellow-creatures, but when you require and ask for sympathy and advice, I shall be ready to give both. My library is at your service, and I hope ere long you will have found yourself some serious aim for your studies. Life without purpose is a life hardly worth living. If girls of your age could only find that out, and seek their vocation early, how much grander and nobler would be a woman's place in the universe. But, alas! my dear, the common aim of girlhood seems to be to look pretty and to get married."

"I have made up my mind never to marry," said Violet, with a smile that was half sad, half cynical; "so there at least you may approve of me, Miss Skipwith."

"My nephew tells me that you refused an excellent offer from an Irish peer."

"I would not have done the Irish peer so great a wrong as to have married him without loving him."

"I admire your honourable feeling," said Miss Skipwith, with solemn approval. "I, too, might have married, but the man towards whom my heart most inclined was a man of no family. I could not marry a man without family. I am weak enough to be prouder of my pedigree than other women are of beauty and fortune. I am the last of the Skipwiths, and I have done nothing to degrade my race. The family name and the family pride will die with me. There was a time when a Skipwith owned a third of the island. Our estate has dwindled to the garden and meadows that surround this old house; our family has shrunk into one old woman; but if I can make the name of Skipwith famous before I go down to my grave, I shall not have lived and laboured in vain."

Vixen felt a thrill of pity as she listened to this brief confession of a self-deluded solitary soul, which had built its house upon sand, as hopefully as if the foundations were solidest rock. The line of demarcation between such fanaticism as Miss Skipwith's, and the hallucination of an old lady in Bedlam who fancies herself Queen Victoria, seemed to Vixen but a hair's breadth. But, after all, if the old lady and Miss Skipwith were both happy in their harmless self-deceptions, why should one pity them? The creature to be pitied is the man or woman who keenly sees and feels the hard realities of life, and cannot take pleasure in phantoms.

Vixen ran off to her room to get her hat and gloves, delighted to find herself free. Miss Skipwith was not such a very bad sort of person, after all, perhaps. Liberty to roam about the island with her dog Vixen esteemed a great boon. She would be able to think about her troubles,

unmolested by inquisitive looks or unwelcome sympathy.

She went down to the court-yard, untied the faithful Argus, and they set out together to explore the unknown, the dog in such wild spirits that it was almost impossible for Vixen to be sad. The afternoon sun was shining in all his glory, birds were singing, flickering lights and shadows playing on the grassy banks. Argus scampered up and down the lanes, and burst tumultuously through gaps in the hedges, like a dog possessed of demons.

It was a pretty little island, after all, Vixen was fain to admit. One might have fancied it a fertile corner of Devonshire that had slipped its moorings and drifted westward on a summer sea.

"If I had Arion here, and—Rorie, I think I could be almost happy," Vixen said to herself with a dreamy smile.

"And Rorie!"

Alas, poor child! faintly, feebly steadfast in the barren path of honour; where could she not have been happy with the one only love of her youth? Was there ever a spot of land or sea where she could not have been happy with Roderick Vawdrey?

Poor Rorie! She knew how well she loved him, now that the wide sea rolled between them; now that she had said him nay, denied her love, and parted from him for ever.

She thought of that scene in the pine-wood, dimly lit by the young moon. She lived again those marvellous moments—the concentrated bliss and pain of a lifetime. She felt again the strong grasp of his hands, his breath upon her cheek, as he bent over her shoulder. Again she heard him pleading for the life-long union her soul desired as the most exquisite happiness life could give.

I had not loved thee, dear, so well
Loved I not honour more.

Those two familiar lines flashed into her mind as she thought of her lover. To have degraded herself, to have dishonoured him; no, it would have been too dreadful! Were he to plead again she must answer again as she had answered before.

She wandered on, following the winding lanes, careless where she went, and determined to take advantage of her liberty. She met few people, and of those she did not trouble herself to ask her way.

"If I lose myself on my desert island it can't much matter," she thought. "There

is no one to be anxious about me. Miss Skipwith will be deep in her universal creed, and Captain Winstanley would be very glad for me to be lost. My death would leave him master for life of the Abbey House and all belonging to it."

She roamed on till she came to the open sea-shore; a pretty little harbour surrounded with quaint-looking houses; two or three white villas in fertile gardens, on a raised road; and, dominating all the scene, a fine old feudal castle, with keep, battlements, drawbridge, portcullis, and all that becomes a fortress.

This was Mount Orgueil, the castle in which Charles Stuart spent a short period of his life, while Cromwell was ruling by land and sea, and kingly hopes were at their lowest ebb. The good old fortress had suffered for its loyalty, for the Parliament sent Admiral Blake, with a fleet, to reduce the island to submission, and Mount Orgueil had not been strong enough to hold out against its assailants.

Violet went up the sloping path that led to the grim old gateway under the gloomy arch, and still upward till she came to a sunny battlemented wall above the shining sea. The prospect was more than worth the trouble. Yonder, in the dim distance, were the towers of Contance Cathedral; far away, mere spots in the blue water, were the smaller fry of the Channel Islands; below her, the yellow sands were smiling in the sun, the placid wavelets reflecting all the colour and glory of the changeful sky.

"This would not be a bad place to live in, Argus, if——"

She paused, with her arm round her dog's neck, as he stood, looking over the parapet, with a deep interest in possible rats or rabbits lurking in some cavity of the craggy cliff below. If! Ah, what a big "if" that was! It meant love and dear familiar companionship. It meant all Vixen's little world.

She lingered long. The scene was beautiful, and there was nothing to lure her home. Then, at last, feeling that her prolonged absence might give alarm, she retraced her steps, and at the foot of the craggy mount asked the nearest way to Les Tourelles.

The nearest way was altogether different from the track by which she had come, and brought her back to the old monastic gate in a little more than an hour. She opened the gate and went in. There was nothing for the most burglarious invader

to steal at Les Tourelles, and bolts and locks were rarely used. Miss Skipwith was reading in her parlour, a white Persian cat dozing on a cushioned arm-chair beside her, some cups and saucers and a black teapot on a tray before her, and the rest of the table piled with books. There was no sign of Captain Winstanley.

"I'm afraid I'm rather late," Vixen said apologetically.

She felt a kind of half-pitying respect for Miss Skipwith, as a harmless lunatic.

"My dear, I daresay that, as an absolute fact, you are late," answered the lady of the manor, without looking up from her book; "but as time is never too long for me, I have been hardly conscious of the delay. Your step-father has gone down to the club at St. Helier's to see some of his old acquaintance. Perhaps you would like a cup of tea?"

Vixen replied that she would very much like some tea, whereupon Miss Skipwith poured out a weak and tepid infusion, against which the girl inwardly protested.

"If I am to exist at Les Tourelles, I must at least have decent tea," she said to herself. "I must buy an occasional pound for my own consumption, make friends with Mrs. Doddery, and get her to brew it for me."

And then Vixen knelt down by the arm-chair and tried to get upon intimate terms with the Persian. He was a serious-minded animal, and seemed inclined to resent her advances, so she left him in peace on his patchwork cushion, a relic of those earlier days when Miss Skipwith had squandered her precious hours on the feminine inanity of needlework.

Vixen went to her room soon after dark, and thus avoided the captain. She was worn out with the fatigue of the voyage, her long ramble, the painful thoughts and manifold agitations of the last two days. She set her candle on the dressing-table, and looked round the bare empty room, feeling as if she were in a dream. It was all strange, and unhomely, and comfortless; like one of those wild dream-pictures which seem so appallingly real in their hideous unreality.

"And I am to live here indefinitely—for the next six years, perhaps, until I come of age and am my own mistress. It is too dreadful!"

She went to bed and slept a deep and comforting sleep, for very weariness: and she dreamt that she was walking on the battlements of Mount Orgueil, in the drowsy afternoon sunlight, with Charles

Stuart; and the face of the royal exile was the face of Roderick Vawdrey, and the hand that held hers as they two stood side by side in the sunshine was the broad strong hand of her girlhood's friend.

When she went downstairs next morning she found Miss Skipwith pacing slowly to and fro the terrace in front of the drawing-room windows, conning over the pencil notes of her yesterday's studies.

"Your step-father has been gone half an hour, my dear," said the lady of the manor. "He was very sorry to have to go without wishing you good-bye."

CHAPTER XXXIX. CHIEFLY FINANCIAL.

VIOLET was gone. Her rooms were empty; her faithful little waiting-maid was dismissed; her dog's deep-toned thunder no longer sounded through the house, baying joyous welcome when his mistress came down for her early morning ramble in the shrubberies. Arion had been sent to grass. Nothing associated with the exiled heiress was left, except the rooms she had inhabited; and even they looked blank and empty and strange without her. It was almost as if a whole family had departed. Vixen's presence seemed to have filled the house with youth and freshness, and free joyous life. Without her all was silent as the grave.

Mrs. Winstanley missed her daughter sorely. She had been wont to complain fretfully of the girl's exuberance; but the blank her absence made struck a chill to the mother's heart. She had fancied that life would be easier without Violet; that her union with her husband would be more complete; and now she found herself looking wistfully towards the door of her morning-room, listening vaguely for a footstep; and the figure she looked for at the door, and the footsteps she listened for in the corridor, were not Conrad Winstanley's. It was the buoyant step of her daughter she missed; it was the bright face of her daughter she yearned for.

One day the captain surprised her in tears, and asked the reason of her melancholy.

"I daresay it's very weak of me, Conrad," she said piteously, "but I miss Violet more and more every day."

"It is uncommonly weak of you," answered the captain with agreeable candour, "but I suppose it's natural. People generally get attached to their worries; and as your daughter was an incessant worry, you very naturally lament

her absence. I am honest enough to confess that I am very glad she is gone. We had no peace while she was with us."

"But she is not to stay away for ever, Conrad. I cannot be separated from my only daughter for ever. That would be too dreadful."

"'For ever' is a long word," answered the captain coolly. "She will come back to us—of course."

"When, dear?"

"When she is older and wiser."

This was cold comfort. Mrs. Winstanley dried her tears, and resumed her crewel-work. The interesting variety of shades in green which modern art has discovered were a source of comfort to the mother's troubled mind. Pamela found in her crewel-work an all-absorbing labour. Matilda of Normandy could hardly have toiled more industriously at the Bayeux Tapestry than did Mrs. Winstanley, in the effort to immortalise the fleeting glories of woodland blossom or costly orchid upon kitchen towelling.

It was a dull and lonely life which the mistress of the Abbey House led in these latter days of glowing summer weather; and perhaps it was only the distractions of crewels and point-lace which preserved her from melancholy madness. The captain had been too long a bachelor to renounce the agreeable habits of a bachelor's existence. His amusements were all masculine, and more or less solitary. When there was no hunting, he gave himself up to fishing, and found his chief delight in the persecution of innocent salmon. He supplied the Abbey House larder with fish, sent an occasional basket to a friend, and despatched the surplus produce of his rod to a fishmonger in London. He was an enthusiast at billiards, and would play with innocent Mr. Scobel rather than not play at all. He read every newspaper and periodical of mark that was published. He rode a good deal, and drove not a little in a high-wheeled dog-cart; quite an impossible vehicle for a lady. He transacted all the business of house, stable, gardens, and home-farm, and that in the most precise and punctual manner. He wrote a good many letters, and he smoked six or seven cigars every day. It must be obvious, therefore, that he had very little time to devote to his pretty middle-aged wife, whose languid airs and vapourish graces were likely to pall upon an ardent temper after a year of married life. Yet, though she found her days lonely, Mrs.

Winstanley had no ground for complaint. What fault could a woman find in a husband who was always courteous and complimentary in his speech, whose domestic tastes were obvious, who thought it no trouble to supervise the smallest details of the household, who could order a dinner, lay out a garden, stock a conservatory, or amend the sanitary arrangements of a stable with equal cleverness; who never neglected a duty towards wife or society?

Mrs. Winstanley could see no flaw in her husband's character; but it began about this time slowly to dawn upon her languid soul that, as Captain Winstanley's wife, she was not so happy as she had been as Squire Tempest's widow.

Her independence was gone utterly. She awoke slowly to the comprehension of that fact. She had no more power or influence in her own house, than the lowest scullion in her kitchen. She had given up her banking account, and the receipt of her rents, which in the days of her widowhood had been remitted to her half-yearly by the solicitor who collected them. Captain Winstanley had taken upon himself the stewardship of his wife's income. She had been inclined to cling to her cheque-book and her banking account at Southampton; but the captain had persuaded her of the folly of such an arrangement.

"Why two balances and two accounts, when one will do?" he argued. "You have only to ask me for a cheque when you want it, or to give me your bills?"

Whereupon the bride of six weeks had yielded graciously, and the balance had been transferred from the Southampton bank to Captain Winstanley's account at the Union.

But now, with Theodore's unsettled account of four years' standing hanging over her head by the single hair of the penny post, and likely to descend upon her any morning, Mrs. Winstanley regretted her surrendered banking account, with its balance of eleven hundred pounds or so. The captain had managed everything with wondrous wisdom, no doubt. He had done away with all long credits. He paid all his bills on the first Saturday in the month, save such as could be paid weekly. He had reduced the price of almost everything supplied to the Abbey House, from the stable provender to the wax candles that lighted the faded sea-green draperies and white panelling of the drawing-room. The only expenditure over which he had no control was his wife's private disbursement; but he had a habit of looking sur-

prised when she asked him for a cheque, and a business-like way of asking the amount required, which prevented her applying to him often. Still, there was that long-standing account of Madame Theodore's in the background, and Mrs. Winstanley felt that it was an account which must be settled sooner or later. Her disinclination to ask her husband for money had tended to swell Theodore's bill. She had bought gloves, ribbons, shoes, everything from that tasteful purveyor, and had even obtained the materials for her fancy work through Madame Theodore; a temporary convenience which she could hardly hope to enjoy gratis.

Like all weak women she had her occasional longings for independence, her moments of inward revolt against the smooth tyrant. The income was hers, she argued with herself sometimes, and she had a right to spend her own money as she pleased. But then she recalled her husband's grave warnings about the future and its insecurity. She had but a brief lease of her present wealth, and he was labouring to lay by a provision for the days to come.

"It would be wicked of me to thwart him in such a wise purpose," she told herself.

The restriction of her charities pained Pamela not a little. To give to all who asked her had been the one unselfish pleasure of her narrow soul. She had been imposed upon, of course; had in some wise encouraged idleness and improvident living; but she had been the comforter of many a weary heart, the benefactor of many a patient, care-oppressed mother, the raiser-up of many a sickly child drooping on its bed of pain.

Now, under the captain's rule, she had the pleasure of seeing her name honourably recorded in the subscription list of every local charity: but her hand was no longer open to the surrounding poor, her good old Saxon name of Lady had lost its ancient significance. She was no longer the giver of bread to the hungry. She sighed and submitted, acknowledging her husband's superior wisdom.

"You would not like to live in a semi-detached villa on the Southampton Road, would you, my dear Pamela?" asked the captain.

"I might die in a semi-detached house, Conrad. I'm sure I could not live in one," she exclaimed piteously.

"Then, my love, we must make a tremendous effort, and save all we can before

your daughter comes of age, or else we shall assuredly have to leave the Abbey House. We might go abroad certainly, and live at Dinan, or some quiet old French town where provisions are cheap."

"My dear Conrad, I could not exist in one of those old French towns, smelling perpetually of cabbage-soup."

"Then, my dear love, we must exercise the strictest economy, or life will be impossible six years hence."

Pamela sighed and assented, with a sinking of her heart. To her mind this word economy was absolutely the most odious in the English language. Her life was made up of trifles; and they were all expensive trifles. She liked to be better dressed than any woman of her acquaintance. She liked to surround herself with pretty things; and the prettiness must take the most fashionable form, and be frequently renewed. She had dim ideas which she considered æsthetic, and which involved a good deal of shifting and improving of furniture.

Against all these expensive follies Captain Winstanley set his face sternly, using pretty words to his wife at all times, but proving himself as hard as rock when she tried to bend him to her will. He had not yet interfered with her toilet, for he had yet to learn what that cost.

This knowledge came upon him like a thunder-clap one sultry morning in July—real thunder impending in the metallic-tinted sky—about a month after Vixen's departure.

Theodore's long-expected bill was among the letters in the morning's bag—a bulky envelope which the captain handed to his wife with his usual politeness. He never opened her letters, but he invariably asked to see them, and she always handed her correspondence over to him with a child-like meekness. To-day she was slow to hand the captain her letter. She sat looking at the long list of items with a clouded brow, and forgot to pour out her husband's coffee in the abstraction of a troubled mind.

"I'm afraid your letters of this morning are not of a very pleasant character, my love," said the captain, watchful of his wife's clouded countenance. "Is that a bill you are examining? I thought we paid ready money for everything."

"It is my dressmaker's bill," faltered Mrs. Winstanley.

"A dressmaker's bill! That can't be very alarming. You look as awful, and

the document looks as voluminous, as if it were a lawyer's bill. Let me have the account, dear, and I'll send a cheque next Saturday."

He held out his hand for the paper, but Pamela did not give it to him.

"I'm afraid you'll think it awfully high, Conrad," she said, in a deprecating tone. "You see it has been running a long time—since the Christmas before dear Edward's death, in fact. I have paid Theodore sums on account, but those seem to go for very little against the total of her bill. She is expensive, of course. All West End milliners are; but her style is undeniable, and she is in direct association with Worth."

"My dear Pamela, I did not ask you for her biography, I asked only for her bill. Pray let me see the total, and tell me if you have any objections to make against the items."

"No," sighed Mrs. Winstanley, bending over the document with a perplexed brow; "I believe—indeed, I am sure—I have had all the things. Many of them are dearer than I expected; but one has to pay for style and originality. I hope you won't be vexed at having to write so large a cheque, Conrad, at a time when you are so anxious to save money. Next year I shall try my best to economise."

"My dearest Pamela, why beat about the bush? The bill must be paid, whatever its amount. I suppose a hundred pounds will cover it?"

"Oh, Conrad, when many women give a hundred pounds for a single dress!"

"When they do I should say that Bedlam must be their natural and fitting abode," retorted the captain, with suppressed ire. "The bill is more than a hundred then? Pray give it me, Pamela, and make an end of this foolishness."

This time Captain Winstanley went over to his wife, and took the paper out of her hand. He had not seen the total, but he was white with rage already. He had made up his mind to squeeze a small fortune out of the Abbey House estate during his brief lease of the property: and here was this foolish wife of his squandering hundreds upon finery.

"Be kind enough to pour me out a cup of coffee," he said, resuming his seat, and deliberately spreading out the bill.

"Great Heaven!" he cried, after a glance at the total. "This is too preposterous. The woman must be mad."

The total was seventeen hundred and sixty-four pounds, fourteen and sixpence.

Mrs. Winstanley's payments on account amounted to four hundred pounds; leaving a balance of thirteen hundred and sixty-four pounds for the captain to liquidate.

"Indeed, dear Conrad, it is not such a very tremendous account," pleaded Pamela, appalled by the expression of her husband's face. "Theodore has customers who spend two thousand a year with her."

"Very laudable extravagance, if they are the wives of millionaires, and have silver-mines, or cotton-mills, or oil-wells to maintain them. But that the widow of a Hampshire squire, a lady who six years hence will have to exist upon a pittance, should run up such a bill as this, is to my mind an act of folly that is almost criminal. From this moment I abandon all my ideas of nursing your estate, of providing comfortably for our future. Henceforward we must drift towards insolvency, like other people. It would be worse than useless for me to go on racking my brains in the endeavour to secure a given result, when behind my back your thoughtless extravagance is stultifying all my efforts."

Here Mrs. Winstanley dissolved into tears.

"Oh, Conrad! How can you say such cruel things?" she sobbed. "I go behind your back! I stultify you! When I have allowed myself to be ruled in everything! When I have even parted with my only child to please you!"

"Not till your only child had tried to set the house on fire."

"Indeed, Conrad, you are mistaken there. She never meant it."

"I know nothing about her meaning," said the captain moodily. "She did it."

"It is too cruel, after all my sacrifices, that I should be called extravagant—and foolish—and criminal. I have only dressed as a lady ought to dress—out of mere self-respect. Dear Edward always liked to see me look nice. He never said an unkind word about my bills. It is a sad—sad change for me."

"Your future will be a sadder change, if you go on in the way you are going," retorted the captain. "Let me see: your income, after Violet comes of age, is to be fifteen hundred a year. You have been spending six hundred a year upon millinery. That leaves nine hundred for everything else—stable, garden, coals, taxes, servants' wages, wine—to say nothing of such trifling claims as butcher and baker, and the rest of it. You will have to manage with wonderful cleverness to make both ends meet."

"I am sure I would sacrifice anything rather than live unhappily with you, Conrad," Mrs. Winstanley murmured piteously, drinking much strong tea in her agitation, the cup shaking in her white weak hand. "Nothing could be so dreadful to me as to live on bad terms with you. I have surrendered so much for your love, Conrad. What would become of me, if I lost that? I will give up dealing with Theodore, if you like—though it will be a hard trial, after she has worked for me so many years, and has studied my style, and knows exactly what suits me. I will dress ever so plainly, and even have my gowns made by a Southampton dressmaker, though that will be too dreadful. You will hardly recognise me. But I will do anything, anything, Conrad, rather than hear you speak cruelly."

She went over to him and laid her hand tremulously on his shoulder, and looked down at him with piteous, pleading eyes. No Circassian slave, afraid of bowstring and sack, could have entreated her master's clemency with deeper self-abasement.

Even Conrad Winstanley's hard nature was touched by the piteousness of her look and tone. He took the hand gently and raised it to his lips.

"I don't mean to be cruel, Pamela," he said. "I only want you to face the truth, and to understand your future position. It is your own money you are squandering, and you have a right to waste it, if it pleases you to do so. But it is a little hard for a man who has laboured and schemed for a given result, suddenly to find himself out in his calculations by so much as thirteen hundred and sixty-four pounds. Let us say no more about it, my dear. Here is the bill, and it must be paid. We have only to consider the items, and see if the prices are reasonable."

And then the captain, with bent brow and serious aspect, began to read the lengthy record of an English lady's folly. Most of the items he passed over in silence, or with only a sigh, keeping his wife by his side, looking over his shoulder.

"Point out anything that is wrong," he said; but as yet Mrs. Winstanley had found no error in the bill.

Sometimes there came an item which moved the captain to speech. "A dinner-dress, pain brûlé brocade, mixed poulte de soie, manteau de cour, lined ivory satin, trimmed with hand-worked embroidery of wild flowers on Brussels net, sixty-three pounds.

"What in the name of all that's reasonable is pain brûlé?" asked the captain impatiently.

"It's the colour, Conrad. One of those delicate tertiaries that have been so much worn lately."

"Sixty guineas for a dinner-dress? That's rather stiff. Do you know that a suit of dress-clothes costs me nine pounds and lasts almost as many years?"

"My dear Conrad, for a man it is so different. No one looks at your clothes. That dress was for Lady Ellangowan's dinner. You made me very happy that night, for you told me I was the best-dressed woman in the room."

"I should not have been very happy myself if I had known the cost of your gown," answered the captain grimly. "Fifteen guineas for a Honiton fichu!" he cried presently. "What in mercy's name is a fichu? It sounds like a sneeze."

"It is a little half-handkerchief I wear to brighten a dark silk dress when we dine alone, Conrad. You know you have always said that lace harmonises a woman's dress, and gives a softness to the complexion and contour."

"I shall be very careful what I say in future," muttered the captain, as he went on with the bill. "French cambric peignoir, trimmed real Valenciennes, turquoise ribbon, nineteen guineas," he read presently. "Surely you would never give twenty pounds for the gown you wear when you are having your hair dressed?"

"That is only the name, dear. It is really a breakfast-dress. You know you always like to see me in white of a morning."

The captain groaned and said nothing.

"Come," he said, by-and-by, "this surely must be a mistake. 'Shooting-dress, superfine silk corduroy, trimmed and lined with cardinal poulte de soie, oxydised silver buttons, engraved hunting subjects, twenty-seven guineas.' Thank Heaven you are not one of those masculine women who go out shooting, and jump over five-barred gates."

"The dress is quite right, dear, though I don't shoot. Theodore sent it me for a walking-dress, and I have worn it often when we have walked in the Forest. You thought it very stylish and becoming, though just a little fast."

"I see," said the captain, with a weary air; "your not shooting does not hinder your having shooting-dresses. Are there any fishing-costumes, or riding-habits, in the bill?"

"No, dear. It was Theodore's own idea to send me the corduroy dress. She thought it so new and recherché, and even the duchess admired it. Mine was the first she had ever seen."

"That was a triumph worth twenty-seven guineas, no doubt," sighed the captain. "Well, I suppose there is no more to be said. The bill to me appears iniquitous. If you were a duchess or a millionaire's wife, of course it would be different. I am no Puritan. But when a woman dresses beyond her means—above her social position—I regret the wise old sumptuary laws which regulated these things, in the days when a fur coat was a sign of nobility. If you only knew, Pamela, how useless this expensive finery is, how little it adds to your social status, how little it enhances your beauty! Why, the finest gown this Madame Theodore ever made cannot hide one of your wrinkles."

"My wrinkles!" cried Pamela, sorely wounded. "That is the first time I ever heard of them. To think that my husband should be the first to tell me I am getting an old woman! But I forgot, you are younger than I, and I daresay in your eyes I seem quite old."

"My dear Pamela, be reasonable. Can a woman's forehead at forty be quite as smooth as it was at twenty? However handsome a woman is at that age—and to my mind it is almost the best age for beauty, just as the ripe rich colouring of a peach is lovelier than the poor little pale blossom that preceded it—however attractive a middle-aged woman may be there must be some traces to show that she has lived half her life; and to suppose that pain brûlé brocade, and hand-worked embroidery, can obliterate those, is extreme folly. Dress in rich and dark velvets, and old point-lace that has been twenty years in your possession, and you will be as beautiful and as interesting as a portrait by one of the old Venetian masters. Can Theodore's highest art make you better than that? Remember that excellent advice of old Polonius's:

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not expressed in fancy.

It is the fancy that swells your milliner's bill, the newly-invented trimmings, the complex and laborious combinations."

"I will be dreadfully economical in future, Conrad. For the last year I have dressed to please you."

"But what becomes of all these gowns?"

asked the captain, folding up the bill; "what do you do with them?"

"They go out."

"Out where? To the colonies?"

"No, dear; they go out of fashion; and I give them to Pauline."

"A sixty-guinea dress flung to your waiting-maid! The Duchess of Dovedale could not do things in better style."

"I should be very sorry not to dress better than the duchess," said Mrs. Winstanley; "she is always hideously dowdy. But a duchess can afford to dress as badly as she likes."

"I see. Then it is we only, who occupy the border-land of society, who have to be careful. Well, my dear Pamela, I shall send Madame Theodore her cheque, and with your permission close her account; and unless you receive some large accession of fortune, I should recommend you not to reopen it."

His wife gave a heart-breaking sigh.

"I would sacrifice anything for your sake, Conrad," she said, "but I shall be a perfect horror, and you will hate me."

"I fell in love with you, my dear, not with your gown."

"But you fell in love with me in my gown, dear; and you don't know how different your feelings might have been if you had seen me in a gown cut by a country dressmaker."

MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE THIRTY YEARS AGO.

THIRTY-SIX years ago a school was founded in a Wiltshire valley, for the purpose of educating the sons of clergymen at the moderate expense of thirty-five pounds* per annum.

After some singular vicissitudes it has, by the ability of successive head-masters, attained a high position amongst the public schools of the country, and the men who were educated there form a numerous society which looks back to the rambling and cumbrous pile of brick-work by the banks of the Kennet, as an Etonian looks back to Eton, or a Wykehamist to Winchester.

I witnessed its birth and infancy, its early struggles, and the rebellion by which its existence was once endangered.

The school was opened in August, 1843.

When the day arrived, numbers of the clergy collected their boys and took the road

* The charge is now nearly double that sum.

to Wiltshire, travelling, sometimes singly, more often by twos or threes for mutual comfort and assistance, the country parson of that day being, unlike his modern brethren, a simple, untravelling man, and many of them having a great fear and dislike of the newly invented railways.

The point to which all these parties converged was Swindon, whence a Roman road led across the downs to Marlborough, a distance of twelve miles.

The station of Swindon was then considered one of the wonders of the world, but Swindon itself was not a town, but only a large village, and its supply of vehicles was quite unequal to the wants of this unexpected invasion.

The rain was pouring in torrents, but the clergy were not to be easily baffled.

All that the village possessed was produced, one or two flys, a mourning-coach, a decrepit post-chaise, a thing called a pill-box, entered from behind, and sundry gigs, together with a strange variety of quadrupeds, including a mule.

By some means everyone was furnished with a seat, and one after another the motley line of vehicles went splashing along the chalky causeway, that once echoed to the tramp of Agricola's infantry.

Accustomed to a fertile county, I remember being struck and depressed by the desolation of the landscape—the barren downs, without house or hedgerow or any sign of life, rolling in grey monotony to the horizon—the straight white road going on and on interminably over hill and valley with no apparent goal—the sombre pine-copses looming large and mysterious through the driving mist.

At length this dreary region was past, and we clattered into the broad street of a little ancient town, and at its western end, turning sharply to the left through a gateway, drove between two long grass-plots, and drew up at the portals of a large mansion.

A flight of stone steps led down from the opposite side of the edifice to an antique bowling-green, enclosed by a bank of mossy turf, on the top of which grew a high fence of gloomy yew trees, cut into pinnacles like pepper-pots.

Beyond, or rather to the right of the bowling-green, was a garden made in the earlier half of the eighteenth century, and still retaining the fashion of its childhood. A long terrace, bordered by prim rectangular flower-beds, and terminating in an artificial ruin, looked down on a straight

and formal canal, on the other side of which a grove of lofty limes and poplars rose out of the thickets of a wilderness, and a huge Druidic mound reared its eccentric cone crowned with waving foliage, and ascended by a spiral walk which wound imperceptibly to the summit. The mound and wilderness were surrounded by a moat, half of which crept sluggishly through a jungle of reeds and rushes, whilst the other half meandered amongst strawberry-beds and cabbages, and was overhung by apple-trees.

The mansion itself was spacious and gloomy, built of dull red-grey brick, with tall heavy chimneys, and large prominent dormer windows.

It consisted of a central part, with a stone portico and two corresponding wings. The rooms, of which many were panelled, were numerous, but not large, and the most dignified feature of the interior was the principal staircase, which was wide, ample, and oaken. The house, which dated from the days of the Stuarts, had been built after the designs of Inigo Jones, and having been first the country residence of a nobleman, and afterwards an inn, was now about to enter upon a third and more distinguished career.

Many of its new tenants were in occupation when I arrived. Boys were passing in and out, or loitering about the portico; boys' faces looked from the windows, and their boots clattered up and down the stairs and along the passages, while the buzz of their voices was everywhere.

We were a unique assemblage. Most of us saw each other for the first time, and we came from widely distant quarters. Every English county had its representative, and the sister island mustered strongly. There was a boy from Lydd, and a boy from Castlebar; Britons from the Land's End, and Cumbrians from the mists of Skiddaw; the Londoner confronted the Welsh mountaineer, and the East Anglian listened with astonishment to the brogue of Ulster.

Our appearance was picturesque, as we were not restricted to any particular dress, and many of us came from remote places where the fashions of the day were unknown, or regarded with pious abhorrence. Wide collars falling to the shoulders and terminating in a large frill; caps made of horsehair, bulging out like air-cushions, or sticking up in whale-bone pinnacles; pantaloons of glaring colours lent variety

to the crowd. One poor boy entered the arena in a white beaver hat!

The masters easily mapped us out into forms and removes, according to our knowledge of Latin and Greek—mathematics were held in very little estimation—and peculiar authority was given to those who were placed in the sixth or highest form. They were called prefects, and their powers were to be exercised over the lower boys, "for the sake of securing a regular government amongst the boys themselves, and avoiding the evils of anarchy, in other words, of the lawless tyranny of physical strength."

This neat fabric was soon exposed to a rude assault.

Whilst the masters were arranging us according to their notions of order, we, according to ours, were settling our places in the new community. As we were ignorant of each other, and there were no traditions or reputations to guide us, nor any peaceful form of examination, we were often obliged to have recourse to the test of battle. By this means we gradually became acquainted with each other, and after a short time it was clear that the supremacy rested between two boys of great strength and toughness, one of whom afterwards became a distinguished sailor, and the other a successful London attorney. These heroes soon came into collision, and a fight took place on a lawn (which has long since disappeared) in front of the eastern wing of the mansion.

The attorney won, and then, in company with his former antagonist, proceeded to thrash the prefects. They had got some way with their task when the head-master was told of the treatment to which his Brahmins were exposed, and the culprits, taken red-handed, received a tremendous public castigation, prefaced by a speech from the master, in which he explained the enormity, and even profaneness, of their offence.

Our cricket-club slowly emerged from a chaos of discordant elements: our first chief was a broad-shouldered, good-humoured boy, round whom most of us rallied, but he had no easy task, and no undisputed throne. The crowd of aspirants was very great, and his judgments were not always accepted. An Irish boy opened a sort of Cave of Adullam, and gathered about him all the discontented spirits. Another boy, a native of Devonshire, was so loquacious and argumentative, and had so little notion of subordination, that no

one could act with him. He also drew aside, and revolved in his private orbit, forming a club for himself of such boys as were willing to render him implicit and unquestioning obedience. For some years there were several rival clubs in the school, until at last the fittest survived.

There were other obstacles to the success of our games. No one could be compelled to play, and many preferred to explore the neighbouring country, over which we were allowed to wander with almost unlimited freedom.

The scenery about Marlborough is attractive even to a boy.

In the valley below the college the Kennet winds its way through a long succession of meadows. At intervals the stream is spanned by picturesque water-mills, or flows past a Wiltshire hamlet—a collection of white thatched cottages and farms, with a parsonage-house, some tall trees and a rookery, clustering round a low grey church tower. Trout abound; the reedy islets and willow-beds give shelter to moor-hens, sedge-warblers, and kingfishers; and the dabchicks' slovenly nests float amongst the water-weeds. On either side of the valley the ground swells upward to an extensive table-land, which is cultivated for a short distance, and then come the wide bleak undulations of the downs, a wild and interesting region which remains in its primeval state, except for the vestiges of humanity which still mark its surface: grey mysterious stones dotting the valleys mile after mile like reposing flocks; huge white horses engraven on the chalky sides of the hills; cromlechs, barrows, mounds, dykes, and ramparts, the relics of extinct creeds, forgotten warriors, and unrecorded wars.

The view from the playing-fields extends over the roofs and church towers of the town, and is bounded towards the south-east by the green hills which slope upward to the beech forest of Savernake. This sylvan territory stretches for many miles, alternate forest, glade, and thicket, intersected by avenues, the principal one traversing the whole distance with its green and lofty arcade. There is a numerous wild population of fallow deer, hares, rabbits, and squirrels; hawks, crows, magpies, jays, starlings, and wood-peckers; and in the remote depths abyer creatures, such as the badger and the ring-ouzel, find a home, or the intruder is liable to be frightened by a red stag suddenly and fiercely lifting his antlered head from the fern.

The freedom we enjoyed often brought us into contact with the rustic population. The Wiltshire peasant, especially in the secluded villages of the downs, is rough and uncouth. He speaks a dialect which is very broad, and sometimes unintelligible to a stranger, and his wife works in the fields with a large hoe, attired in a great coat and gaiters, so that it is often difficult to distinguish the sexes.

Nevertheless, we were at first on very friendly terms with this primitive people, and did not find them inhospitable or unkindly, except when exasperated by the taunt of "moonraker,"* which they could not bear.

Unfortunately, this good feeling did not last long, and gradually there arose in its place a mutual animosity which often led to serious and unseemly conflicts. On one occasion some drovers, on their way to Pewsey market, met a party of boys. Words passed between them, and from words they came to blows. The drovers fought with great fury, using their sticks and whips, and any weapon they could seize; but they were beaten off, and so severely mauled that they determined to prosecute their assailants, and obtained permission from the head-master to come to the college and identify them. Accordingly, one day whilst we were at dinner, two ghastly figures entered the hall, and were led round the tables with grave solemnity by our fat butler. Their faces were wofully discoloured, and their noses and foreheads plastered with horizontal stripes. After a very long and careful scrutiny, they selected the largest boy in the school, and swore to him as one of the culprits. He was a very peaceful boy, and was well known to have been far from the scene of action.

Our first head master had been a tutor of repute at Cambridge, and afterwards the successful master of a private school. He was a good scholar, and had abundance of wit, but he was not qualified to mould the destiny of a new public school. He ruled us with severity; we trembled at his slightest word; we fled at the rustle of his cassock; but, by degrees, a spirit of discontent arose. His views were narrow; he offended our dignity; and as we became more unruly, he became more despotic.

At length the chain, stretched too

tightly, snapped. An old man, who gained his livelihood by the sale of chips, appeared one day before the college authorities, and asserted that on the previous afternoon he was returning from the village of Ogbourn St. Mary to Marlborough with his donkey, when he was met by three boys, who asked leave to ride, and being refused, took forcible possession of the animal, rode it rapidly to and fro, and at last drove it into the river, whence he extricated it with great difficulty. The leader in the outrage said his name was Lamb (this was only a stupid joke, there being no boy of that name).

The doctor summoned us all to the great school-room, repeated the peasant's story in a speech from the throne, and in peremptory tones called on the culprits to surrender themselves on pain of heavier punishment if they delayed.

We had been in so much awe of him that this course had generally proved successful.

But now his voice had lost its spell: no one came forward. He renewed his demand more sternly; still no one stirred; then, after waiting a few minutes, during which all continued motionless and silent, he "gated" the whole school until the offenders should be discovered.

This sweeping punishment produced a deep feeling of anger, which was not long in finding a vent.

One morning two men entered the school-room, carrying a large and heavy hamper, which they deposited at the foot of the central dais.

One of them was the porter of the college, who had also to check and report all offenders against the law, and to manufacture the birches with which we were flogged. He was a little buxom man, with a prying nose, small sharp black eyes, and eyebrows habitually elevated. We hated him. He lived in a small lodge at the college gates.

On the previous evening, which was dark and stormy, he was having tea with his wife and infant, when they were startled by a heavy crash against the door. He looked out, but was driven back by a shower of stones and brickbats, and thinking there was some design upon his life, retreated with his wife and baby into the wash-house at the rear of the premises. Meanwhile the hurricane of missiles continued, and did not cease until the door, windows, and many of the tiles were smashed, and his solitary chimney-pot shivered to atoms.

* This nickname was derived from the absurd story that a number of Wiltshire rustics once tried to rake the reflection of the moon out of a pond, thinking it was a large cheese.

When, at last, he ventured forth, all was quiet, and he had not been able to detect any of his besiegers, but had picked up most of the brickbats, and put them in a hamper, which he now produced. Such was his story.

The government was evidently perplexed; no high-handed demand was made for the submission of the offenders; frequent councils were held, and the assistant-masters and prefects patrolled the grounds after dark.

Unfortunately, the college buildings were so straggling, and extended over so large an area, that it was very difficult to guard them efficiently.

A large irregular courtyard about two hundred yards long, by a hundred broad, was bounded on three sides by buildings, and on the fourth by a tall iron railing, which separated it from the high road. The eastern side consisted of school-rooms, five-courts, corridors, cloisters, and some old structures, which had once been the stables of the inn, but were then converted into covered playgrounds.

The whole formed a labyrinth of dark nooks, abrupt angles, archways, and openings, amongst which a fugitive could very easily baffle his pursuer.

In spite of all precautions matters grew worse. Acts of outrage multiplied, fireworks (the 5th of November was near) were smuggled into the college, and a night seldom passed without an explosion, a smashing of windows, or assault on some obnoxious person.

In this emergency the assistant masters were eager to do their duty. But they were for the most part quiet studious men, and were completely out of their element in a scene of violence, in darkness amongst unseen enemies, and distracted by flying brickbats, sudden explosions, and the crash of falling glass.

At this juncture an unexpected ally came to the assistance of the authorities. A tradesman of the town, disregarding the eternal infamy that clings to a traitor, disclosed the names of the boys to whom he had sold fireworks. The chief offenders were instantly expelled, and the minor criminals strictly guarded. Deprived of its leaders, the rebellion languished, and the dreaded 5th of November passed without any outbreak.

But the flame, though burning low, was not extinct, and soon burst forth again with novel fury.

A number of boys were one evening in

the great schoolroom, when one of them, designedly or by accident, upset a master's desk. Amused at the appearance of the fallen structure, he upset a second. Other boys joined him, and a third was overturned. The appetite for destruction grew; the crowd increased; and moved along, destroying everything indiscriminately. Down went the doctor's crimson throne, forms, chairs, and desks were overturned and smashed, and the floor was soon strewn with grammars and dictionaries, and Latin and Greek classics. Emboldened by impunity the marauders flew at higher game. Adjoining the schoolroom was the head-master's classroom, a sacred chamber, replete with painful associations. In it the doctor kept his papers, including the manuscript of Sophocles which he was preparing for the press; it was the scene of the daily tribunal for the trial of all grave offences; it likewise contained the stock of birches, and the record of crimes and punishments, and was the common place of execution. The shadow of a fear hung over it, and many a boy had abandoned hope as he entered the gloomy portal.

All awe was now forgotten. The door was broken open, the detested twigs were scattered to the winds, the furniture was smashed, the records torn up, the large inkstand flung through the window, and Sophocles dragged forth and burnt.

Here the mob paused, and satiated with havoc dispersed; some of the leaders having already slunk away, frightened at the proportions to which the matter had grown.

The whole affair was over in twenty minutes, and when the alarm had been given, and the authorities came hurrying to the spot, nobody was to be seen except a few very quiet and inoffensive boys searching for their property amongst the ruins, like the peasantry of a village over which the storm of war has passed.

This outbreak opened the eyes of the governing powers to the defects of their system, and measures were now adopted, which, if taken earlier, would have prevented the mischief. No one was allowed to be abroad after dark, no large assemblages were permitted, and the boys were divided and shut off in separate classrooms, where only a few could meet together.

A searching investigation was held: the ringleaders in the last outrage were discovered and expelled, and many of the

lesser offenders were severely punished. But the blow which had been given to authority was too severe to be healed, except by some more extensive remedy, and to pave the way for a new order of things, the head-master resigned.

The fame of these lawless proceedings spread far and wide, and besides our real misdeeds all sorts of charges were brought against us and swallowed by a credulous public. We were supposed to be a curiously evil race, idle, ignorant, rebellious, and habitually given to "larceny and malicious mischief."

No less a personage than Dr. Stanley, the Dean of Westminster, declared in a grave publication* "that we did no work, that civilised life and out-of-door games, such as cricket, and football, and wholesome sports, did not exist amongst us, and that we were a society of poachers, poultry-stealers, and rat-hunters."

Stinging words! which Dr. Cotton, the well known Bishop of Calcutta, who was our next head-master, and knew us well, would have been surprised to read.

In literal truth we were not worse than any other set of boys, and our outbreaks did not arise from any inherent wickedness, but were the venial ebullitions of youthful spirit inadequately watched and restrained. Through all those stormy times cricket, football, and wholesome sports flourished; we did as much work as is usually done in a public school; and we showed our civilised taste by producing a respectable monthly magazine, in which we wrote stories, essays, criticisms, and poetry. The vices with which the dean rounds off his paragraph did not exist at all, though perhaps the charge of poaching may have arisen from the circumstance that some of the boys, in imitation of Shakespeare, used occasionally to chase the fallow deer through the glades of the forest.

SHAKESPEARE'S TEMPEST.

THE *Tempest* was first published in the folio collection of 1623. A century of research has not brought to light the sources from which the poet derived the materials of his play. The speech of Gonzalo in the first scene of the second act:

I' the commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things;

is no doubt traceable to a passage in Florio's *Montaigne*, 1603; a book well known to Shakespeare—his own copy of the work is extant in the British Museum. And something of the description of the shipwreck seems to have been borrowed from Harington's *Ariosto*, 1591. The portions of the play thus accounted for are very small, however; and there is obvious soundness in Mr. Carew Hazlitt's supposition that the poet was not considerably indebted to any single original, although he may have found divers publications and occurrences of or about the time very serviceable to him. It has been observed, too, that imaginative adventures upon desert islands in distant seas greatly occupy the early literature of romance. Nevertheless, much ingenuity has been expended in the search for a likely island to be the scene of the incidents of *The Tempest*. The Rev. Joseph Hunter, an antiquarian of repute, published some years since the result of his investigation of the subject. He decided that the island known to geographers and hydrographers by the names of Lampedusa or Lampedosa, Lipadusa or Lopadusa, in circuit thirteen miles or so, situate in a stormy sea midway between Malta and the African coast, was unquestionably the island of Prospero. He regards as a deluding light, leading critics and commentators far astray, Ariel's mention of "the still vexed Bermoothes;" and maintains that enquiring minds have been tossing about needlessly on the Atlantic, when they should have been musing on the Mediterranean, "peering in maps for ports, and piers, and rocks," and also for diminutive and obscure islands which lie basking in the sun between Tunis and Naples.

The *Tempest*, although it stands first in the folio collection of plays, is usually accounted one of the latest of Shakespeare's works. Malone states upon the authority of the MSS. of Mr. Vertue, "that *The Tempest* was acted by Mr. John Hemmings and the rest of the king's company before Prince Charles, the Lady Elizabeth, and the Prince Palatine Elector, in the beginning of the year 1613."

"The play in itself had formerly been acted with success in the Blackfriars," writes Dryden, in his preface to the altered play—he is referring of course to performances that took place before the civil war and the closing of the theatres. The *Tempest*, or the *Enchanted Island*, the adaptation by Dryden and Davenant, was

* *Memoir of Bishop Cotton*, p. 17.

produced at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre on November 7th, 1667—the year before the death of Davenant. Mr. Pepys was present at the first performance. He records in his diary: "At noon resolved with Sir W. Pen to go to see *The Tempest*, an old play of Shakespeare's, acted, I hear, the first day; and so my wife and girl and W. Hewer, by themselves, and Sir W. Pen and I afterwards by ourselves; and forced to sit in the side balcone over against the musique-room at the Duke's house, close by my Lady Dorset and a great many great ones. The house mighty full; the king and court there; and the most innocent play that ever I saw; and a curious piece of musick in an echo of half sentences, the echo repeating the former half while the man goes on to the latter; which is mighty pretty. The play" Mr. Pepys decides, "has no great wit, but yet good above ordinary plays." The "curious piece of music" occurred in the third act of the adaptation, and was sung by Ferdinand, Ariel echoing his voice:

Go thy way;

Why should'st thou stay?

Where the winds whistle and where the streams creep
Under yon willow-tree fain would I sleep.

The music was by Banister, a member of Charles the Second's band, the composer of *Circe*, and altogether a musician of fame in his day. He lies interred in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey.

The adaptation was not published until after the death of Davenant. In the preface Dryden states that he sets no value on his share in the play, but out of gratitude to the memory of Sir William Davenant, his partner in the undertaking. He points out, as proof of the popularity of *The Tempest*, and by way of justifying his own dealing with it, that Fletcher had imitated it in his *Sea-Voyage*: "the storm, the desert island, and the woman who had never seen a man, are all sufficient testimonies of it." And that Sir John Suckling had closely followed *The Tempest* in his *Goblins*: "his *Reginella* being an open imitation of Shakespeare's *Miranda*, and his spirits, though counterfeit, yet copied from *Ariel*." The reader is then informed that Sir William, being "a man of quick and piercing imagination," perceived that something might be added to the original, of which neither Fletcher nor Suckling had ever thought, and accordingly he designed "the counterpart to Shakespeare's plot, namely, that of a man who had never seen a woman; that by these

means those two characters of innocence and love might the more illustrate and connect each other." Dryden found this contrivance very admirable, and was delighted to assist in completing it. "I never wrote anything with more delight," he avows. The exact shares of Dryden and Davenant in the adaptation are not to be distinguished. "My writing received daily his amendment," says Dryden, "and that is the reason why it is not so faulty as the rest which I have done without the help or correction of so judicious a friend." He adds that "the comical parts of the sailors were also of his (Davenant's) invention, and, for the most part, his writing, as you will easily discover by the style." But in this matter of tinkering a poet, the style of the tinkers is not much worth discussion. The alterations, whether by Dryden or by Davenant, are alike detestable. And it is curious to note that Pepys, who seems to have been unaware that the play was otherwise than as Shakespeare left it, on seeing *The Tempest* a second time, found "the seaman's part a little too tedious," while commending the work generally as "very pleasant and full of so good variety that I cannot be more pleased almost in a comedy."

The first scene of the adaptation amplifies the first scene of the original, so as to invest the storm and the shipwreck with increase of theatrical effect. The abundant stage directions evidence the ingenuity that was now beginning to be employed upon scenery and machinery, and disclose the removal of the orchestra from the side of the stage to its modern position in front. "The front of the stage is opened, and the band of twenty-four violins, with the harpsichals and theorbos which accompany the voices, are placed between the pit and the stage. While the overture is playing the curtain rises, and discovers a new frontispiece joined to the great pilasters on each side of the stage. This frontispiece is a noble arch, supported by large wreathed columns of the Corinthian order; the wrappings of the columns are beautified with roses wound round them, and several cupids flying about them. On the cornice, just over the capitals, sits on either side a figure with a trumpet in one hand and a palm in the other, representing Fame. A little farther on the same cornice on each side of a compass-pediment lie a lion and a unicorn, the supporters of the royal arms of

England. In the middle of the arch are several angels holding the king's arms as if they were placing them in the midst of that compass-pediment. Behind this is the scene, which represents a thick cloudy sky, a very rocky coast, and a tempestuous sea in perpetual agitation. This tempest (supposed to be raised by magic) has many dreadful objects in it, as several spirits in horrid shapes flying down amongst the sailors, then rising and crossing in the air; and when the ship is sinking the whole house is darkened, and a shower of fire falls upon them. This is accompanied with lightning and severe claps of thunder to the end of the storm." In regard to the second scene the stage direction runs: "In the midst of the shower of fire the scene changes. The cloudy sky, rocks and sea, vanish; and when the lights return discover that beautiful part of the island which was the habitation of Prospero. 'Tis composed of three walks of cypress trees; each side-walk leads to a cave, in one of which Prospero keeps his daughters, in the other Hippolito. The middle walk is of great depth, and leads to an open part of the island." From these quotations may be gathered some idea of scenic decoration at the period of the Restoration.

The Prospero of Dryden and Davenant has two daughters, Miranda and Dorinda, "that never saw man." Alonso is no longer King of Naples, but Duke of Savoy, and by usurpation Duke of Mantua. Hippolito, the rightful heir to the dukedom of Mantua, has been bequeathed by his father, the late duke, to the care of Prospero, who, expelled from his own dukedom of Mantua by his usurping brother Antonio, has brought the youth with him to the enchanted island, and keeps him imprisoned in a cave, because

By calculation of his birth I saw
Death threatening him, if till some time were past
He should behold the face of any woman.

Thus, although they inhabit neighbouring caves, Miranda and Dorinda have never seen Hippolito, nor has Hippolito ever seen them. At last there occurs a meeting between Dorinda and Hippolito of a corresponding sort to the meeting of Miranda and Ferdinand. But the lovers do not pair immediately. Ferdinand and Hippolito fight a duel, and Hippolito falls dangerously wounded, greatly to the wrath of Prospero. Ariel, however, being endowed with larger powers as a magician than are possessed by Prospero, produces a

weapon-salve wherewith to anoint the sword which has hurt Hippolito, and straightway he recovers. Sycorax, a female monster, the sister of Caliban, is another new character. Trinculo is no longer a jester; he is converted into the boatswain of the ship, and in addition to much new matter, speaks many of the speeches of Stephano, who is reduced to a character of minor importance. Sebastian, the brother of Alonzo, disappears from the list of dramatis personæ with the lords Adrian and Francisco. New sailors, however, named Mustacho and Ventoso, are brought upon the scene. Trinculo appoints himself duke or prince of the island, in right of his marriage with Sycorax, who professes much love for him. As Genest points out, when Sir Wilful Witwoud in Congreve's *Way of the World* is described as being "drunk and as loving as the monster in *The Tempest*, and much after the same manner," the allusion is to Sycorax and not to Caliban. Sycorax presently transfers her affections to Stephano, and they drink together. Fights occur between Trinculo and Stephano, Ventoso and Mustacho, Caliban and Sycorax. The humour of these interpolated scenes is as dull as it is coarse, while the passages of the play relating to Hippolito are unspeakably silly.

Here is an extract from a speech addressed by Prospero to Ariel:

I'll chain thee in the north for thy neglect,
Within the burning bowels of Mount Hecla:
I'll singe thy airy wings with sulphurous flames,
And choke thy tender nostrils with blue smoke.
At every hiccup of the belching mountain
Thou shalt be lifted up to taste fresh air
And then fall down again.

Dorinda believes the ship to be a living creature, and thus describes it to Miranda:

This floating ram did bear his horns above,
All tied with ribbons ruffling in the wind;
Sometimes he nodded down his head awhile,
And then the waves did heave him to the moon;
He clambering to the top of all the billows,
And then again he curtied down so low
I could not see him.

Dorinda asks: "What is the soul?" Hippolito exclaims: "A small blue thing, that runs about within us." Says Dorinda: "Then I have seen it in a frosty morning run smoking from my mouth!" Ariel's famous song undergoes alteration. Ariel no longer flies on a bat's back, but on the "swallow's wings." The *Masque of Iris*, Juno, and Ceres is omitted. In lieu, Neptune, Amphitrite, Oceanus, and Tethys rise from the sea in a chariot drawn by sea-horses, and attended by sea-gods and

goddesses, Nereids and Tritons. Presently Prospero directs :

Now, my Ariel, be visible,
And let the rest of your aerial train
Appear, and entertain 'em with a song.

Thereupon the scene changes to the rising sun, and a number of aerial spirits appear in the air; Ariel, flying from the sun, advances towards the pit and sings, Where the Bee Sucks; and Prospero speaks a tag, concluding:

The promises of blooming spring live here,
And all the blessings of the ripening year.
On my retreat let Heaven and Nature smile,
And ever flourish this Enchanted Isle.

The prologue, described by Sir Walter Scott as "one of the most masterly tributes ever paid at the shrine of Shakespeare," begins:

As when a tree's cut down, the secret root
Lives under ground, and thence new branches
shoot;
So from Old Shakespeare's honoured dust, this
day
Springs up and buds a new reviving play.

No excuse is offered, however, for the cutting down of Shakespeare by the adapters. The names of the actors concerned in the representation have not come down to us, but it is likely that Trinculo was played by Cave Underhill. When *The Tempest* was revived at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields for his benefit, in 1702; the playbills contained the announcement: "Duke Trinculo, by Cave Underhill, who performed it originally." Davies writes in his *Miscellanies*: "Underhill acted till he was past eighty. He was so excellent in the part of Trinculo in *The Tempest*, that he was called Prince Trinculo. He had an admirable vein of pleasantry. Cibber describes him as particularly excellent in characters that might be called "still life" — the stiff, the heavy, and the stupid. Pepys, writing on the 6th of November, 1667, refers to Betterton as being still sick and unable to play *Macbeth*; so he was probably not the Prospero of the 7th of November. In the Duke of Buckingham's Rehearsal, produced in 1671, one of the players states: "For scenery, clothes, and dancing, we quite put down all that ever went before us; and those are the things, you know, which are essential to a play." Probably *The Tempest*, among other highly decorated plays, was here referred to. During a later scene in *The Rehearsal*, a dance being badly executed, Bayes exclaims: "Out, out, out! Did ever men spoil a good thing?"

No figure, no ear, no time, nothing! Udzookes, you dance worse than the angels in Harry the Eighth, or the fat spirits in *The Tempest*."

It has been said of *The Tempest* that even in its original state, with its masque and many songs, it might almost be considered a musical drama. The early dramatists were wont thus to deck their plays with lyrical pieces, and to introduce frequent strains of music, until the drama and music fell apart, and speech and song became distinct means and forms of entertainment. And the earlier operas were not so much musical pieces as spectacles—plays depending for success upon their mechanical changes, scenic illusions, and costly costumes. In his *Roscious Anglicanus*, 1708, Downes describes the production at the Dorset Garden Theatre in 1673 of *The Tempest*, or *The Enchanted Island*, "made into an opera by Mr. Shadwell, having all new in it, as scenes, machines; particularly one scene painted with myriads of aerial spirits; and another flying away with a table furnished out with fruits, sweet-meats, and all sorts of viands, just when Duke Trinculo and his companions were going to dinner; all things performed in it so admirably well that not any succeeding opera got more money." The music was now supplied by Matthew Lock, who in the previous year had composed the songs and choruses in Davenant's version of *Macbeth*. But it was chiefly in the matter of stage decoration that Shadwell's *Tempest* surpassed Dryden's. Davies finds the origin of Dryden's resentment to Shadwell in the fact of his greater success with *The Tempest*: he should not have meddled with the subject after so great a master. The success of Shadwell's *Tempest* stimulated the management to produce a burlesque by Duffet, *The Mock Tempest*, or *The Enchanted Castle*, probably the earliest parody of Shakespeare.

Purcell's music to *The Tempest* was probably composed about 1690, but the date of its first production upon the stage can hardly now be ascertained. Additions were made to the lyrical portions of the play, and the words of Dryden's songs underwent considerable alteration. Mr. George Hogarth, in his *Memoirs of the Musical Drama*, 1838, greatly commends the poetic character of Purcell's music, while admitting that certain vices of manner attend the composition, and notably the error of what may be called musical word-painting. When the winds are

bidden to drive Alonzo and his companions to the worst part of the island, and there to let them "howl and languish in despair," the singer is required at the word "howl" to howl on one note for two bars, and at the word "languish" to languish for three bars "through a drawing descent of semitones." The music sung by Ariel is described as exquisite in its fairy lightness; and a song introduced for Caliban, "The owl is abroad, the bat, and the toad," is said to be worthy of Weber. Mr. Hogarth notes, too, the recitation and air for Neptune, "Æolus, you must appear," as grand and dignified in style. Æolus characteristically blusters "through many long divisions;" but the beauty of Amphitrite's soprano air, "Halcyon days," with its passages for the oboes and rich accompaniments, and of the chorus of Nereids and Tritons, is strongly insisted upon. With the famous duet and chorus, "No stars again shall hurt you," a piece of rich and resonant harmony, the whole is brought to a brilliant conclusion.

The *Tempest*, according to the text of Dryden, was performed in 1714, when the beautiful Mrs. Mountford personated Hippolito, and Dorinda was played by Mrs. Santlow, afterwards known as Mrs. Barton Booth; Powell appeared as Prospero, Johnson as Caliban, Bullock as Trinculo, and Ryan as Ferdinand. A performance of the play in 1728 introduced Miss Rafter in the part of Dorinda. The young lady was but seventeen, very vivacious, charming of aspect and manner, with special gifts as a singer; she was presently to become famous as Mrs. Clive, the brightest and sauciest of soubrettes. Mrs. Booth was now transferred to the part of Miranda; Mrs. Cibber played Hippolito; Mills represented Prospero; Wilks was the Ferdinand; and Joe Miller, of jest-book celebrity, undertook the congenial character of Trinculo.

In 1746, at Drury Lane, the play-bill being headed, "Never acted here before," The *Tempest* of Shakespeare was restored to the stage. Mrs. Clive was now the Ariel of the night; Macklin appeared as Stephano, Delane as Ferdinand, and actors bearing the same surname, Luke and Isaac Sparks, figured as Prospero and Caliban. But something of Dryden's version was retained. The play concluded with the musical entertainment of Neptune and Amphitrite. Two seasons later, Garrick, with all his professions of zeal for Shakespeare, thought it well to return to Dryden's version absolutely. This was

done, perhaps, for the sake of Mrs. Woffington's Hippolito. Macklin now played Trinculo in lieu of Stephano. Sycorax was personated by a Mr. Taswell.

Ten years afterwards, Garrick subjected Shakespeare to still further indignity. The playbills announced "A new opera, called *The Tempest*, altered from Shakespeare." Prospero now sang songs, being personated by Mr. John Beard, the admired tenor, who in 1739 had married Lady Henrietta, the widow of Lord Edward Herbert and the only daughter of James Earl of Waldegrave. Hippolito and Dorinda did not appear, but certain of Dryden's additions were retained. New music was provided by John Christopher Smith, the pupil of Handel, and the composer of the opera of *Teraminta*; but many of Purcell's songs were retained. Ariel, indeed, introduced in the first act the song composed by Purcell for Dryden's opera of *Tyrannic Love*:

Merry, merry, merry, we sail from the East,
Half-tipped at a rainbow feast, &c. &c.

Garrick incurred much censure because of his operatic *Tempest*. It was asked why he did not revive the true text, and himself appear as Prospero? And Theophilus Cibber, glad of an opportunity of attacking him, delivered a dissertation at the Haymarket, demanding: "Were Shakespeare's ghost to rise, would he not frown indignation on this pilfering pedlar in poetry, who thus shamefully mangles, mutilates, and emasculates his plays? The *Midsummer Night's Dream* has been minced and fricasseed into a thing called *The Fairies*; the *Winter's Tale* mammoocked into a droll; and *The Tempest* cut into an opera." He concludes, in allusion, doubtless, to the criticisms of Voltaire: "No wonder Shakespeare's name is insulted by foreigners, while he is tamely suffered to be thus maltreated at home." Garrick probably repented his error; at any rate, he abandoned the opera, and next year reverted to the original text, the play enjoying seventeen performances. Mossop appeared as Prospero, Holland as Ferdinand, Woodward as Stephano, Yates as Trinculo, and Miss Pritchard as Miranda. In 1777 Shakespeare's *Tempest* was revived at both Drury Lane and Covent Garden. This was Woodward's last season on the stage; his final performance was at Covent Garden, in the part of Stephano, the play being "contracted to three acts on account of the

additional airs," as the bill curiously explained. It was about this time, probably, that Ariel's song of *Where the Bee Sucks* was first sung to Dr. Arne's famous melody.

We now come to an alteration of *The Tempest*, made by John Kemble, for performance at Drury Lane in 1789. Certain of the scenes suppressed by Dryden were restored, but great part of Dryden's additions were retained, inclusive of the characters of Hippolito and Dorinda. Ferdinand and Miranda were represented by the singers, Michael Kelly and Mrs. Crouch. As Kelly writes: "I composed a duet for myself and Mrs. Crouch, as Ferdinand and Miranda, which was a favourite; the whole of the delightful music by Purcell was well got up by Mr. Linley, the accompaniments by himself." Miss Farren was said to play Dorinda particularly well. Kemble had not yet assumed the part of Prospero; he left it in the hands of Bensley, the Prospero of 1777. The scene of the shipwreck was transferred to the second act; the "weapon salve" was duly employed to anoint the weapon that had wounded Hippolito; Dryden's masque of Neptune and Amphitrite was presented, and the play concluded with Ariel's song, *Where the Bee Sucks*. Genest says justly of this adaptation, that it does Kemble no credit, and that he "must be ranked with those who have disgraced themselves by mutilating Shakespeare." An epilogue was supplied by General Burgoyne, curiously flattering to the Prince of Wales of the period. Here is an extract:

High o'er the crowd, informed with patriot fire,
Pure as the virtues that endear his sire,
See one who leads—as mutual trials prove—
A band of brothers to a people's love:
One, who on station scorns to found control,
But gains pre-eminence by worth of soul.
These are the honours that, on reason's plan,
Adorn the prince, and vindicate the man;
While gayer passions, warmed at nature's breast,
Play o'er his youth—the feathers of his crest.

In 1806 Kemble produced another version of the play; still mangling the original considerably, but restoring certain of the scenes previously omitted, and retrenching Dryden's additions. Neptune and Amphitrite were dispensed with; nothing was heard of the "weapon salve," or "the nonsense about the soul," as Genest describes it; and the characters introduced by Dryden were much reduced in importance. In the interval there had occurred performances of what may be called Kemble's first edition; Palmer

appearing as Prospero, the Bannisters—father and son—personating Caliban and Stephano, to the Trinculo of Snett, the Dorinda of Mrs. Jordan, the Ferdinand of Charles Kemble, and the Hippolito of Miss De Camp, afterwards known as Mrs. Charles Kemble. But John Kemble now assumed the character of Prospero, with Emery as Caliban, Munden as Stephano, and Fawcett as Trinculo. And now arose a warm discussion concerning Kemble's dissyllabic pronunciation of the word *aches*; aitches he called it. The pit interrupted him with murmurs and laughter; yet still he persisted; and he had authority on his side. The word is clearly used as a dissyllable by Shakespeare; Butler in his *Hudibras* rhymes catches with *aches*; and an epigram of Heywood's shows that *ache* had sometimes a soft pronunciation. *The Tempest* was played twenty-seven times during the season of 1806-7, many of the repetitions being due to the excitement occasioned by Kemble's obstinacy and the derision of the audience. The manager, Harris, was said to approve this conflict of opinion, seeing that it brought "grist to the mill." One night, Kemble being ill, Cooke essayed the part of Prospero, and much curiosity was felt in regard to his pronunciation of the word. He was prudent and adroit enough to omit altogether the line in which it occurs. In 1812 Young succeeded to the part of Prospero.

Macready has recorded in his *Reminiscences* how in the year 1821 he was required to act "the remnant that was left of the character of Prospero" in "a *mélange* that was called *Shakespeare's Tempest*, with songs interpolated by Reynolds, among the mutilations and barbarous ingraftings of Dryden and Davenant." This was apparently Kemble's version of the play manipulated by Reynolds the dramatist. The playbill sets forth the order of the new scenery by Messrs. Pugh, Grieve, T. Grieve, W. Grieve, and assistants. "Act I. Prospero's Cave. The Interior of the Island. Act II. Storm and Shipwreck. Rocky part of the Island. Hippolito's Cave, &c. A new overture, composed by Mr. Davy, was heard for the first time on this occasion, and to "the original music of Purcell" were added compositions by Hadyn, Mozart, Dr. Arne, Linley, Braham, Mayer, Martini, Puccini, Rossini, &c. *The Tempest* had reverted to the operatic condition it had first assumed in Garrick's time. Dorinda and

Hippolito were represented by the singers Miss Stephens and Durnset. Miss Foote played Ariel, Emery appeared as Caliban, Blanchard as Trinculo, and W. Farren as Stephano. This most musical version of *The Tempest* was represented on eleven nights, and apparently underwent reproduction at Drury Lane Theatre in 1833. Macready notes of his share in the performance at this time that he "acted the part unequally, but maintained himself in the only great passage retained in the characterless stupid old proser of commonplace, which the acted piece calls Prospero." It may be noted that in 1833 Blanchard was still the Trinculo of the cast; but Dowton now appeared as Stephano, and Paul Bedford as Caliban. Hippolito was played by Miss Taylor, afterwards Mrs. Walter Lacy, and the characters of Miranda, Dorinda, and Ariel were sustained by Miss Inverarity, Miss Shirreff, and Miss Poole.

When Macready next appeared as Prospero, he was no longer "the stupid old proser" of Dryden and Davenant, but the Prospero of Shakespeare. Manager of Covent Garden Theatre in 1838, Macready resolved upon a textual revival of *The Tempest*. New scenery was painted by Mr. Marshall; the costumes were splendid; the music illustrative of the text was selected from the works of Purcell, Linley, and Dr. Arne. A strong company was engaged in supporting the play. Mr. Anderson appeared as Ferdinand, Mr. Phelps as Antonio, Miss Helen Fancit as Miranda, Miss P. Horton as Ariel, Miss Rainforth as Juno. Trinculo, Stephano, and Caliban were represented by Harley, Bartley, and George Bennett. The success of the performance was most complete. Macready enters in his journal on the evening of the first representation: "Read Prospero as well as I could; acted it as well as I could—but how could I act it well with the excitement and load of such a production on my mind? Was greatly received. Called for after the play, and received again with enthusiasm." On the morrow, 14th October, he writes: "Could not recover myself from the excitement of last night. The scenes of the storm, the flights of Ariel, and the enthusiasm of the house were constantly recurring to me. October 15th went to the theatre, where I saw the newspapers, which renewed the excitement that I thought had subsided. I tried to tranquillise myself, but vainly. This is

not a life to live for one who wishes to improve himself by living—it is a tempest itself!" At the end of the season he was able to record: "It appears that we have acted *The Tempest* fifty-five nights, to an average exceeding £230. This is not a common event." Mr. Bunn sneered a rival manager's sneer. He urged that *The Tempest* at Covent Garden "owed all the attraction it possessed to the novelty of Miss P. Horton, 'my gentle Ariel,' singing while suspended in the air." There was a grain of truth in this. It is clear that manager and public alike laid stress upon Miss Horton's flight. Here are some quotations from the manager's journal bearing upon the subject: "August 25th. Talked much with Bradwell on the machinery, &c., of *The Tempest*. August 28th.—Miss P. Horton—to whom I spoke about the flying of Ariel, and appointed the makers of the dress to call on her. August 29th.—Had conversation with Bradwell about the flying dress of Ariel. September 12th.—At Covent Garden Theatre found Miss Horton practising her flight." The earlier Ariels of the stage had been content to walk, and to make their exits and their entrances in a thoroughly prosaic, human, and conventional manner.

In 1842 Charles Kemble, his own career as an actor having closed, was drawn back to the cares of management by the great success of his daughter Adelaide as a singer. He opened Covent Garden, in order to perform opera in English and the Shakespearian drama upon alternate nights, and produced *The Tempest* with great completeness, new mechanical devices being employed to represent the storm and shipwreck. Mr. Vandenhoff was now the Prospero; Miss Vandenhoff the Miranda; Mr. J. Bland the Caliban. Harley and Bartley resumed their old characters of Trinculo and Stephano; the singers Miss Rainforth and Miss Poole appeared as Ariel and Juno. The revival scarcely awoke the enthusiasm of 1838, however, and *The Tempest* soon disappeared from the scene, Mr. Kemble's management enduring but three months. In 1847, Mr. Phelps, manager of Sadler's Wells, and, reverential of the Macready traditions, produced *The Tempest* strictly in accordance with the original text, yet handsomely equipped with scenic illusions and adornments. Mr. Phelps's Prospero was assisted by the Miranda of Miss Laura Addison, the Ariel of Miss St. George, and the

Caliban of Mr. G. Bennett—Macready's Caliban in 1838.

The *Tempest* was one of Mr. Charles Kean's highly embellished revivals at the Princess's Theatre in 1857. The text was respected, and the supply of music and singing was not much in excess of the absolute requirements of the drama. But every opportunity for the introduction of scenic display and mechanical device was sought and secured. The poet having ascribed the action of the story to no distinct period, the costumes of the thirteenth century, because of their picturesqueness and elegance, were assumed by the dramatis personæ. No attempt was made, however, to identify the island of Prospero with any actual locality; the scenery depicted an imaginary kingdom, abounding in "affecting and mysterious incidents," as Mr. Kean wrote, "over which Ariel presides, as the image of air, in spiritual contrast to the grosser Caliban, who embodies the earthly element." Ariel was gracefully personated by Miss Kate Terry, a slender poetic-looking little girl of thirteen or so; the songs being executed by an invisible singer, Miss Poole, who had been the visible Ariel of Drury Lane in 1833. "Now," writes the biographer of Mr. Kean of the performance, "we were really presented with a 'delicate spirit;' at one moment descending in a ball of fire; at another, rising gently from a tuft of flowers; again, sailing on the smooth waters on the back of a dolphin; then gliding noiselessly over the sands as a water nymph; and, ever and anon, perched on the summit of a rock, riding on a bat, or cleaving mid-air with the velocity of lightning. The powers of modern stage mechanism are almost as marvellous as the gift ascribed to the magic wand and book of Prospero." The ship in the first scene was exhibited struggling with the fury of the elements, and at last foundering, apparently, with all on board. In the third act occurred a grand ballet of naiads, wood nymphs, and satyrs. The masque in the fourth act was presented with unusual pomp and gorgeousness; at its conclusion, Caliban and his associates were hunted and tortured by a legion of goblins copied from furies depicted upon Etruscan vases. Prospero delivered the epilogue from the deck of a ship moving gently away from the enchanted island. Nothing was seen at last but an open expanse of sea glittering in the sunshine, with Ariel swinging aloft watching the departure of the royal vessel, while a hidden chorus of spirits discoursed

soft and plaintive music. Mr. Kean, of course, personated Prospero; the Miranda was Miss Leclercq; the Caliban, Mr. Ryder; the Stephano, Mr. F. Mathews. For the first time Ferdinand found a feminine representative: Miss Bufton. Harley, the Trinculo of 1838, resumed his old part. Mr. Kean's illustrated edition of *The Tempest* was received with great enthusiasm; the performance was repeated many times during the seasons of 1857 and 1858.

The latest representations of *The Tempest* in London occurred at the Queen's Theatre in 1871, when Mr. Ryder, Mr. Kean's Caliban, appeared as Prospero; Mr. George Rignold playing Caliban, and Miss Henrietta Hodson appearing as Ariel. The production was received with considerable favour, much interest attaching to the new music composed by Mr. Arthur Sullivan, and now heard for the first time in connection with the play it was designed to illustrate.

MY LAND OF BEULAH.

A STORY IN FIFTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IV.

We had driven from Bromley to a waterfall some five miles distant. The day was perfect. Our party numbered three: papa, myself, and Eulalie. Eulalie in a wide-brimmed hat that cast a shadow upon her eyes, giving a deepened intensity to their soft appealing glances.

There is a picture by Gainsborough of a girl in just such a hat, with just such a shadow over her lovely eyes—a picture very fair to see, but not one whit fairer than the living picture made by Eulalie that day. She had gathered a deep-red rose, and set it in the fastening of the tippet that showed the fall of her graceful shoulders, and left the slender circle of her waist visible. She was very simply dressed, but the hat with its shadow, the sweet face beneath, the "red, red rose" nestling against the delicate white throat, how perfect it all was!

I had wanted her to sit beside papa in the carriage, but she was quite shocked and troubled at the idea; I saw her lip quiver as she took her place opposite to us.

"You are too kind to me, Nellie dear," she said in a low voice, as if she did not wish papa to hear.

At all events he and I were the gainers by her persistency, for had we not a lovely picture to look at as we passed along between the summer-decked hedges and under the shadows of the trees?

I have said that my school-friend was

always quiet and retiring, but on this particular occasion she seemed so much more timid even than her wont that a droll thought came into my mind, and I half turned round so as to have a good comprehensive stare at papa, and see if I could find out why Eulalie was afraid of him.

For that was the droll thought that her confusion had called up. I saw much to admire, but, or so it seemed to me, nothing to fear.

Papa had been many years older than my mother, and was now a handsome man of forty or thereabouts. The hair upon his temples was a little thinned, but that only added to the noble candour of his face; his eye-brows, like his dark curly locks, were slightly grey, his mouth was as sweet as a woman's, and his smile—oh, no one ever had such a smile, I think! When he was thinking deeply, his dark grey eyes had a look of gravity that some might think stern, but the moment he smiled this shadow of sternness vanished. To-day his eyes seemed always smiling, as they dwelt long and often on the face beneath the shadow of the broad-brimmed hat.

There was triumph in my heart, and in my eyes too, I daresay, as I noted this, for what is so pleasant as, when you have helped anyone to form a certain ideal, to see that reality equals fancy?

Eulalie was never a chatterbox. I had been one from the day that I could make any practical use of my tongue at all; and now, our drive over, and the footpath to the falls gained, I could hardly get the words out quick enough to express my delight. Then, having at last said my say, sure-footed as a young goat I climbed here and there, leaving my more staid companions to follow as they saw fit. Now I discovered some lichen, marvellously tinted orange and crimson, and fled to papa's side with my treasure; now some rare flower, and added it to the posy in my hand, but not before it had been held up for a word of admiration from him.

"You're like a bird let out of a cage, my darling," he said, as I came suddenly down a bank, and lighted just in the pathway of the other two. I had been singing for very joy, or perhaps because I hated to be silent, and this was what I sang:

Te souviens tu Marie
De notre enfance aux champs,
Des jeux dans la prairie?
(J'avais alors quinze ans)
La danse sur l'herbette,
Egayait nos loisirs—
Le temps que je regrette,
C'est celui des plaisirs.

I forgot the words of the verse that followed, and hummed the sweet plaintive air until I came to the refrain at the last:

Ma bouche en vain répète
Des regrets superflus.
Le temps que je regrette
C'est le temps qui n'est plus.

Music at all times had a mighty power over me, and I possessed that capability that alone gives true passion and pathos to song—the capability of identifying myself for the time being with the sentiment expressed.

Now the very beauty of all that surrounded me, and the happiness of my own heart in the nearness of the two human beings dearest to me, made me realise with a strange intensity what it would be to look back upon such golden days when they were lost for ever.

With all my soul in my voice, I sang again the last two lines of that wonderful song, a song full of the very spirit of a loving, passionate regret, sweet as the scent of dead flowers:

Le temps que je regrette
C'est le temps—qui—n'est—plus.

"Why, Nell," said papa's voice close beside me, and I started from the fit of musing into which I had fallen. He took my hand in his and held it close. "What a sad song, child; you might be Undine, the spirit of the waterfall, weeping over her lost love; what does my little girl know of regrets that she should sing so pitiful a ditty?"

"I, dear papa? nay, I have no regrets. I was only thinking how terrible it must be for those who have——"

Eulalie's face was turned away, and I saw her bosom heave.

"Oh, I should not have said that! I should not have sung that song! I was cruel. I did not mean it; I did not think. Eulalie, forgive me, dear!"

The sobs rose to my throat and choked me. Papa looked in some dismay from one of us to the other.

It really was rather hard upon a man who had brought two young damsels out for a pleasant country drive to find them suddenly turned into a pair of Niobes; and it was all my fault too; my wicked thoughtless words had brought it all about! When I cry my nose gets red in a few seconds, and my face puckers up in most unbecoming fashion; but Eulalie in tears was as beautiful as Eulalie under any other

circumstance of life. The drowned eyes looked like diamonds in water, but the tip of the little straight nose remained of its normal tint, and the sweet sad mouth trembled like that of a troubled child.

"How unkind of me to spoil your happy day together with my foolish nonsense," she said at last, dashing the drops from her long wet lashes, and looking up at papa with a smile like the radiant gleam of an April sun.

So the cloud of sentiment that had threatened to spoil our day of pleasure passed like an April shower, leaving its only trace in the closer pressure with which I held my friend's hand, and the redoubled kindness of papa's manner to her.

"And how is Mr. Twinkler getting on?" said papa, willing to lead to cheerful topics.

"Oh, charmingly," I answered, laughing. "He still 'hopes that his lordship is in the enjoyment of good health;' but I'm not such a good customer to him as I used to be, papa. I'm getting past the stage of sweets and steel-pens, you see," I added, with an air of dignity that set papa laughing, and made Eulalie smile.

"It's all very well to laugh," I said with some show of indignation, "but the next time you come to see me you'll find me in long dresses."

"Fully fledged, eh?" said papa, still failing to be impressed; "like a bird whose plumage has attained its full growth?"

Eulalie said nothing, but looked from one to the other with a certain tender wistfulness, as of one who watched a drama in which she had no part, so that I felt half ashamed of our banter.

All at once I caught sight of a silvery gleam among the far-off trees.

"It is the falls," I cried, and was off like a bird, never stopping till I had reached the rocky basin into which the natural fountain tumbled amid a feathery cloud of spray.

Ferns grew all about it; some bending their graceful heads towards the water, as if they strove to see themselves in its shining surface; others nestling low down in crevices, and there in the moist gloom growing of a brighter, fresher green.

The silver birch grew plentifully near these falls, and one adventurous tree had grown half way up the steep bed of the cascade, drooping its feathery branches almost across the stream. Here a thrush had taken its perch, and was singing in maddest trills and gurgles, as if to try and drown the song of the water.

Just as I stood drinking in the beauty

of the whole scene, the sun, that had been hiding behind a fleecy cloud, as some coquettish Eastern beauty might seek the shelter of her veil, came forth, and poured his light upon the falls, until each ripple gleamed like silver and the spray like diamond dust.

I uttered an exclamation of delight, which the thrush heard, I suppose, for with a quick rush he spread his wings, and I saw his dappled breast glance among the trees. I looked back at my lagging companions. Eulalie had found her tongue; indeed, she was evidently speaking with no little earnestness, though I could not catch a word she said, for the babble of the water at my feet. Her eyes were cast down, and in her hand she held a deep long trail of the white woodbine, its green leaves and chalice flowers showing in pretty artistic contrast against the soft grey of her dress. Papa was bending towards her, evidently listening as earnestly as she was speaking.

"That's all right," thought I to myself; "I'll be bound she's telling him about some of her troubles. I'm glad Miss Maria let her come with us; and, oh, what an orchid that is high up in the cleft of that big stone! it looks like a bunch of tiny butterflies all growing on a stem."

Off I started, making my way towards the prize, and the habit that is second nature brought a tune to my lips:

Te souviens-tu, Marie
De notre enfance—

I had got so far without thinking, and then pulled myself up with a round turn. "Nell, you foolish child," I thought, addressing myself as a culprit self-condemned. "What's up with you that you can't behave yourself to-day? Haven't you brought mischief enough about already with your miserable little song? 'Fie, for shame!' as Polly says; it's a pity she isn't here to say it now, I think."

It was not very easy work getting that orchid, but then what a beauty he was when I did get him! I was up as high as the birch that had stretched its arms lovingly across the burn by the time that papa and Eulalie stood among the ferns beside its rocky basin.

"Nell," said papa, looking up at me with laughing, loving eyes, "is that the way you are going to conduct yourself when you are fully fledged? Come down, you daft lassie; what would Miss Mary say if she saw you perched up there?"

"She would only say, 'Take care, my darling child.' Eulalie, shouldn't you like

to see Miss Theodosia's face if she stood just where you are now? She thinks I'm doomed to perdition as it is but if she saw me here!" The idea of what Miss Theodosia's feelings would be was too gigantic to be grappled with. Instead of descending from my elevated position, I set down upon a projecting ledge of rock, and began to arrange a background of ferns for my beautiful orchid.

"Papa," I cried to him, standing ever so far below me, "isn't this fall, and the trees, and the flowers, and all that"—sketchily indicating the surrounding scenery—"just the loveliest thing you ever saw?"

For answer he looked—not at the babbling waterfall with its mist of spray, not at the trees overhead, nor yet at the flowers at his feet, but at the face of the woman by his side. And with that electric sympathy that bound my heart to his, I saw and understood the meaning of that look.

"You mean that Eulalie is lovelier still?" I said, radiant at the silent homage offered at my idol's shrine. "Well, I think you're right, papa. Haven't I told you, dearest Eulalie, a hundred times, that there is no one like you in the world? Now, you see, papa agrees with me, and the thing upon which two witnesses are agreed must be true."

At my thoughtless words Eulalie looked ready to sink into the earth with confusion; and bringing me down from my eyrie, as surely as ever gun toppled over an unfortunate bird, I saw a look of reproof and reproach in papa's eyes as he said gravely:

"Nell, Nell, when will you learn to curb that unruly tongue of yours?"

Ferns and orchid were flung into the falling water as he spoke, and quickly whirling round and round in the miniature Charybdis below, while I dropped lightly to my feet. What were flowers or anything else the world held to me, weighed against a look of disapproval from my father's eyes?

Eulalie had wandered on, feigning to search for blossoms to add to the branch of woodbine in her hand. I looked ruefully after her.

"I've been naughty again, you see, papa," I said, clinging to his hand, and watching the poor orchid floating away down stream.

"Nay, not naughty," he said, smiling just a little at my disconcerted air, "only thoughtless. You forget, my darling, that though you are only a child still, your friend is—a woman."

"And don't women like to be told they

are beautiful?" I asked, puzzled by the new idea thus presented to my mind.

"Well," he answered, "not quite in that outspoken way, Nell."

And then, why or wherefore I was at a loss to tell, the colour on his cheek, that was already bronzed by travel, took a deeper hue, and he looked away from me and after the figure in the soft grey dress and shadowy hat.

The experiences of the last few moments had taught me my first lesson in prudence of speech; and so in my new timidity I made no comment on either circumstance. Presently we overtook Eulalie, who looked lovelier than ever in the bashfulness with which she answered papa's admiring comments on the posy she had gathered. On our way back to the carriage I cast many a furtive glance at my school-friend. I had never thought of her seventeen years as setting her so very far ahead of me on the way of life; but now, papa had said she was a "woman," and what was I?—a child who still loved to bowl a hoop and play at battledore and shuttlecock; who got into trouble only last holiday afternoon for climbing the big cherry-tree, and sitting in the fork of a branch to read Undine. What was that ugly name that Miss Theodosia had called me upon one occasion? A Tom-boy! Was she ever a Tom-boy, I wondered; or was her cradle a backboard, and did she always sit as bolt upright as if she had swallowed the poker.

Well, I was all these terrible things, and doubtless many more besides; but at thirteen seventeen is not so very far off, after all, and soon I should be a woman, like Eulalie.

I had a great many things to learn beforehand evidently, and one of them was to be less—what was it papa had said?—outspoken Yes; that was it. These and many kindred thoughts kept me wonderfully silent on our long drive home. Perhaps papa noticed this, and feared that his first, his very first reproof, had sunk too deeply into my heart. Anyway, before long his hand sought mine, and having found it held it close; and thus we went our way through the summer gloaming that was sweet with the breath of the bean-blossoms in the fields and the honey-suckle in the hedges.

"Home, sweet home," I hummed to myself, as the white gates of Summerfield came in sight, and papa smiled.

"Yes, indeed, it has been a home to you, Nell," he said; and Eulalie's soft

voice chimed in with: "It is that to all of us, I think, Sir Charles."

Presently, Eulalie had gone back to her work in the class-room, after thanking papa ever so sweetly for the pleasant outing he had given her, and he and I were left alone together in the drawing-room.

He had only half an hour longer to stay before the carriage would drive him to the station, five miles off, to catch the evening train for the north. My heart always felt as if it had suddenly grown too big for my body when I had to say "Good-bye" to papa; and evinced an inclination to choke me, which was extremely unpleasant, and made continued conversation difficult. I was, therefore, at such seasons apt to be somewhat spasmodic in my remarks. Now, seated at his knee, upon a certain small chair much affected by me from my youth upwards, I endeavoured to lay before him a plan that had suggested itself to my mind during the latter part of our homeward drive. It concerned my school-friend.

"You know, papa," I said, holding his hand in mine, and twisting the ring, a blood-red cornelian finely carved, upon his little finger, round and round, "Eulalie isn't like me."

He looked puzzled; and I recognised that my opening speech was a lame one.

"Of course, I don't mean to look at; that would be talking nonsense," I said, in loving depreciation of my own small modicum of charms as compared with Eulalie's; "but what I mean is, that she has no papa like you, and no home like Hazledene, and that when she goes away from Summerfield she will have to earn her own living—oh, poor Eulalie!—and be a governess."

His hand caressed my hair tenderly; his eyes met mine, fond and proud.

"Poor child!" he said; "she does not look very fit for such a life."

"No; I know," said I, looking monstrosously wise. "I heard Miss Mary say she was 'far too pretty to be a governess.' I don't know why they ought to be uglier than other people, though; do you papa?" I added, with the air of one searching out an occult problem.

"There are a great many things that my little girl doesn't understand as yet."

"Yes, of course; but there's one thing she does understand—"

"And that is——?"

"That you love your little girl very dearly, and like to make her happy——"

"Well, what is it you want, child?"

"I want you to help Eulalie."

I felt him give ever such a little start as the words passed my lips.

"How can I help your friend?" Then, under his breath, I heard him mutter, "Impossible!"

"Not at all," I said, throwing my head back, and putting on my most "outspoken" and confident manner. "Don't you know lots of grand folks all about our county—round about Hazledene, I mean? Well, can't you find some very nice people who want a governess for quite little children—as little as I was when first I came to Summerfield? Can't you tell them about Eulalie, and get them to take her? And then, when I come home for good, I can see her as often as I like."

"Will you do what I ask you, papa?" I persisted, after a silence that somewhat puzzled me.

"I will try."

"And I will try too. I will try to be—what is it?—'less outspoken.' I think I know what you mean; I shouldn't have told Eulalie to-day that she was pretty, and made her poor face get as red as the roses over there"—pointing to the window as I spoke—"I should have done as you did."

"As I did?" This with a mighty look of surprise.

"Yes; you looked at her so that she could tell you thought her pretty—without your saying so, I mean. I don't think she minded that; I think she liked it. Your way was ever so much better than mine; but they meant the same thing, didn't they, papa?"

One quick glance to assure himself that his little girl's words were the outcome of utter guilelessness, and then, with the same heightened colour in his bronzed cheek as I had seen there once before that day, he hurried to the window to see if the carriage had come round.

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VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XL. "WITH WEARY DAYS THOU
SHALT BE CLOTHED AND FED."

CAPTAIN WINSTANLEY never again alluded to the dressmaker's bill. He was too wise a man to reopen old wounds, or to dwell upon small vexations. He had invested every penny that he could spare, leaving the smallest balance at his banker's compatible with respectability. He had to sell some railway shares in order to pay Madame Theodore. Happily the shares had gone up since his purchase of them, and he lost nothing by the transaction; but it galled him sorely to part with the money. It was as if an edifice that he had been toilsomely raising, stone by stone, had begun to crumble under his hands. He knew not when or whence the next call might come. The time in which he had to save money was so short. Only six years, and the heiress would claim her estate, and Mrs. Winstanley would be left with the empty shell of her present position—the privilege of occupying a fine old Tudor mansion, with enormous stables, and fifteen acres of garden and shrubberies, and an annuity that would barely suffice to maintain existence in a third-rate London square.

Mrs. Winstanley was slow to recover from the shock of her husband's strong language about Theodore's bill. She was sensitive about all things that touched her own personality, and she was peculiarly sensitive about the difference between her husband's age and her own. She had married a man who was her junior; but she had married him with the conviction

that, in his eyes at least, she had all the bloom and beauty of youth, and that he admired and loved her above all other women. That chance allusion to her wrinkles had pierced her heart. She was deeply afflicted by the idea that her husband had perceived the signs of advancing years in her face. And now she fell to perusing her looking-glass more critically than she had ever done before. She saw herself in the searching north light; and the north light was more cruel and more candid than Captain Winstanley. There were lines on her forehead—unmistakable, ineffaceable lines. She could wear her hair in no way that would hide them, unless she had hidden her forehead altogether under a bush of frizzy fluffy curls. There was a faded look about her complexion, too, which she had never before discovered—a wanness, a yellowness. Yes; these things meant age! In such a spirit, perchance, did Elizabeth of England survey the reflection in her mirror, until all the glories of her reign seemed as nothing to her when weighed against this dread horror of fast-coming age. And luckless Mary, cooped up in the narrow rooms at Fotheringay, may have deemed captivity, and the shadow of doom, as but trifling ills compared with the loss of youth and beauty. Once to have been exquisitely beautiful, the inspiration of poets, the chosen model of painters, and to see the glory fading—that, for a weak woman, must be sorrow's crown of sorrow.

Anon dim feelings of jealousy began to gnaw Pamela's heart. She grew watchful of her husband's attentions to other women, suspicious of looks and words that meant no more than a man's desire to please. Society no longer made her

happy. Her Tuesday afternoons lost their charm. There was poison in everything. Lady Ellangowan's flirting ways, which had once only amused her, now tortured her. Captain Winstanley's devotion to this lively matron, which had heretofore seemed only the commoner's tribute of respect to the peeress, now struck his wife as a too obvious infatuation for the woman. She began to feel wretched in the society of certain women—nay, of all women who were younger, or possibly more attractive, than herself. She felt that the only security for her peace would be to live on a desert island, with the husband she had chosen. She was of too weak a mind to hide these growing doubts and ever-augmenting suspicions. The miserable truth oozed out of her in foolish little speeches; those continual droppings which wear the hardest stone, and which wore even the adamant surface of the captain's tranquil temper. There was a homeopathic admixture of this jealous poison in all the food he ate. He could rarely get through a tête-à-tête breakfast or dinner undisturbed by some invidious remark.

One day the captain rose up in his strength, and grappled with this jealous demon. He had let the little speeches, the random shots, pass unheeded until now; but on one particularly dismal morning, a bleak March morning, when the rain beat against the windows, and the deodaras and cypresses were lashed and tormented by the blustering wind, and the low sky was darkly grey, the captain's temper suddenly broke out.

"My dear Pamela, is it possible that these whimpering little speeches of yours mean jealousy?" he asked, looking at her severely from under bent brows.

"I'm sure I never said that I was jealous," faltered Pamela, stirring her tea with a nervous movement of her thin white hand.

"Of course not; no woman cares to describe herself in plain words as an idiot; but of late you have favoured me with a good many imbecile remarks, which all seem to tend one way. You are hurt and wounded when I am decently civil to the women I meet in society. Is that sensible or reasonable, in a woman of your age and experience?"

"You used not to taunt me with my age before we were married, Conrad."

"Do I taunt you with it now? I only say that a woman of forty"—Mrs. Winstanley

shuddered—"ought to have more sense than a girl of eighteen; and that a woman, who has had twenty years' experience of well-bred society, ought not to put on the silly jealousies of a school-girl trying to provoke a quarrel with her first lover."

"It is all very well to pretend to think me weak and foolish, Conrad. Yes, I know I am weak, ridiculously weak, in loving you as intensely as I do. But I cannot help that. It is my nature to cling to others, as the ivy clings to the oak. I would have clung to Violet, if she had been more loving and lovable. But you cannot deny that your conduct to Lady Ellangowan yesterday afternoon was calculated to make any wife unhappy."

"If a wife is to be unhappy because her husband talks to another woman about her horses and her gardens, I suppose I gave you sufficient cause for misery," answered the captain sneeringly. "I can declare that Lady Ellangowan and I were talking of nothing more sentimental."

"Oh, Conrad, it is not what you talked about, though your voice was so subdued that it was impossible for anyone to know what you were saying—"

"Except Lady Ellangowan."

"It was your manner. The way you bent over her, your earnest expression."

"Would you have had me stand three yards off, and bawl at the lady? Or am I bound to assume that bored and vacuous countenance which some young men consider good form? Come, my dear Pamela, pray let us be reasonable. Here are you and I settled for life beside the domestic hearth. We have no children. We are not particularly well-off—it will be as much as we shall be able to do, by-and-by, to make both ends meet. We are neither of us getting younger. These things are serious cares, and we have to bear them. Why should you add to these an imaginary trouble, a torment that has no existence, save in your own perverse mind? If you could but know my low estimate of the women to whom I am civil! I like society: and to get on in society a man must make himself agreeable to influential women. It is the women who have the reins in the social race, and by-and-by, if I should go into Parliament—"

"Parliament!" cried his wife. "You want to become a Member of Parliament, and to be out at all hours of the night! Our home-life would be altogether destroyed then."

"My dear Pamela, if you take such pains to make our home-life miserable, it

will be hardly worth preserving," retorted the captain.

"Conrad, I am going to ask you a question—a very solemn question."

"You alarm me."

"Long ago—before we were married—when Violet was arguing with me against our marriage—you know how vehemently she opposed it——"

"Perfectly. Go on."

"She told me that you had proposed to her before you proposed to me. Oh, Conrad, could that be true?"

The heartrending tone in which the question was asked, the pathetic look that accompanied it, convinced Captain Winstanley that, if he valued his domestic peace, he must perjure himself.

"It had no more foundation than many other assertions of that young lady's," he said. "I may have paid her compliments, and praised her beauty; but how could I think of her for a wife, when you were by? Your soft confiding nature conquered me, before I knew that I was hit."

He got up and went over to his wife and kissed her kindly enough, feeling sorry for her as he might have done for a wayward child that weeps it scarce knows wherefore, oppressed by a vague sense of affliction.

"Let us try to be happy together, Pamela," he pleaded with a sigh; "life is weary work at best."

"That means that you are not happy, Conrad."

"My love, I am as happy as you will let me be."

"Have I ever opposed you in anything?"

"No, dear; but lately you have indulged in covert upraidings that have plagued me sorely. Let us have no more of them. As for your daughter"—his face darkened at the mention of that name—"understand at once, and for ever, that she and I can never inhabit the same house. If she comes, I go. If you cannot live without her, you must learn to live without me."

"Conrad, what have I done that you should talk of such a thing? Have I asked you to let Violet come home?"

"No; but you have behaved mopeishly of late, as if you were pining for her return."

"I pine for nothing but your love."

"That has always been yours."

With this assurance Mrs. Winstanley was fain to content herself, but even this assurance did not make her happy. The glory and brightness had departed from her life somehow; and neither kind words

nor friendly smiles from the captain could lure them back. There are stages in the lives of all of us when life seems hardly worth living: not periods of great calamity, but dull level bits of road along which the journey seems very weary. The sun has hidden himself behind grey clouds, cold winds are blowing up from the bitter east, the birds have left off singing, the landscape has lost its charm. We plod on drearily, and can see no Pole Star in life's darkening sky.

It had been thus of late with Pamela Winstanley. Slowly and gradually the conviction had come to her that her second marriage had been a foolish and ill-advised transaction, resulting inevitably in sorrow and unavailing remorse. The sweet delusion that it had been a love-match on Captain Winstanley's side, as well as on her own, abandoned her all at once, and she found herself face to face with stern common-sense.

That scene about Theodore's bill had exercised a curious effect upon her mind. To an intellect so narrow, trifles were important, and that the husband who had so much admired and praised the elegance of her appearance could grudge the cost of her toilet galled her sorely. It was positively for her the first revelation of her husband's character. His retrenchments in household expenses she had been ready to applaud as praiseworthy economies; but when he assailed her own extravagance, she saw in him a husband who loved far too wisely to love well.

"If he cared for me, if he valued my good looks, he could never object to my spending a few pounds upon a dress," she told herself.

She could not take the captain's common-sense view of a subject so important to herself. Love in her mind meant a blind indulgence like the squire's. Love that could count the cost of its idol's caprices, and calculate the chances of the future, was not love. That feeling of poverty, too, was a new sensation to the mistress of the Abbey House, and a very unpleasant one. Married very young to a man of ample means, who adored her, and never set the slightest restriction upon her expenditure, extravagance had become her second nature. To have to study every outlay, to ask herself whether she could not do without a thing, was a hard trial; but it had become so painful to her to ask the captain for money, that she preferred the novel pain of self-denial to that

humiliation. And then there was the cheerless prospect of the future always staring her in the face, that dreary time after Violet's majority, when it would be a question whether she and her husband could afford to go on living at the Abbey House.

"Everybody will know that my income is diminished," she thought. "However well we may manage, people will know that we are pinching."

This was a vexatious reflection. The sting of poverty itself could not be so sharp as the pain of being known to be poor.

Captain Winstanley pursued the even tenor of his way all this time, and troubled himself but little about his wife's petty sorrows. He did his duty to her according to his own lights, and considered that she had no ground for complaint. He even took pains to be less subdued in his manner to Lady Ellangowan, and to give no shadow of reason for the foolish jealousy he so much despised. His mind was busy about his own affairs. He had saved money since his marriage, and he employed himself a good deal in the investment of his savings. So far he had been lucky in all he touched, and had contrived to increase his capital by one or two speculative ventures in foreign railways. If things went on as well for the next six years, he and his wife might live at the Abbey House, and maintain their station in the county, till the end of the chapter.

"I daresay Pamela will outlive me," thought the captain; "those fragile-looking invalid women are generally long lived. And I have all the chances of the hunting-field, and vicious horses, and other men's blundering with loaded guns, against me. What can happen to a woman who sits at home, and works crewel antimacassars, and reads novels all day, and never drinks anything stronger than tea, and never eats enough to disturb her digestion?"

Secure in this idea of his wife's longevity, and happy in his speculations, Captain Winstanley looked forward cheerfully to the future: and the evil shadow of the day when the hand of fate should thrust him from the good old house had never fallen across his dreams.

CHAPTER XLI. LOVE AND ESTHETICS.

SPRING had returned, primroses and violets were being sold at the street-corners, Parliament was assembled, and London had reawakened to life and vigour. The Dovedales were at their Kensington mansion. The duchess had sent forth her

cards for alternate Thursday evenings of a quasi-literary and scientific character. Lady Mabel was polishing her poems with serious thoughts of publication, but with strictest secrecy. No one but her parents and Roderick Vawdrey had been told of these poetic flights. The book would be given to the world under a *nom de plume*. Lady Mabel was not so much a Philistine as to suppose that writing good poetry could be a disgrace to a duke's daughter; but she felt that the house of Ashbourne would be seriously compromised were the critics to find her guilty of writing doggerel; and critics are apt to deal harshly with the titled muse.

Mr. Vawdrey was in town. He rode a good deal in the Row, spent an hour or so daily at Tattersall's, haunted three or four clubs of a juvenile and frivolous character, and found the task of killing time rather hard labour. Of course there were certain hours in which he was on duty at Kensington. He was expected to eat his luncheon there daily, to dine when neither he nor the ducal house had any other engagement, and to attend all his aunt's parties. There was always a place reserved for him at the dinner-table, however middle-aged and politically or socially important the assembly might be.

He was to be married early in August. Everything was arranged. The honeymoon was to be spent in Sweden and Norway—the only accessible part of Europe which Lady Mabel had not explored. They were to see everything remarkable in the two countries, and to do Denmark as well, if they had time. Lady Mabel was learning Swedish and Norwegian, in order to make the most of her opportunities.

"It is so wretched to be dependent upon couriers and interpreters," she said. "I shall be a more useful companion for you, Roderick, if I thoroughly know the language of each country."

"My dear Mabel, you are a most remarkable girl," exclaimed her betrothed admiringly. "If you go on at this rate, by the time you are forty you will be as great a linguist as Cardinal Wiseman."

"Languages are very easy to learn when one has the habit of studying them, and a slight inclination for etymology," Lady Mabel replied modestly.

Now that the hour of publication was really drawing nigh, the poetess began to feel the need of a confidante. The duchess was admiring, but somewhat obtuse, and

rarely admired in the right place. The duke was out of the question.

If a new Shakespeare had favoured him with the first reading of a tragedy as great as Hamlet, the duke's thoughts would have wandered off to the impending dearth of guano, or the probable exhaustion of Suffolk punches, and the famous breed of Chillingham oxen. So, for want of anyone better, Lady Mabel was constrained to read her verses to her future husband; just as Molière read his plays to his house-keeper, for want of any other hearer.

Now, in this crucial hour of her poetic career, Mabel Ashbourne wanted something more than a patient listener. She wanted a critic with a fine ear for rhythm and euphony. She wanted a judge who could nicely weigh the music of a certain combination of syllables, and who could decide for her when she hesitated between two epithets of equal force, but varying depths of tone.

To this nice task she invited her betrothed sometimes on a sunny April afternoon, when luncheon was over, and the lovers were free to repair to Lady Mabel's own particular den—an airy room on an upper floor, with quaint old Queen Anne casements opening upon a balcony crammed with flowers, and overlooking the umbrageous avenues of Kensington Gardens, with a glimpse of the old red palace in the distance.

Rorie did his best to be useful, and applied himself to his duty with perfect heartiness and good-temper; but luncheon, and the depressing London atmosphere, made him sleepy, and he had sometimes hard work to stifle his yawns, and to keep his eyes open, while Lady Mabel was deep in the entanglement of lines which soared to the seventh heaven of metaphysics. Unhappily Rorie knew hardly anything about metaphysics; and a feeling of despair took possession of him when his sweetheart's poetry degenerated into diluted Hegelism, or rose to a feeble imitation of Browning's obscurest verse.

"Either I must be intensely stupid or this must be rather difficult to understand," he thought helplessly, when Mabel had favoured him with the perusal of the first act of a tragedy or poetic dialogue, in which the hero, a kind of milk-and-watery Faustus, held converse, and argued upon the deeper questions of life and faith, with a very mild Mephisto.

"I'm afraid you don't like the opening of my Tragedy of the Sceptic Soul," Lady

Mabel said with a somewhat offended air, as she looked up at the close of the act, and saw poor Rorie gazing at her with watery eyes, and an intensely despondent expression of countenance.

"I'm afraid I'm rather dense this afternoon," he said with hasty apology. "I think your first act is beautifully written—the lines are full of music; nobody with an ear for euphony could doubt that; but I—forgive me, I fancy you are sometimes a shade too metaphysical—and those scientific terms which you occasionally employ, I fear will be a little over the heads of the general public——"

"My dear Roderick, do you suppose that in an age whose highest characteristic is the rapid advance of scientific knowledge, there can be anybody so benighted as not to understand the terminology of science?"

"Perhaps not, dear. I fear I am very much behind the times. I have lived too much in Hampshire. I frankly confess that some expressions in your—er—Tragedy—of—er—Soulless Scept—Sceptic Soul—were Greek to me."

"Poor dear Roderick, I should hardly take you as the highest example of the Zeitgeist; but I won't allow you to call yourself stupid. I'm glad you like the swing of the verse. Did it remind you of any contemporary poet?"

"Well, yes; I think it dimly suggested Browning."

"I am glad of that. I would not for worlds be an imitator; but Browning is my idol among poets."

"Some of his minor pieces are awfully jolly," said the incorrigible Rorie. "That little poem called Youth and Art, for instance. And James Lee's Wife is rather nice, if one could quite get at what it means. But I suppose that is too much to expect from any great poet?"

"There are deeper meanings beneath the surface—meanings which require study," replied Mabel condescendingly. "Those are the religion of poetry——"

"No doubt," assented Rorie hastily; "but frankly, my dear Mabel, if you want your book to be popular——"

"I don't want my book to be popular. Browning is not popular. If I had wanted to be popular, I should have worked on a lower level. I would even have stooped to write a novel."

"Well, then, I will say if you want your poem to be understood by the average intellect, I really would sink the scientific

terminology, and throw overboard a good deal of the metaphysics. Byron has not a scientific or technical phrase in all his poems."

"My dear Roderick, you surely would not compare me to Byron, the poet of the Philistines. You might as well compare me with the author of *Lalla Rookh*, or advise me to write like Rogers or Campbell."

"I beg your pardon, my dear Mabel. I'm afraid I must be an out and out Philistine, for to my mind Byron is the prince of poets. I would rather have written *The Giaour* than anything that has ever been published since it appeared."

Mabel Ashbourne closed her manuscript volume with a sigh, and registered an oath that she would never read any more of her poetry to Roderick Vawdrey. It was quite useless. The poor young man meant well, but he was incorrigibly stupid.

"In the realm of thought we must dwell apart all our lives," Mabel told herself despairingly.

"The horses are ordered for five," she said, as she locked the precious volume in her desk; "will you get yours, and come back for me?"

"I shall be delighted," answered her lover, relieved at being let off so easily.

It was about this time that Lord Mallow, who was working with all his might for the regeneration of his country, made a great hit in the House by his speech on the Irish land question. He had been doing wonderful things in Dublin during the winter, holding forth to patriotic assemblies in the Round Room of the Rotunda, boldly declaring himself a champion of the Home Rulers' cause, demanding Repeal and nothing but Repeal. He was one of the few Repealers who had a stake in the country, and who was likely to lose by the disruption of social order. If foolish, he was at least disinterested, and had the courage of his opinions.

In the House of Commons Lord Mallow was not ashamed to repeat the arguments he had used in the Round Room. If his language was less vehement at Westminster than it had been in Dublin, his opinions were no less thorough. He had his party here, as well as on the other side of the Irish Channel; and his party applauded him. Here was a statesman and a landowner willing to give an ell, where Mr. Gladstone's Land Act gave only an inch. Hibernian newspapers sang his praises in glowing words, comparing him

to Burke, Curran, and O'Connell. He had for some time been a small lion at evening parties; he now began to be lionised at serious dinners. The Duchess of Devonshire considered it a nice trait in his character that, although he was so much in request, and worked so hard in the House, he never missed one of her Thursday evenings. Even when there was an important debate on he would tear up Birdcage Walk in a hansom, and spend an hour in the duchess's amber drawing-rooms, enlightening Lady Mabel as to the latest aspect of the Policy of Conciliation, or standing by the piano while she played Chopin.

Lord Mallow had never forgotten his delight at finding a young lady thoroughly acquainted with the history of his native land, thoroughly interested in Erin's struggles and Erin's hopes; a young lady who knew all about the Protestants of Ulster, and what was meant by Fixity of Tenure. He came to Lady Mabel for sympathy in his triumphs, and he came to her in his disappointments. She was pleased and flattered by his faith in her wisdom, and was always ready to lend a gracious ear. She, whose soul was full of ambition, was deeply interested in the career of an ambitious young man—a man who had every excuse for being shallow and idle, and yet was neither.

"If Roderick were only like him there would be nothing wanting in my life," she thought regretfully. "I should have felt such pride in a husband's fame; I should have worked so gladly to assist him in his career. The driest blue-books would not have been too weary for me—the dullest drudgery of parliamentary detail would have been pleasant work, if it could have helped him in his progress to political distinctions."

One evening, when Mabel and Lord Mallow were standing in the embrasure of a window, walled in by the crowd of aristocratic nobodies and intellectual eccentricities, talking earnestly of poor Erin and her chances of ultimate happiness, the lady, almost unawares, quoted a couplet of her own which seemed peculiarly applicable to the argument.

"Whose lines are those?" Lord Mallow asked eagerly; "I never heard them before."

Mabel blushed like a schoolgirl detected in sending a valentine.

"Upon my soul," cried the Irishman, "I believe they are your own! Yes, I am

sure of it. You, whose mind is so high above the common level, must sometimes express yourself in poetry. They are yours, are they not?"

"Can you keep a secret?" Lady Mabel asked shyly.

"For you? Yes, on the rack. Wild horses should not tear it out of my heart; boiling lead, falling on me drop by drop, should not extort it from me."

"The lines are mine. I have written a good deal—in verse. I am going to publish a volume, anonymously, before the season is over. It is quite a secret. No one—except mamma and papa, and Mr. Vawdrey—knows anything about it."

"How proud they—how especially proud Mr. Vawdrey must be of your genius," said Lord Mallow. "What a lucky fellow he is!"

He was thinking at that moment of Violet Tempest, to whose secret preference for Roderick Vawdrey he attributed his own rejection. And now here—where again he might have found the fair ideal of his youthful dreams—here where he might have hoped to form an alliance at once socially and politically advantageous—this young Hampshire squire was before him.

"I don't think Mr. Vawdrey is particularly interested in my poetical efforts," Lady Mabel said with assumed carelessness. "He doesn't care for poetry. He likes Byron."

"What an admirable epigram!" cried the Hibernian, to whom flattery was second nature. "I shall put that down in my commonplace book when I go home. How I wish you would honour me—but it is to ask too much, perhaps—how proud I should be if you would let me hear, or see, some of your poems."

"Would you really like——" faltered Lady Mabel.

"Like! I should deem it the highest privilege your friendship could vouchsafe."

"If I felt sure it would not bore you, I should like much to have your opinion, your candid opinion" (Lord Mallow tried to look the essence of candour) "upon some things I have written. But it would be really to impose too much upon your good-nature."

"It would be to make me the proudest, and—for that one brief hour at least—the happiest of men," protested Lord Mallow, looking intensely sentimental.

"And you will deal frankly with me?"

You will not flatter? You will be as severe as an Edinburgh reviewer?"

"I will be positively brutal," said Lord Mallow. "I will try to imagine myself an elderly feminine contributor to the Saturday, looking at you with vinegar gaze through a pair of spectacles, bent upon spotting every fleck and flaw in your work, and predetermined not to see anything good in it."

"Then I will trust you!" cried Lady Mabel, with a gush. "I have longed for a listener who could understand and criticise, and who would be too honourable to flatter. I will trust you, as Marguerite of Valois trusted Clement Marob."

Lord Mallow did not know anything about the French poet and his royal mistress, but he contrived to look as if he did. And, before he ran away to the House presently, he gave Lady Mabel's hand a tender little pressure, which she accepted in all good faith as a sign manual of the compact between them.

They met in the Row next morning, and Lord Mallow asked—as earnestly as if the answer involved vital issues—when he might be permitted to hear those interesting poems.

"Whenever you can spare time to listen," answered Lady Mabel, more flattered by his earnestness than by all the adulatory sugar-plums which had been showered upon her since her début. "If you have nothing better to do this afternoon——"

"Could I have anything better to do?"

"We won't enter upon so wide a question," said Lady Mabel, laughing prettily. "If committee-rooms and public affairs can spare you for an hour or two, come to tea with mamma at five. I'll get her to deny herself to all the rest of the world, and we can have an undisturbed hour in which you can deal severely with my poor little efforts."

Thus it happened that, in the sweet spring weather, while Roderick was on the stand at Epsom, watching the City and Suburban winner pursue his meteor course along the close-cropped sward, Lord Mallow was sitting at ease in a flowery fauteuil in the Queen Anne morning-room at Kensington, sipping orange-scented tea out of eggshell porcelain, and listening to Lady Mabel's dulcet accents, as she somewhat monotonously and inexpressively rehearsed *The Tragedy of a Sceptic Soul*.

The poem was long, and, sooth to say,

passing dreary; and, much as he admired the duke's daughter, there were moments when Lord Mallow felt his eyelids drooping, and heard a buzzing, as of summer insects, in his ears.

There was no point of interest in all this rhythmical meandering whereon the hapless young nobleman could fix his attention. Another minute and his sceptic soul would be wandering at ease in the flowery fields of sleep. He pulled himself together with an effort, just as the eggshell cup and saucer were slipping from his relaxing grasp. He asked the duchess for another cup of that delicious tea. He gazed resolutely at the fair-faced maiden, whose rosy lips moved graciously, discoursing shallowest platitudes clothed in erudite polysyllables, and then at the first pause—when Lady Mabel laid down her velvet-bound volume, and looked timidly upward for his opinion—Lord Mallow poured forth a torrent of eloquence, such as he always had in stock, and praised *The Sceptic Soul* as no poem and no poet had ever been praised before, save by Hibernian critic.

He was so grateful to Providence for having escaped falling asleep that he could have gone on for ever. But if anyone had asked Lord Mallow what *The Tragedy of the Sceptic Soul* was about, Lord Mallow would have been spun.

When a strong-minded woman is weak upon one particular point she is apt to be very weak. Lady Mabel's weakness was to fancy herself a second Browning. She had never yet enjoyed the bliss of having her own idea of herself confirmed by independent evidence. Her soul thrilled as Lord Mallow poured forth his praises; talking of *The Book* and *the Ring*, and *Paracelsus*, and a great deal more, of which he knew very little, and seeing in the expression of Lady Mabel's eyes and mouth that he was saying the right thing, and could hardly say too much.

They were tête-à-tête by this time, for the duchess was sleeping frankly, her crewel-work drooping from the hands that lay idle in her lap; her second cup of tea on the table beside her, half-finished.

"I don't know how it is," she was wont to say apologetically, after these placid slumbers. "There is something in Mabel's voice that always sends me to sleep. Her tones are so musical."

"And do you really advise me to publish?" asked Lady Mabel, fluttered and happy.

"It would be a sin to keep such verses hidden from the world."

"They will be published anonymously, of course. I could not endure to be pointed at as the author of *The Sceptic Soul*. To feel that every eye was upon me—at the opera—in the Row—everywhere! It would be too dreadful. I should be proud to know that I had influenced my age—given a new bent to thought—but no one must be able to point at me."

"'Thou canst not say I did it,'" quoted Lord Mallow. "I entirely appreciate your feelings. Publicity of that sort must be revolting to a delicate mind. I should think Byron would have enjoyed life a great deal better if he had never been known as the author of *Childe Harold*. He reduced himself to a social play-actor—and always had to pose in his particular rôle—the Noble Poet. If Bacon really wrote the plays we call Shakespeare's, and kept the secret all his life, he was indeed the wisest of mankind."

"You have done nothing but praise me," said Lady Mabel, after a thoughtful pause, during which she had trifled with the golden clasp of her volume; "I want you to do something more than that. I want you to advise—to tell me where I am redundant—to point out where I am weak. I want you to help me in the labour of polishing."

Lord Mallow pulled his whisker doubtfully. This was dreadful. He should have to go into particulars presently, to say what lines pleased him best, which of the various metres into which the tragedy was broken up—like a new suburb into squares and crescents and streets—seemed to him happiest and most original.

"Can you trust me with that precious volume?" he asked. "If you can, I will spend the quiet hours of the night in pondering over its pages, and will give you the result of my meditations to-morrow."

Mabel put the book into his hand with a grateful smile.

"Pray be frank with me," she pleaded. "Praise like yours is perilous."

Lord Mallow kissed her hand this time, instead of merely pressing it, and went away radiant, with the velvet-bound book under his arm.

"She's a sweet girl," he said to himself, as he hailed a cab. "I wish she wasn't engaged to that Hampshire booby, and I wish she didn't write poetry. Hard

that I should have to do the Hampshire booby's work! If I were to leave this book in a hansom now—there'd be an awful situation!"

Happily for the rising statesman, he was blest with a clever young secretary, who wrote a good many letters for him, read blue-books, got up statistics, and interviewed obtrusive visitors from the Green Isle. To this young student, Lord Mallow, in strictest secrecy, confided Lady Mabel's manuscript.

"Read it carefully, Allan, while I'm at the House, and make a note of everything that's bad on one sheet of paper, and of everything that's good on another. You may just run your pencil along the margin wherever you think I might write 'divine!' 'grandly original!' 'what pathos!' or anything of that sort."

The secretary was a conscientious young man, and did his work nobly. He sat far into the small hours, ploughing through *The Sceptic Soul*. It was tough work; but Mr. Allan was Scotch and dogged, and prided himself upon his critical faculty. This autopsy of a fine lady's poem was a congenial labour. He scribbled pages of criticism, went into the minutest details of style, found a great deal to blame and not much to praise, and gave his employer a complete digest of the poem before breakfast next morning.

Lord Mallow attended the duchess's kettledrum again that afternoon, and this time he was in no wise at sea. He handled *The Sceptic Soul* as if every line of it had been engraven on the tablet of his mind.

"See here now," he cried, turning to a pencilled margin; "I call this a remarkable passage, yet I think it might be strengthened by some trifling excisions;" and then he showed Lady Mabel how, by pruning twenty lines off a passage of thirty-one, a much finer effect might be attained.

"And you really think my thought stands out more clearly?" asked Mabel, looking regretfully at the lines through which Lord Mallow had run his pencil—some of her finest lines.

"I am sure of it. That grand idea of yours was like a star in a hazy sky. We have cleared away the fog."

Lady Mabel sighed. "To me the meaning of the whole passage seemed so obvious," she said.

"Because it was your own thought. A mother knows her own children however they are dressed."

This second tea-drinking was a very serious affair. Lord Mallow went at the poem like a professional reviewer, and criticised without mercy, yet contrived not to wound the author's vanity.

"It is because you have real genius that I venture to be brutally candid," he said, when, by those slap-dash pencil-marks of his—always with the author's consent—he had reduced the *Tragedy of the Sceptic Soul* to about one-third of its original length. "I was carried away yesterday by my first impressions; to-day I am coldly critical. I have set my heart upon your poem making a great success."

This last sentence, freely translated, might be taken to mean: "I should not like such an elegant young woman to make an utter fool of herself."

Mr. Vawdrey came in while critic and poet were at work, and was told what they were doing. He evinced no unworthy jealousy, but seemed glad that Lord Mallow should be so useful.

"It's a very fine poem," he said, "but there's too much metaphysics in it. I told Mabel so the other day. She must alter a good deal of it if she wants to be understood of the people."

"My dear Roderick, my poem is metaphysical or it is nothing," Mabel answered pettishly.

She could bear criticism from Lord Mallow better than criticism from Roderick. After this it became an established custom for Lord Mallow to drop in every day, to inspect the progress of Lady Mabel's poems in the course of their preparation for the press. The business part of the matter had been delegated to him, as much more au fait in such things than homely rustic Rorie. He chose the publisher, and arranged the size of the volume, type, binding, initials, tail-pieces, every detail. The paper was to be thick and creamy, the type mediæval, the borders were to be printed in carmine, the initials and tail-pieces specially drawn and engraved, and as quaint as the wood-cuts in an old edition of *Le Lutrin*. The book was to have red edges, and a smooth grey linen binding with silver lettering. It was to be altogether a gem of typographic art.

By the end of May Lady Mabel's poems were all in type, and there was much discussion about commas and notes of admiration, syllables too much or too little, in the flowery morning-room at Kensington, what time Roderick Vawdrey—sorely at a loss for occupation—wasted the summer

hours at races or other outdoor amusements within easy reach of London, or went to out-of-the-way places to look at hunters of wonderful repute, which, on inspection, were generally disappointing.

TWENTY YEARS' CAPTIVITY IN CEYLON.

Two hundred and twenty-two years ago the East India Company had been founded more than fifty years; our first factory, at Surat, was forty-five years old; Sir Thomas Roe had gone as James the First's ambassador to the Great Mogul; yet we were looked on as (what we were) a set of peddling traders, willing to submit to almost any humiliation for the sake of making money.

Nowadays, if a white man in India goes on the loose—an engineer or railway-stoker or so forth—he may, with care, live for months upon the natives, doing just as he likes, and getting the best of everything. The thing has been tried again and again. All that an impudent rascal has to do is to keep out of the way of Europeans and educated Hindoos, and to show a paper purporting that he is sent round by Government to take some census or other, and everybody will be ready to fee him and make him presents, hoping thereby to get his good word with the authorities. How differently the white man then fared amongst Orientals, Robert Knox's veracious narrative will show:

"Anno 1657, the Ann Frigate, of London, Captain R. Knox, commander, on the one-and-twentieth day of January, set sail out of the Downs, in the service of the Hon. East India Company, bound for Fort St. George, on the coast of Coromandel, to trade one year from port to port in India." But as they were lading for England, "happened such a mighty storm that we were forced to cut our main-mast by the board," and were sent by the agent at Fort St. George to Cotair Bay in Ceylon, there to sell some cloth while damages were being repaired.

Ceylon was quite new ground to the English, and "at our first coming we were shy and jealous of the people of the place;" but after twenty days' coming and going they gained confidence, and the captain and his son and eighteen men, venturing ashore, were captured. The Cingalese treated them very well, quartering the officers "in a house all hanged with white calico, which is the greatest

honour they can show to any;" and assured them that they were only detained till the king had got ready his present and letters to the English nation. "Therefore," urged the native officials, "do you take order for bringing the ship up into the river, lest the Dutch fire her if she remains in the bay." Naturally, instead of doing this, the captain sends and exhorts those left on board to shot their guns, put top chains on their cables, and keep a watch. The Cingalese, thinking he has been doing what they wish, bid him send a more urgent message by his son, he being security for his return; so the writer of the narrative is despatched on board, and tells the rest of the crew how things are going, and gets them to sign a letter, "which should clear his father and himself," to the effect that they will not obey the captain, but will stand on their own defence. By-and-by the ship sails away, and pretty soon those left behind are marched inland, and "separated and placed asunder, one in a village, where we could have none to confer withal or look upon but the horrible black faces of our heathen enemies. Yet was God so merciful to us as not to suffer them to part my father and I."

On their journey they had been very kindly treated; men being appointed to carry their little baggage, and plenty of all kinds of food being brought them ready cooked. The people had to pay for all this, "for we fed like soldiers upon free quarters; yet I think we gave them good content for all the charge we put them to, which was to have the satisfaction of seeing us eat to the public view of all beholders, who greatly admired us, having never seen Englishmen before. It was also great entertainment to them to observe our manner of eating with spoons, which some of us had, and that we could not take the rice up in our hands and put it to our mouths without spilling, as they do, nor gaped and poured water into our mouths out of pots according to their country's custom."

Father and son were presently settled in the same house, not far from Candy; the father choosing an open house, having only a roof, "their houses being dark and dirty. Herein the natives placed a cot or bedstead for him, which in their account is an extraordinary lodging, and for me a mat upon the ground."

The season was unhealthy; many of the people dying of fever and ague, "inasmuch that many times we were forced to remain

an hungry, there being none well enough to boil or bring victuals unto us." For a time their health kept good, and life was pretty bearable with them: "We had with us a Practice of Piety, and Mr. Rogers's seven treatises called the Practice of Christianity, with which companions we did frequently discourse, and in the cool of the evening walk abroad in the fields for a refreshing, tired with being all day in our house or prison." But soon the father fell sick, and was full of remorse at having brought his son ashore again. And so for weary months Captain Knox "lay groaning and sighing in a most piteous manner, insomuch that I was almost reduced to the same condition, but then I felt that doctrine of Mr. Rogers most true—that God is most sweet when the world is most bitter."

Then the father died, having first arranged "the order concerning his burial—that having no winding-sheet, I should pull his shirt over his head and slip his breeches over his feet, and so wrap him up in the mat he laid upon."

The son was so sick that he could scarcely move; but he hired some one to help dig a grave, and then, with the aid of their black serving lad, the body was decently laid below ground, "and I remained where I was before, with none but my black boy and my ague to bear me company."

By-and-by, to his great joy, in exchange for a cap which the black boy had knitted, he got an English Bible. "While I was fishing an old man asked if I could read: for, said he, I have a book which I got when the Portuguese lost Colombo." We can imagine his feelings when he found what book it was; he was ready to pay even his one gold pagoda for it if needful, but his boy told him the old man would only want a trifle. The moment he got it he fell to pricking for verses, after the fashion of the time; and "the first place the book opened in was the sixteenth chapter of Acts, and the verse that my eye first pitched on was: 'What must I do to be saved?'"

His countrymen began to act as uneducated Englishmen too often do among natives. "At first they daily expected to be put to work, but finding the king's order was to feed them well only, they began to domineer, and would not be content unless they had such victuals as pleased them, and oftentimes used to throw the pots, and victuals and all, at their heads that brought them, which they

patiently would bear." Food was granted them, but not clothes; so instead of taking their allowance ready dressed, "they devised to take it raw, and so to pinch somewhat out of their bellies to save for their backs." Cap-knitting, too, brought in some money, "but at length, we plying hard our new-learned trade, caps began to abound, which reduced several of our nation to great want."

Quiet as he was himself, young Knox could not help relishing the instances which he gives of "English metal;" how one of these men, because a potter would not sell to him at his own price, quarrelled with him, and getting the worst of it, complained to the magistrate "as being one that belonged unto the king." The poor potter was bound by soldiers, and while he was in that state the Englishman was sent in to beat him, and was told to take the pots for nothing, "and the soldiers laid in many blows besides." A wine merchant fared no better; because he would not supply drink for nothing to a party of English he and his friends got their heads broken, and when they ran off streaming with blood to their great men, they were only laughed at into the bargain. "Our men got two or three black and blue blows, but they came home with their bellies full of drink for their pains."

Knox, too, had a quaint way of taking care of himself. His house was too small to cook as well as live in, so he got the people to build him a bigger one in a convenient garden belonging to the king. He and his boy whitened the walls, a capital crime among the Cingalese, "for none may white their houses with lime, that being peculiar to royal houses and temples. But being a stranger nothing was made of it." Here he lived in great comfort, keeping hogs and hens, and learning to knit caps, and being allowed all the coconuts that fell down before gathering-time.

There was another set of fourteen Englishmen in the island, part of the crew of the ship Persian Merchant, cast away on the Maldives. These also the king kept in the same way, apparently dreading lest if they were permitted to go home they should tell of the nakedness of the land, and induce their countrymen to do as the Portuguese and Dutch had already done. These showed more "metal and manfulness" than even Knox's companions, killing cows because they did not like their short commons of flesh, and turning the king's officers out of a garden of

jack-trees, from which the royal elephants were fed; "yet these gentlemen were so civil that, notwithstanding this affront, they laid no punishment upon them, but a few days after they were removed to another house where was a garden but no jack-trees in it, and because they would not allow the king a few they lost all themselves."

Two lads of this company were taken into the king's service, and fared as every courtier fared sooner or later under such a tyrant. One of them privately got speech of the Dutch ambassador, and was caught. Had he been a courtier he would surely have been put to death; being a foreigner he was only banished to the mountains, where he took a wife and "lived better content than in the palace." The other broke a china dish, took sanctuary, and was forgiven. But by-and-by he committed the unpardonable sin of having to do with written letters, of which the king was as jealous as if he had thought a letter was able to blow up his government. A Portuguese wrote to him to try to get him begged off some unpleasant duty, and he showed the letter to a native courtier. After a time the courtier told the king; whereupon, "the Portuguese, the Englishman, and he that read the letter, because he had informed no sooner, were torn to pieces by the elephants."

So things went on till the year 1664, when the right worshipful Sir Edward Winter, governor and agent of Fort St. George, wrote to the king on behalf of the captives, and the Dutch ambassador also made an effort for them. Rajah-singah gave them their choice whether they would go away in their own boat (grown crazy through age) or with the Dutch ambassador. They chose the latter course, but just then the king's intolerable cruelty forced his people into a rebellion. While this was going on their allowance was stopped, and they were reduced to such straits that they were glad to join in the scrambles for money and clothes which were made by the rebel princes. In this way they got enough to provide their Christmas dinner, which they proceeded to eat together, "intending neither to make nor meddle on the one side or on the other."

The rebellion failed miserably; the boy-prince, who was to have been made king in Rajah-singah's room, fled with his aunt to the very father whom he was to have supplanted. This amazed and discouraged

the rebels, as much as taking away their queen does a swarm of bees.

After the rebellion was stamped out (by the royal elephants), nothing more was heard of travelling with the Dutch ambassador, and all Knox's comrades save three, despairing of liberty, took wives and settled down among the natives; but Knox himself never for an hour gave up the hope of some day or other escaping. This the king determined, if possible, to prevent; for when a Dutch invasion came rather near the English settlement, he had them all hurried off to the mountains, poor Knox losing all his stock in trade, "lying scattered abroad in betel-nuts, so that I called to mind Job's words: 'Naked came I into the world, and naked shall I return.'" The poor mountaineers had a benefit; the king laid on them the maintenance of all these idle prisoners; "and if their ability would not reach thereunto, it was the king's order to bid them sell their cattle and goods, and when that was done, their wives and children, rather than we should want of our due allowance."

What with hogs, and hens, and betel-nuts, and knitted caps, Knox managed to make money, and actually bought for five dollars a plot of ground, taking care to ascertain of the district governor that it was land which might be bought and sold, and "not in the least litigious." "The place liked me wondrous well, it being a point of land standing into a cornfield, so that cornfields were on three sides of it, and very well watered. In the ground eight cocoanut-trees and all sorts of fruit trees; but it had been so long desolate that it was all overgrown with bushes." Unfortunately he does not say how much ground it was, but goes on to tell us how the contract was "written upon a leaf, after that country manner, and witnessed by seven or eight men of the best quality in the town." Here he and three of his companions built a house, "and with a joint consent concluded that only single men and bachelors should dwell there, and such as would not be conformable to this agreement to forfeit all right and claim to the benefit." In two years' time two out of the four, finding the low country beset with watchers, and weary of peddling and cap-selling about the northern mountains, took wives; so that Knox was left with only Stephen Rutland, "whose inclination and resolution was as steadfast as mine against marriage."

The native wives were helpful, spinning

cotton yarn and knitting the always saleable caps, while the men, among other trades, took to "stilling rack," for which Rajah-singah never thought of making them take out a license. In fact, they thrived remarkably well, "and this I speak to the praise and glory of our God, who loves the stranger in giving him food and raiment, and hath been pleased to give us favour and a good repnte in the sight of our enemies. Nor can we complain for want of justice, or that our cause hath been discountenanced, but rather we have been favoured above the natives themselves."

At last the king thought that these idle foreigners might be made useful; and beginning with some Dutch runaways, who would be sure not to desert again for fear of the gallows, he formed a small force of married men. The English were too few to form a separate company, and the Portuguese would not serve under a Dutchman, so all were divided into two corps; but the few English pretty soon took to paying some poor runaway Dutch to serve in their stead, finding that the king's soldiers never got either pay or allowance. On the other hand, "he winks at their failings more than he uses to do towards his natural subjects; for upon the watch they use to be very negligent, one lying drunk here and another there. They have to guard one of the magazines, and the king has contrived their station a pretty good distance from the Court, that they might swear and swagger out of his hearing." One great privilege was that they might wear what clothes they pleased—"gold, silver, or silk, and shoes and stockings, and a shoulder-belt and sword, and their houses whitened with lime—all which the Chingulays are not permitted to do."

Knox was puzzled why Rajah-singah is at such pains and cost to keep so many white men in captivity. "It cannot be out of hope of profit or advantage; neither is it in the power of money to redeem any, for that he neither values nor needs." He concluded that he kept them "out of love and favour, delighting in their company, and to have them ready at command." His subjects winced under the burden, "being more like slaves unto us than we unto the king, and their poverty oftentimes so great that, for want of what they are forced to supply us with themselves, their wives and children must suffer hunger. Such," he adds, in the true Puritan vein, "is the favour that Almighty God hath

given Christian people in the sight of this heathen king, whose entertainment and usage of them is thus favourable."

Meanwhile the joint household thrived admirably. Goats were added to the hens and hogs; and, with a great thorn gate, like the gate of the city, the place was made as grand as any nobleman's seat in the land; the object of all this neatness being to prevent the people from thinking they had any intent to escape.

Knox next took to lending out corn, "the benefit of which is fifty per cent. per annum." But as there were always a number of creditors, and those who came first seized what was due to them, he was put to the trouble of watching early and late till his debtors' crops were ripe, "and many times missed of them after all his pains." Those who had to wait till the next year were paid, if they could get it, cent. per cent.; "but the interest never runs up higher, though the debt be seven years unpaid."

Once Knox was summoned to Court, a promotion which he looked on as something like a sentence of death; but he begged off, and stayed away when sent for; and at last, as seems to have been usual, the king got tired of sending for him.

And now he and his comrade began to plan their long-meditated escape. The only feasible way seemed by travelling northward; and the difficulties they knew were great, for "there be no highways, but a multitude of little paths, some into the woods where they sow their corn, and the whole country covered with woods that a man cannot see anything but just before him. And the ways change often, for having cut down the wood and got off one crop they leave it, and wood soon grows over it again."

Worst of all is the want of good water, there being no springs in that north country, but only foul pools. Happily bang (Indian hemp) beaten to powder with jaggory (native sugar) was "a counter poison against the filthy venomous water." And so, with a store of pepper, garlic, combs, tobacco, and all sorts of iron ware, they made their first northern expedition. It gives us an idea at once of their patience and cautiousness that they spent eight or nine years in peddling about, and stealthily learning what they could about the roads, &c. Four years they were hindered by droughts, unfelt in their mountain homes, but ruinous in the

northern plains; but at last they started in good earnest, and to throw the magistrates of the towns they passed through off the scent, they paid for supplies of dried deer's flesh, which they wished to have provided against their return. Everywhere they were kindly treated; one governor, "being disposed to be merry, sent for people whose trade it is to dance and show tricks, the men beating drums, and the women turning brass basons on one of their fingers, twirling it round very swift and wondrous strange, tossing up balls into the air one after another to the number of nine, and catching them as they fall, and as fast as they do catch them still they toss them up again, so that there are always seven up in the air. The beholding them spent most part of the night, which we merrily called our old host's civility to us at our last parting, as it proved, indeed, though he, honest man, then little dreamed of any such thing."

Their aim was to strike across to the district inhabited by Malabars, and through it to the Dutch fort of Manaar; but their journey was a long one, for whenever they came near a high road they went aside into the woods, through which travelling was difficult. For defence against tigers or bears they had each a good knife and a small axe fastened to a long staff; "as for elephants, there is no standing against them, but the best defence is to flee from them." Once they had to hide from a party of deer-catchers, who manage in this wise: "Into a cane basket like a funnel they put fire and certain pitchy wood which gives an exceeding light. This they carry on their heads with the flame foremost, the basket hiding him that is under it and them that come behind. In their hands they carry three or four small bells, which they tingle as they go, that the noise of their steps should not be heard." A man with bow and arrows comes behind, and every kind of beast, except the wild hog, will stand and stare at the light, and so wait to be shot, "and they will distinguish one beast from another by the glittering of their eyes."

At another time they came upon an elephant hunt, and had much ado to creep into a hollow tree. At night they pushed on again, and were rejoiced to hear by the creaking boughs that the elephants were between them and the hunters' voices; "for a very good guard these elephants were, and methought like the darkness that came between Israel and the Egyptians."

Then, having passed all the tame inhabitants, they began to fear lest the Veddahs might see and slay them; the Veddahs being wild people who live in separate pairs, having no idea even of a household, the young going off as soon as they are old enough, like the young of birds.

After many perils they got into the Malabar country; and here they found the woods so full of thorns and shrubby bushes, and so thronged with elephants, which they kept at bay by flinging lighted brands, that they took to the river's edge, and made their way upon the sand.

At last, "about four of the clock on Saturday afternoon, October 18th, 1679, which day God grant us grace that we may never forget," they reached the Dutch fort of Aripo, whence they were passed on to Manaar. There the captain of the castle received them with great kindness, "and it seemed not a little strange to us, who had so long eat our meat on leaves, sitting on the ground, now to sit on chairs and eat out of china dishes at a table, we being in such habit and guise, our natural colour excepted, that we seemed not fit to eat with the captain's servants, no, nor with his slaves." Of course the people came flocking to see them, "and to enquire about husbands, sons, and relations which were prisoners in Candy."

Thence they are shipped to Colombo, where the governor, Ricklof van Gons, "standing in a large and stately room, paved with black and white stones," questioned them much about Candyan politics, and then feasted them right royally. Batavia is their next station; "and as we came to greater men so we found greater kindness, for the Governor of Batavia's reception of us and favours to us exceeded, if possible, those of the others. He told us he had omitted no means for our redemption . . . and then his own tailor was ordered to take measure of us, and furnish us with two suits of apparel. And oftentimes the general would send for me to his own table, at which sat only himself and lady, who was all bespangled with diamonds and pearls, the trumpet sounding all the while we did eat. We finding ourselves thus kindly entertained, and our habits changed, therefore cut off our beards, which we had brought with us out of our captivity, God having rolled away the reproach of Candy from us." The Dutchman was going to send them to England, when two English merchants bound for Bantam

agreed to take them thither, and the agent at Bantam put them on board the good ship *Cæsar*, which reached England in September, 1680.

It is worth noting that during Knox's captivity the French tried to get a settlement in Ceylon, and with their usual ill-success at colonising, failed; and very amusing, in contrast with the submissiveness of the Dutch, are the airs which their ambassador gave himself. First, he would insist on riding up to the palace instead of dismounting outside the city gate; then, when he came in great state to an audience, and the king kept him waiting, he stalked away to his lodging. "Some of the court would have stopped him by elephants that stood hard by, turning them to the gate through which he was to pass; but he would not be so stopped, but laid his hand upon his sword, so the people, seeing his resolution, called the elephants away and let him pass." The poor man suffered for his haughtiness; ambassador though he was, he was put in chains, and then he and his suite quarrelled, "his carriage being so imperious," and the suite maintained themselves by "stilling rack, and keeping the greatest taverns in the city."

A curious portrait, too, is that of old Father Vergonse, "a Genoese born, of the Jesuits' order, who, when the king asked him if it would not be better for him to lay aside his old coat and cap and do as two other priests had done—receive honour from him? replied that he boasted more in that old habit and the name of Jesus than in all the honour that he could do him. For which saying the king valued him all the more; and he had a pretty library about him, and died in his bed of old age; whereas the other two priests in the king's service died miserably, one of a canker, and the other, by the king's order, was trampled to death by elephants."

Further details of Knox's book we cannot give. The frontispiece is a portrait of him from a picture painted in 1695—a good English face somewhat of the Oliver Cromwell type, and there is a curious dedication to the East India Company—of which Sir Josiah Child, of Childs' Bank, was then governor—regretting that "this book is the whole return I made from the Indies after twenty years' stay there." This is followed by an attestation from the secretary of the Honorable East India Company's Court, that they esteem the book worthy of credit, and have encouraged him to make it public; and then

comes a letter from no less a man than Sir Christopher Wren, saying he has read the MS., which to him seems written with great truth and integrity, and he recommends it to be published, as likely to give great satisfaction to the curious.

We know plenty about Ceylon as it is, but there is a good deal of interest in reading what it was and how Europeans fared there two hundred and twenty years ago.

HOPE.

I LAY in grief,
And Hope drew near to where I tossed alone
Without relief,
And paused a moment when she heard that moan;
Then raised her glowing eyes and met mine own.
Never a word she said,
Yet still I gazed and still was comforted.
Then bending low with wond'rous grace
She laid her hand upon my eyes,
Her cool hand on my burning face,
And at her touch bright visions rise,
Fresh woods and streams and unimagined skies.
In softest tone
She sang the song that has no close,
That deathless song which no one knows,
Save she alone;
The song that leaves no memory,
The song of endless victory
And future love;
And as I listened to the voice above
I felt as one returning from the dead;
Slowly I rose and raised my drooping head.

AL FRESCO.

I.

AMONG the changes which have gradually come over London, may be noted the decline and departure of its pleasure-grounds. Land increasing in value, and the inhabitants multiplying more and more, the city bursting its original boundaries, and covering the country round about with a sort of overflow of bricks and mortar, little room has been left for the bowling greens, grass plots and gardens, such as were once to be counted among the appurtenances of houses situated even in the heart of the capital. Alteration has occurred, moreover, in the manners and customs of our citizens; or they have become in these later days more susceptible of climatic influences. They no longer entertain themselves of evenings in the open air; they dread too much the possibilities of bleak winds or wet weather. They prefer to be pleased by musical or theatrical performances under cover. Formerly Londoners lived much more of an out-of-door life; the city was rich in public gardens and al fresco places of pleasure. One after the other all have gone. Music-halls thrive and theatres flourish; but our Vauxhalls have vanished.

Spring Gardens, Charing Cross, were genuine gardens once, with archery butts, a tilt yard, a bowling green, a bathing pond, and a pheasant yard. The name was due to a jet or spring of water, which upon the pressure of the foot spirited up and "wetted whoever was foolish or ignorant enough to tread upon it." Mechanical water springs were deemed excellent practical jokes in the days of Elizabeth, and indeed long afterwards. Such devices existed in recent years at Chatsworth and at Enstone, in Oxfordshire. The bathing pond was supplied by leaden pipes from St. James's Fields. In an account of certain expenses incurred for "needful reparacons" of Spring Gardens, in 1614, appears a charge of four shillings for "two clucking hens to set upon the pheasant eggs." There was an ordinary at Spring Gardens, the charge being six shillings per meal; and much drinking of wine under the trees went on all day long. The company stayed until midnight, refreshing themselves at "a certain cabaret" in the middle of the gardens, with tarts, neat's tongues, salt meats, and Rhenish wine. "Shall we make a fling to London, and see how the spring appears there in the Spring Gardens; and in Hyde Park, to see the races, horse and foot?" asks one of the characters in Brome's comedy, *A Jovial Crew*, 1652. Evelyn records in 1658 that he "went to see a coach race in Hyde Park, and collationed in Spring Gardens." But this was possibly the new Spring Gardens, opened at the north-east corner of the Haymarket, "in the fields beyond the Mews," where was built "a fair house and two bowling-greens, made to entertain gamesters and bowlers," at a cost of £4,000. For Evelyn had previously noted the seizing and shutting up of Spring Gardens by Cromwell and his partisans in 1654, so that the Mulberry Garden had become a fashionable place of rendezvous and refreshment for ladies and gallants. In a glowing description of Spring Gardens, published in 1659, mention is made of the "thickets and enclosures, the solemnness of the grove, the warbling of the birds, &c." The grounds, it is stated, gave entrance into "the spacious walks at St. James's."

Spring Gardens opened again after Cromwell and his partisans had closed them; but they were now known as the Old Spring Gardens, to distinguish them from the New Spring Gardens established at Vauxhall about 1660. And presently houses were erected upon the ground, known as Inner Spring Gardens and

Outer Spring Gardens. The place had ceased to exist as a public resort for purposes of entertainment. The New Spring Gardens in the Haymarket did not long survive. "Lammas-money," on account of Piccadilly House and Bowling Green was paid, however, as late as 1670. The Tennis Court in James's Street is the last vestige of the Haymarket or Piccadilly Spring Gardens. The Mulberry Gardens occupied the site of the present Buckingham Palace and Gardens. The grounds were demised by Charles the Second, in 1673, to Bennet, Earl of Arlington, at a nominal rent. Pepys writes in 1668: "To the Mulberry Gardens, where I never was before, and find it a very silly place, worse than Spring Gardens, and but little company, only a wilderness here that is somewhat pretty." In the following year Pepys was regaled at the Mulberry Gardens with a Spanish olio, and pronounced it "a very noble dish, such as I never saw before or any more of." James the First had concerned himself about the planting of mulberry trees, hoping to encourage the manufacture of English silks. In James's time Shakespeare had planted his famous mulberry tree at Stratford. Sedley wrote a comedy called *The Mulberry Garden*; and the dramatists, his contemporaries Shadwell, Etherege, and Wycherley, make frequent mention of the place. John Dryden, wearing a sword and a "Chedreux wig," was wont to eat tarts at the Mulberry Garden with his friend, Madame Reeve. The following lines occur in Dr. King's *Art of Cookery*, 1709:

The fate of things lies always in the dark;
 What Cavalier would know St. James's Park?
 For Locket's stands where gardens once did spring,
 And wild ducks quack where grasshoppers did sing;
 A princely palace on that space does rise
 Where Sedley's noble muse found mulberries.

Locket's was a fashionable ordinary or restaurant, which stood on the ground once part of Old Spring Gardens, and now occupied by Drummond's banking-house, Charing Cross.

Pepys also mentions 'Sparagus Gardens, a place of amusement, concerning which even antiquaries have little to tell. It was situate in Lambeth Marsh, and adjoined the better known Cuper's Gardens. A comedy by Richard Brome, called *The 'Sparagus Gardens*, was acted at the Salisbury Court Theatre in 1635. Pepys writes in 1668: "To the fishmonger's, and bought a couple of lobsters, and over to the 'Sparagus Gardens, thinking to have met Mr. Pierce and his wife, and Knipp."

Evelyn, in 1661, found the New Spring Gardens at Lambeth "a pretty contrived plantation." Pepys writes in 1665: "By water to Fox Hall, and there walked an hour alone observing the several humours of the citizens, that were this holiday pulling off cherries and God knows what." The manor of Vauxhall, properly Fulke's Hall, derived its name from Fulke de Breaté, who married Margaret, Earl Baldwin's mother, and thus obtained the wardship of her son. The estate subsequently passing into the possession of the Crown, was granted by Edward the Third to the Black Prince, who gave it to the church of Canterbury. Upon the suppression of the monasteries, and the appropriation of church lands, Henry the Eighth confirmed the Dean and Chapter in their possession of the manor. During the two centuries that Vauxhall Gardens flourished, it probably occurred to few visitors that they were treading upon ground which was so far consecrated, that it had been the absolute property of the church. In later times, however, the estate was described as "copyhold, containing eight acres, subject to a heriot or fine of five hundred pounds to the Prince of Wales, the lord of the manor."

Vauxhall Gardens became a famous resort, the model or pattern upon which other gardens were formed, until "Vauxhall" was recognised all the world over as the proper title for an open-air nocturnal place of entertainment. As early as 1668 Pepys had written of his supper there "in an arbour," with Henry Killigrew, "a rogue newly come back out of France, but still in disgrace at court," young Newport, and others. "But, Lord!" he exclaims, "their mad talk did make my heart ake!" Refreshments "in an arbour," it may be noted, were long deemed peculiarly agreeable to British taste and appetite. The year before Pepys had observed upon the pleasantness and cheapness of Vauxhall, "for a man may spend what he will or nothing, all as one." He had noted, too, the number of the company, and how "mighty divertising" it was "to hear the nightingale and the birds, and here fiddles, and there a harp, and here a Jew's trump, and here laughing, and there fine people walking, &c." Jew's harps, by-the-bye, survive, and are often heard; but a Jew's trump strikes one as a less familiar instrument. Pepys, however, had also to consider "how rude some of the gallants of the town are become;" and to be troubled by "the confidence of the vice of the age."

It was in 1667, according to Aubrey's Surrey, that Sir Samuel Moreland, having obtained a lease of Vauxhall House and grounds, built there a fine room, the inside all of looking-glass and fountains, with a figure of Punchinello, very well carved, on the outside, holding up a dial, which the high winds subsequently destroyed.

The new Spring Gardens obtained frequent mention in the comedies of Wycherley, Etherege, Sedley, and Congreve; and it may be remembered how the Spectator and his friend Sir Roger de Coverley took water at the Temple Stairs, and paid a visit to Fox Hall. It was the month of May; and Spring Garden was pronounced to be especially pleasant at that period of the year. The Spectator, considering the fragrantcy of the walks and flowers, with the choirs of birds that sang under the trees, and the loose tribe of people that walked under their shades, could not but look on the place as "a kind of Mahometan Paradise." Sir Roger was reminded of a little coppice by his house in the country, which his chaplain used to call an aviary of nightingales. "You must understand," said the knight, "that there is nothing in the world that pleases a man in love so much as your nightingale. Ah, Mr. Spectator, the many moonlight nights that I have walked by myself, and thought on the widow by the music of the nightingale!" They concluded their walk with a glass of Burton ale and a slice of hung beef; the good knight sending a waiter with the remainder of their supper to the waterman. The waiter was about to be saucy because of the oddness of this proceeding; but the Spectator "ratified the knight's commands with a peremptory look."

In 1732, New Spring Gardens came into the possession of Jonathan Tyers, who opened them in June with a grand entertainment called *Ridotto al fresco*, the Prince of Wales being present, and the company wearing dominoes, masks, and lawyer's gowns. The charge for admission was one guinea; four hundred persons were present, and, to preserve order, one hundred of the foot guards were posted round the gardens. The title of Spring Gardens was continued until 1785, when they were called the Royal Vauxhall Gardens. To the last, however, the magistrate's license was always applied for on account of "The Spring Garden, Vauxhall." In 1739, the admission was one shilling, but many subscribed for the season of three months. It was publicly

announced: "A thousand tickets only will be delivered out at twenty-five shillings each, the silver of every ticket to be worth three shillings and two pence, and to admit two persons every evening—Sundays excepted—through the season. Every person coming without a ticket to pay one shilling each time for admittance. No servants in livery to walk in the gardens. All subscribers are desired not to permit their tickets to get into the hands of persons of evil repute, it being absolutely necessary to exclude all such." Hogarth, who was living in Lambeth Terrace, seems to have taken a lively interest in the gardens under Tyers's management; he designed the tickets, and the pictures in the saloon and supper boxes, the paintings in the saloon being executed at the cost of five hundred pounds each by Hayman and Mortimer. A statue of Handel, by Roubiliac, stood in the centre of the gardens. In recognition of Hogarth's services, Tyers presented him with a gold ticket of perpetual admission for six persons any night. The concerts were at first purely instrumental, but in 1745 singing was introduced; "the eccentric Tom Collet" leading the band, and Dr. Worgun playing the organ. Westminster Bridge was not completed until 1750; for the accommodation of his performers, therefore, Tyers built a handsome barge, which carried them from Palace Yard Old Stairs and back again when the entertainments were over.

In *The Connoisseur* for 1755, there is enumeration of the changes in public pleasures consequent upon the varying of the seasons. The theatrical genre having dissipated the gloom of winter evenings, now that the long days are coming on, are described as "packing up their tragedy wardrobes, together with a sufficient quantity of thunder and lightning for the delight and amazement of the country;" while the several public gardens near the metropolis trim their trees, level their walks, and burnish their lamps for the reception of the Londoners. "At Vauxhall the artificial ruins are repaired, the cascade is made to spout with several additional streams of block tin; and they have touched up all the pictures which were damaged last year by the fingering of those curious connoisseurs who could not be satisfied without feeling whether the figures were alive." Then follows an account of a visit to Vauxhall, paid by an honest citizen, his wife, and two daughters. They are regaled with a chicken and a

shilling plate of ham. "The old gentleman, at every bit he put in his mouth, amused himself by saying: 'There goes twopence, there goes threepence, there goes a groat. Zounds! a man at these places should not have a swallow as wide as a tom-tit.'" Five years before, Walpole had visited Vauxhall upon the invitation of Lady Caroline Petersham. It was a river party, "a boat of French horns attending;" and little Miss Ashe, "the pollard ash," as her friends called her, singing to entertain the company. Lord Granby arrived "very drunk, from Jenny's Whim," a tea-garden at Chelsea; and Lord Orford, Horace's brother, was fetched from an adjoining box to help mince chickens. "We minced seven chickens into a china dish, which Lady Caroline stewed over a lamp, with three pats of butter and a flagon of water, stirring, and rattling, and laughing, and we every minute expecting the dish to fly about our ears. She had brought Betty the fruit-girl with hampers of strawberries and cherries from Rogers's, and made her wait upon us and then made her sup by us at a little table. . . . It was three o'clock before we got home."

Upon the death of Jonathan Tyers, in 1767, his son, Thomas Tyers, the Tom Tyers of Dr. Johnson and Boswell, and the Tom Restless of the *Idler*, No. 48, succeeded to the management of the gardens. Boswell has left a glowing account of "that excellent place of public amusement, Vauxhall Gardens, which," he writes, "must ever be an estate to its proprietor, as it is peculiarly adapted to the taste of the English nation; there being a mixture of curious show, gay exhibition, music—vocal and instrumental—not too refined for the general ear; for all which only a shilling is paid; and, though last not least, good eating and drinking for those who choose to purchase that regale." The best English singers appeared from time to time in the gardens. At first they objected to lend their services, records Parke in his *Memoirs*, "so strange and uncouth did the proposal appear to them of singing in the open air . . . but the trial was no sooner made than the judicious improvement was so highly admired, as to give the proprietor ample reason to rejoice at its adoption." Fireworks, it is said, were not exhibited until 1798, and even then were only displayed occasionally, although of the smaller place of entertainment known as Cuper's Gardens, *The Connoisseur* writes

in 1755, that "its magazine is furnished with an extraordinary supply of gun-powder, to be shot off in squibs and sky-rockets, or whirled away in blazing suns and catherine-wheels." The price of admission was one shilling up to the summer of 1792, when, because of increased decorations and attractions, the charge was raised to two shillings. "I cannot approve of this," writes Boswell; "the company may be more select, but a number of the honest commonalty are, I fear, excluded from sharing in elegant and innocent entertainments." Subsequently the admission became three-and-sixpence and four shillings.

The elder Tyers was naturally querulous, and his temper was much tried by the wet weather which often grievously affected his seasons at Vauxhall. To him seems really due the lament afterwards appropriated by Mr. Graves in the comedy of *Money*, to the effect that "if he had been brought up to be a hatter, he believed little boys would have been born without heads." A farmer once plagued him with enquiries as to when he intended to open his gardens. He asked in return why the farmer was so anxious for information on the subject. "Why, sir," he said, "I'm thinking of sowing my turnips, and I want to know for certain when we shall have rain."

Vauxhall long continued to be a most fashionable resort, enjoying the special patronage of George, Prince of Wales. The season usually commenced on the king's birthday, June 4th; the prince's birthday, August 12th, being the great festival of the year. Then there were galas to celebrate the happy recovery of the king, in honour of distinguished foreign visitors, or because of victories achieved by our land and sea forces, or the proclamation of peace. In 1813, occurred the Vittoria fête, to celebrate Lord Wellington's triumphs in the Peninsula. The Duke of York, commander-in-chief, by desire of the Prince Regent, with the assistance of one hundred stewards of the first distinction, presided at a grand dinner of a thousand gentlemen, at two guineas per head. There was afterwards a grand concert of vocal and instrumental music. Some twelve thousand persons visited the gardens, "and the difficulty at night of procuring refreshments was such," writes Parke, the oboe player, "that in various parts of the splendidly illuminated gardens were seen a brace of dukes regaling themselves from a wine-bottle and glasses they

held in their hands; a bevy of countesses devouring a cold chicken which they had separated with their delicate fingers; and a plump citizen's wife, who would have fainted had she not been timely relieved by a glass of water with a little brandy in it. Amidst the elegant confusion which prevailed, I had the good fortune to sup in a private room in the house of the proprietor of the gardens with some friends, who were afterwards joined by the Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan, one of the stewards, whose brilliant conversation I had the pleasure to share till daylight the next morning."

The first balloon ascent from Vauxhall was Garnerin's, in 1802, when he rose four thousand feet and descended in a parachute. In 1817, and for some following seasons, Madame Saqui, the famous rope-dancer, appeared at Vauxhall, and occasioned much excitement by her daring performances. In 1828 Italian operas were performed in the saloon, and a ballet-theatre was opened for serious and comic dancing. In 1830 Sir Henry Bishop was musical director, and a dramatic company was engaged for the performance of burlettas. But already the glory of Vauxhall was passing away. It survived its illustrious patron, George the Fourth, but only to linger on in a decrepit and degraded state. Parke, even in 1830, questioned whether even Bishop's superior ability could restore the place to its "pristine excellence," although he might, "by inundating it with the powerful strains of his harmony, partially cleanse the Angean stable." Croker, in his edition of Boswell, 1847, spoke contemptuously of Vauxhall, as "long closed, and only occasionally used for letting off a balloon or some such exhibition." But this was incorrect; the end had not yet come.

In 1838 the charge for admission had been reduced to one shilling. Fashion had departed; there was an effort to attract popularity—even vulgarity. Balloon ascents were now frequent; a circus was added, with horses from Astley's. Poses plastiques were brought from Paris, and a chorus from the German opera at Drury Lane. In 1841 the estate was offered for sale, but bought in. Certain of the old decorations were disposed of, however, including the Hogarth and Hayman pictures, now in a very infirm condition. They produced but a few shillings. In 1845 Musard conducted the orchestra, and masquerades were given, very dissolute as

to character. In 1846, under Mr. Wardell's management, came further violation of Vauxhall traditions. The famous oil-lamps, many-coloured and multitudinous, were replaced by gas-jets, and the members of the orchestra abandoned the cocked hats they had worn from time immemorial. The master of the ceremonies—for of old such a functionary had presided—was no longer visible, or was represented only by a transparent portrait of the deceased Mr. Simpson, in a courteous attitude, full-dressed, pantalooned and pumped, lifting his chapeau bras to greet the visitor. In 1854 the Secretary of State interfered to prevent certain dangerous and cruel exhibitions—balloons carrying horses, or with acrobats on trapezes slung from the cars. In 1859 the gardens finally closed. The site is now built over and occupied by St. Peter's Church, a school of art, and numerous streets.

Vauxhall outlived many of its rivals. On the Surrey side of the Thames the Waterloo Bridge Road runs through the centre of what was once Cuper's Gardens, known commonly as Cupid's Gardens, a place of entertainment of the Vauxhall pattern, first opened to the public in 1678. Aubrey in his Account of Surrey writes, "Near the Bankside lies a very pleasant garden, in which are fine walks, known by the name of Cupid's Gardens. They are the estate of Jesus College, in Oxford, and erected by one who keeps a public-house; which, with the convenience of its arbours, walks, and several remains of Greek and Roman antiquities, have made this place much frequented." The gardens obtained their name from Boydell Cuper, a gardener in the employ of Thomas, Earl of Arundel. When Arundel House in the Strand was taken down, the gardener obtained many mutilated marbles from his master's famous collection, carried them across the river, and erected them as decorations of his gardens. Fragments of an antique figure were even discovered in the mud of the Thames when Sir William Chambers was digging the foundation of a portion of Somerset House; and it was supposed that the gardener might have lost certain of his treasures in the endeavour to convey them over the water. A Mrs. Evans, whose husband had formerly kept the old tavern, the Hercules Pillars, in Fleet Street, opposite Clifford's Inn, became tenant of Cuper's Gardens in 1736, erected an organ and an orchestra, and provided entertainments of fireworks. Cuper's Gardens, indeed, became famous for fireworks. There is extant an

old song in commemoration of the pleasures of the place, beginning :

'Twas down in Cuper's gardens
For pleasure I did go,
To see the fairest flowers
That in that garden grow;
The first it was the jessamine,
The lily, pink, and rose,
And surely they're the fairest flowers
That in that garden grows.

I'd not walked in that garden
The part of half an hour,
When there I saw two pretty maids
Sitting under a shady bower.
The first was lovely Nancy,
So beautiful and fair,
The other was a virgin,
Who did the laurel wear.

The gardens maintained their popularity for some years, but were suppressed in 1753, and converted to the uses of trade. J. T. Smith, in his Life of Nollekens, records that he walked over the gardens "when they were occupied by Messrs. Beaufoy for their wine and vinegar works, and I then saw many of the old lamp-irons along the paling of the gardens." Dr. Johnson related that once, driving in a coach by Cuper's Gardens, then untenanted, he jestingly proposed that he, Beauclerk, and Langton, should take them; "and we amused ourselves with scheming how we should all do our parts." Old Lady Sydney Beauclerk, the mother of Topham Beauclerk, was much angered, however, and said, "an old man should not put such things in young people's heads." Johnson noted for the information of Boswell: "She had no notion of a joke, sir; had come late into life, and had a mighty unpliant understanding."

Vauxhall had other rivals and imitators on its own side of the Thames. There opened in 1698 a place of entertainment, called Lambeth Wells. A mineral spring had been discovered, and the waters were dispensed at "a penny per quart to the affluent, and gratis to the poor." A performance of music commenced so early as seven in the morning; the charge for admission being threepence. A monthly concert, on a more important scale, was afterwards given under the direction of Mr. Starling Goodwin, organist of St. Saviour's Church; lectures were also delivered with experiments in natural philosophy by Erasmus King, who had been coachman to Dr. Desaguliers, the price of admission being raised to sixpence. The place existed so late as 1752, when "a penny wedding, after the Scotch fashion, for the benefit of a young couple," was advertised to be celebrated there. But the Wells were held to be a nuisance at

last; the premises were closed for some time, the concert-room being afterwards let as a Methodist meeting-house. Eventually a public-house, with the sign of the Fountain, supplying strong rather than mineral waters, was the only surviving trace of Lambeth Wells.

There was a Spa, too, in existence between 1784 and 1804, farther on at Bermondsey, of which the Spa Road is now the only relic; while on the Lambeth side of Westminster Bridge flourished, between 1788 and 1799, the Apollo Gardens, opened by one Clagget, an ingenious musician, who in 1793 published a description of an organ he had invented, "made without pipes, strings, bells, or glasses; the only instrument in the world that will never require to be re-tuned." The gardens possessed a spacious concert-room, a number of elegant pavilions or alcoves, ornamented with paintings, "relating to romantic histories, particularly the different adventures of Don Quixote;" with a fine orchestra in the centre of the grounds. Finch's Grotto, "on the plan of Vauxhall," was opened to the public in 1770, and thrived for some time. This was situate in Gravel Lane, Southwark. "An orchestra and a band of musicians, added to the rural character of the place, drew a numerous body of visitors." Little is known of the grotto or of the proprietor, William Finch, who gave his name to it; but a story has survived concerning one of its singers, a North Briton named Snows. He was, it seems, required to sing a ballad beginning:

Where no ripened summer glows
On the lap of northern snows,
Only let my nymph be there
Jocund spring will soon appear.

He was suddenly interrupted by an Irish visitor, who exclaimed with an oath of indignation: "Och, Mister Northern Snows with his nymph on his lap; a mighty pretty scene to entertain decent people with!"

No doubt the closing years of Vauxhall suffered from the competition of the Surrey Zoological Gardens, near the Elephant and Castle. These grounds were laid out in 1831-2 by Mr. Cross, who had owned the menagerie at Exeter Change, and afterwards at the King's Mews, Charing Cross. Cunningham, in his Handbook of London, 1850, described the animals as superior to those possessed by the Zoological Society in the Regent's Park. But the Surrey Gardens, in truth, depended for success

fireworks. A sheet of water, some three acres in extent, added greatly to the attractions of the place, and was of service to the large paintings of Vesuvius and Hecla, Rome and Venice, Old London, Hamburg, and Edinburgh, which, from time to time, occupied the grounds, and formed excuses for brilliant displays of fireworks. A large hall, said to be capable of holding twelve thousand persons, was erected in 1856, to be totally destroyed by fire five years later. In this hall a public dinner was given to the Guards returned from the Crimea in 1856; in the same year, owing to a false alarm of fire raised during one of Mr. Spurgeon's religious services in the hall, eight persons were killed, and thirty seriously injured. For some time the place was devoted to the use of St. Thomas's Hospital during the rebuilding of that institution. The Surrey Gardens, following the fate of Vauxhall, have since been sold for building purposes.

MY LAND OF BEULAH.

A STORY IN FIFTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER V.

SUMMER had waned to autumn. The roses were all dead, and even the chrysanthemums hung their draggled heads miserably. My friends the rooks still sailed about, not in an azure sea, but in a sea of turbulent, drifting clouds, and a wind that drove their black bodies all to one side as they flew, and threatened to shake them off the pine-tree tops, where they clung fluttering and chattering, and, I have no doubt, speculating as to the sadly changed condition of affairs in general. For my own part, I love the autumn, and the pungent odour of the dead and dying leaves that make a rustling brown carpet on the grass. Yet this autumn I was less contented of spirit than my wont. And why?

Well; it was hard to define my mood exactly. Life had been very sweet and fair to me since ever I could remember; it had been like a melody all in time and tune; now, there was a jarring note. For what is so trying to any of us as to see that between two people whom we love a cloud has arisen, and is gradually hiding the one heart from the trust and confidence of the other?

What was it that had changed the estimation in which my dear Miss Mary held my equally dear school-friend?

I did not know then; and only by the light of future events could I even guess

been my happy custom, as our weekly half-holiday came round, to go wandering in the fields or in my wood with Eulalie; now, each Saturday, some plan or other, some expedition to the county town for shopping purposes, or to visit some friends at a distance, always came about; and on all these occasions Miss Mary seemed to set her heart on having me for her companion, and never Eulalie.

I used to look back wistfully sometimes, as we set off together up the carriage-way, to catch a glimpse, at the school-room window, of a dark sleek head bent over a book or a work-frame. How I longed to question Miss Mary about all these strange things. Nay, now and then I have been hardly able to see before me for the hot tears that started to my eyes; but to question the why and wherefore of anything either of the Miss Sylvesters did was to break the eleventh commandment at Summerfield; and so my eyes only, and not my tongue, pleaded for Eulalie.

That I loved her the more vehemently, the more defiantly, for this strange dwelling "out in the cold," goes without saying; yet in my letters to papa I made no mention of the perplexities that beset me. It would have grated upon my sense of what was delicately and strictly honourable, to have commented upon Miss Mary's conduct in any way. Nor did Eulalie appear wishful for arms to be taken up in her defence; but, rather, she acquiesced quietly in the inevitable, and shunned the closeness of that intimacy that had been so dear a thing to me.

Once, as I sat reading in the wood, and none of the other girls chanced to be within sight or hearing, I heard the cracking of twigs and the rustle of a dress, and saw the boughs of the hazel-nut bushes parted to let Eulalie pass. It is one of the pictures on which I can still look back, the parting of the green branches, then laden with their ripe fruit, and the beautiful face of my friend looking at me from beneath their shadow.

"What is it?" I cried, flinging my book down upon the grass at my feet, and springing forward to meet her. "Oh, how glad I am you've come. We shan't have many more such days as this, Eulalie—it's almost as warm as June—sit down, and let us have a "big chat;" how nice it is to talk English as fast as one can on a holiday, just to make the best use of one's time."

She had let the hazel boughs fall back into their place, and stood there against

the background of their massed foliage, looking at me with a wistful sadness.

I caught her hands, and finding them cold as death, covered them with kisses, to try and put some warmth into them. It is an odd peculiarity of mine, that if my feelings are deeply stirred, my ready tongue is dumb; so now, seeing that some great trouble was over Eulalie, nothing came readily from my lips save those silent kisses.

Presently she drew her hands from mine, and her voice trembled a little as she said:

"Nell, have you heard from your father lately? Do you think he has forgotten what you asked him to do—for me?"

"Forgotten!" I cried, in wide-eyed astonishment at the suggestion. "Oh, dear, no; papa never forgets what I ask him, but it takes time."

"Time!" she cried, with a sudden vehemence as startling as it was rare. "Oh! I am weary, weary of it all. I wish I was going away now—now, this very moment—"

"From Summerfield?" I gasped.

"From Summerfield," she answered, a wild gleam lighting up her lovely eyes, and a hard and—I hated to think it then, I hate to write it now—a cruel expression changing and marring the lines of her mouth.

I glanced down, and saw that the hands that had writhed themselves from mine were clenched hard and fast.

My utter amazement—doubtless written, like most of my emotions, in broad letters on my face—seemed to rouse her to some effort at self-control. She drew a long, shuddering breath, and then in a moment the statue of Nemesis became the timid maiden, with eyes softly brown as dead leaves under water.

She touched me playfully under the chin with a finger-tip.

"Bring your owl's eyes down to their natural size again," she said laughing. "Do you think that everyone thinks Summerfield a—what was it you called it the other day?—Land of Beulah, eh, Nell?"

"It has been that to me," I answered hotly. "I shall always look back and think of it as that—a place 'very sweet and pleasant,'" I added, quoting John Bunyan defiantly.

"You see, you haven't to teach the young idea how to count 'one, two, three, one, two, three; the cat's in the cupboard and can't see me.'"

"Eulalie, you are talking great nonsense,"

I said, laughing at her words all the same, "but I daresay it is very tiresome teaching the little ones their music. I never thought how different it must be for you and for me; but still, even if papa does hear of some nice children for you to go and be governess to, it will come to the same thing, won't it? 'one, two, three,' over and over again?"

"Yes; the same thing, of course, but with—a difference——"

At that moment a rushing and scrambling among the bushes made itself audible, and Amy Ladbroke, a small child of six, broke through the cover, and passed by us, flushed and panting, in the character of a hare hotly pursued by the hounds.

"Write to your father to-night—promise me, Nell—do you hear?" said Eulalie hurriedly; and I had only time to say Yes, before the "pack" were upon us, a chattering, shouting, laughing bonnie team of little English lassies.

"Has the hare gone by here, Nell?" cried the leader of the troop, while the "harriers" threw themselves down on the grass, fanning their hot faces, and making about as much noise as my friends the rooks.

"It isn't fair to ask that—is it now, Miss Le Breton?" said a small maid, whose face looked like a ripe apple, and whose black elf-locks had become a hopeless tangle that had to be pushed back every minute.

Eulalie was just going to reply, when all at once the various "hounds" who were reclining on the green sward started to their feet, and the small person who had last spoken began to make vehement efforts at "putting straight" the gooseberry-bush of her locks.

Miss Mary had come into the wood, and was making her way slowly towards us.

"Never mind, dear," she said, as she saw the child struggling to attain to something like neatness; "play is play, and I don't mind what figure you make of yourself, only don't run about too long, and get too hot," she added with a smile. Then she turned to me:

"Nellie, I was looking for you; I want you to come with me to the Vicarage."

She did not speak to my companion, and I was troubled at the fact that the traces of tears were on her cheek.

"It's a letter from Polly's country, I suppose," I thought to myself as I followed Miss Mary towards the house.

The mystery of those foreign letters was no longer a riddle to me, for Eulalie had solved it; indeed, she was in some sort connected with the story, since, years back, her mother had tried to befriend the worthless brother whose career of vice and dissipation was the "family skeleton" of the three sisters Sylvester. Like a chain this home-trouble had bound their lives. The savings of each year had had to go to pay "poor Charley's" debts, left as a legacy to his native land, when he went out to Ceylon to try his fortune as a coffee-planter. Whether he had there planted anything save an additional crop of "wild oats" was doubtful. His demands upon the three hard-working women at home continued; and he always declared that some disaster threatened to overwhelm him, unless "such and such a sum" was forthcoming "by an early mail."

"Poor Charley" was younger by many years than his sisters, and had been the "mother's darling;" that dead mother of whom those dear ladies spoke with such tender reverence, and whose dying words, "Do what you can for Charley," had all the sacredness of a last trust. In the days when first this trouble began to press upon them so sorely, Eulalie's mother had given sympathy and kindly help; therefore her child seemed to have a peculiar claim upon their love and care, and Eulalie had found a home in her need at Summerfield.

When Miss Mary reached the Vicarage, the good vicar was busy hoeing weeds out of the garden-path. When engaged in these horticultural pursuits he presented a very droll appearance, with his coat-sleeves turned up, his trowsers in the same condition, and a straw hat, about the size of Miss Theodosia's sun-shade, upon his head. When he saw us coming up the walk, he made a wild attempt to raise this head-gear in our honour, but the brim was wide and flabby, and the attempt a failure. Then he came forward, hoe in hand, and beamed upon us from behind his spectacles.

"I want a few moments' quiet talk with you, Mr. Girdstone," said Miss Mary.

"Will you go and sit with my sister, Nellie, or would you like to go and see my new rabbit-hutches?" said the vicar, turning to me.

Rabbits? why, if it had been ravening, roaring wolves, whose society I had been offered as an alternative to Miss Theodosia's, I should have rushed wildly into their embrace.

"I should like to see the rabbits very

much indeed," I said, as eagerly as though my "life's young dream" in the matter of hatches was about to be realised; and off I set towards the little white gate leading to the kitchen-garden. But I reckoned without my host, or rather, without my hostess. Tap, tap, tap, went Miss 'Dosis's finger, on the breakfast-room window; and I saw her head wagging to me to come in. Of course, there was no help for it, so I gave up the rabbits with a sigh, and betook myself into the house. What the vicar's sister said to me during that interview I cannot call to mind; I had, indeed, no mind to give to her words. My whole attention was concentrated upon the two figures pacing slowly up and down between the borders of London Pride that edged the pathways in the Vicarage garden.

How clearly it all comes back to me! The quaint figure of the vicar, with his ankles fully displayed, the big hat pushed to the very back of his head, and the hoe in his hand coming down every now and then on the gravel by way of emphasis to his words: beside him, my more than mother, her head drooping a little, and her face shaded from me by the grey falling ringlets. Now and again they stop—once I see Miss Mary hide her eyes a moment with her hand.

Miss Girdstone's voice brays on. I think she is telling me some story of the obstinacy of a certain demoralised parishioner of the female gender, who sold—instead of wearing—an under-garment made by her own fair hands. But in this I may have been mistaken, for where could a purchaser be found for a coat-of-mail of the raspy flannel used by Miss Theodosia as suitable clothing for the "poor and needy?"

Presently Miss Mary and I are upon our way home. The evening is drawing on, and from beneath a deep purple cloud the sun pours a flood of gold upon the distant hills. We are in the grey shadow of the coming night; but the hill-tops shine clear and fair. I can see one, darker than its fellows, clothed in firs, and I know that the water-falls are there, falling and whirling into the fern-edged basin where I had flung my pretty orchid in to die.

This makes me think of my father, and I call to mind that I have promised to write to him to-night. I have plenty of time to let my thoughts wander to all

these things, for Miss Mary is very silent; she is sad, too, but the look of perplexity that I had noticed in her face as we walked to Bromley is no longer there. Undaunted by the coming of the gloaming, a robin, perched upon a bough whose leaves are wearing their sober autumn livery of brown, sings his plaintive good-night song. I can see his little red throat swelling with the utterance of the clear, sweet notes, and though his bright eyes see us well enough, he does not care, but goes on making the best of the light that yet remains to him, just as if we were not there at all. I slip my hand into Miss Mary's, and we stand still till robin has done.

Truly a robin's song is not much to write of; but every voice of nature, however faint and small, brings a sense of joy to some hearts, and of these mine is one, and my dear Miss Mary's is another.

Besides, I listened to that "even-song" of robin's as a child listens to any sweet sound, and loves it, and I think I was never quite a child again; but something full of deeper thought and sadder knowledge.

It wanted more than an hour to prayer-time when we reached home; and I was hurrying across the hall, to "take time by the forelock" in the matter of the promised letter to Hazledene, when Miss Maria, key-basket in hand as usual, and a beaming smile upon her jovial face, met and stopped me.

"There is a letter for you from your father, Nell. It came by the late post—"

It was the custom for all our letters to be laid upon a certain table in the library, a room that entered upon the left of the hall-door. And now, as I went in search of mine, I thought as I did so: "What a good thing it is I waited till this evening. Who knows but what there is something about Eulalie in this very letter, and papa might have thought I was accusing him of forgetfulness?"

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SATURDAY, MAY 3, 1879.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

SEBASTIAN STROME.

CHAPTER I. CEDARHURST.

BREAKFAST was ready at Cedarhurst Vicarage, but the Rev. Arthur Strome had not yet come in from his early morning rounds. It was the middle of winter, and the sun was not half an hour above the horizon: not the sort of weather to beguile an ordinary gentleman out of his bed at daybreak — especially if, like the vicar, he had turned the corner of fifty years. But the spare-framed, warm-hearted, vehement personage under whose ministrations the inhabitants of Cedarhurst, or some of them, had grown in grace for a generation past, was not the man to set an example of sluggardliness to his parishioners. On the contrary, his spirit never seemed to sleep at all, and was inclined to grudge its fleshly envelope even so much repose as nature absolutely demanded. He was one of those indomitable and — to some minds — slightly unreasonable creatures, who persist in keeping up, through the winter, habits which the majority of mankind in easy circumstances are satisfied to practise only during the longest and most amiable days of summer. His sympathies, his principles, and his purposes haled him about like so many big bullies, and, so he performed their bidding, recked little what became of his flesh and bones. He was in a state of chronic misapprehension as to the limits of his physical endurance, and was the only person to manifest surprise and indignation when he had overstepped them. To make matters worse, he was the victim of certain extreme views as to bodily train-

round in cold water, in a cold room; and then, after kneeling down and humbly praying to God, he got up and went resolutely through a quarter of an hour's "extension movements" with the dumb-bells. By this time it was full seven o'clock; and family prayers having been read, forth sallied this irrepressible clergyman of the Church of England into the open air, took a turn about his garden and farmyard, and paid visits to those of his poorer parishioners whose names he had noted down the evening before. At half-past eight he was back to breakfast, which consisted, for him, of a plate of oatmeal porridge and a cup of black coffee. Between this and dinner, at half-past six, his time was fully occupied: he ate sparingly, and sometimes drank a table-spoonful of light claret in a tumbler of water, affirming, as he did so, that occasional dissipation was good for men of robust physique like himself. In the evening he was at anybody's disposal rather than his own, except on Fridays and Saturdays, when he wrote his sermon. It might be supposed that, by the time Sunday came round, even this robust sybarite would peevishly insist upon taking a little repose. If so, his conception of repose was not incompatible with being on his feet all day, except when he was on his knees; and as for peevishness, we cannot do better than quote the emphatic utterance of Mistress Barbara Trench, the elderly serving-woman who had spent the better part of her life in the Strome household. "On week-days," said this excellent woman, "Mr. Strome he is, maybe, not so very much better nor one of them saints; but on the Sabbath, ma'am, you mark my word, he is

brightness seemed to illuminate his face on that day; and there was a tenderness in his resonant voice, and an introspective gentleness in his deepest blue eyes, that made him seem like one who walked with unseen spirits of good.

Such was the man who was late to breakfast on this cold winter's morning, a quarter of a century ago. Mrs. Strome had already taken her place at table. She was a small, quiet-eyed, silvery-haired lady, with an old-fashioned repose and serenity of manner, which impressed the beholder somewhat like a soothing undertone of quaint melody. She had the air of a wife who builds her faith upon her husband as upon a rock. She believed him to be the noblest and the purest among all pure and noble men. She had loved him for thirty years, and during that time he had done nothing that had not seemed to her a warrant for loving him more. During that time their sky had been obscured by no cloud that had not drawn them closer to each other, and rendered more secure and intimate their sense of mutual dependence. And now, after many dangers passed, and some hardships and more than one deep grief endured, their evening of life had set in with a mellow calm that seemed the fit sequel to its beginning. Of their three children, Sebastian, the first-born son, was still living, and was soon to take orders, and carry on and crown with honour his father's career. The congregation which every Sunday filled the grey-towered Norman church was proud in the knowledge that it listened to sermons which the most learned and famous men of the day had travelled to Cedarhurst to hear. In fact, Arthur Strome's gifts had obtained wide recognition far beyond his own circle, and would have led him to high preferment in the Church but for one thing, namely, his own incorrigible disbelief in his fitness for any beyond the humbler duties of his calling. "I haven't the head for it," was his answer to those who suggested possible bishoprics. "I can preach to these people here, and talk to them in their houses, and christen them, and marry them, and bury them; they and I are old friends, and they can make allowances for me. But I haven't got it in me to be a bishop. My wife, now, would make a capital bishop; and, perhaps, some day, my boy Sebastian—he's like his mother, thank God!" Whether the Reverend Arthur Strome were right or wrong in his self-estimate,

at all events Reverend he remained to the end of his days; and the congregation at Cedarhurst, with vicarious self-denial, never once resented his devotion to them. On the contrary, they raised a subscription—there were many wealthy ones among them—and built for him the handsome vicarage, with solid stone walls, and mullioned windows, and velvet environment of cedar-shadowed lawn, in which the latter decade of his life had been spent. It was, perhaps, as lovely a home, both spiritually and materially, as could be found in England. Beneath that Gothic roof sin and suffering would seem to have no right to enter. The atmosphere was too pure and clear for them.

Mrs. Strome sat without change of posture, her small white hands—somewhat thin now, but still retaining their shapeliness and delicacy—clasped against the edge of the table before her. The level rays of the misty winter sun illuminated the blue steam of the tea-urn, and sparkled over the antique silver breakfast-service. The broad strings of Mrs. Strome's lace cap, falling across her bosom, rose and subsided with a barely perceptible movement as she breathed. The rare power of sitting perfectly still which characterised this lady was but another expression of the interior steadfastness of soul which looked forth from her face. It was a face blended of innocence, refinement, and moral intrepidity; a face eloquent of experience, and subtly alive in every part; free from every trace of selfish passion; and whose youthful charm old age had rendered sweeter and more reverend. And yet it was a face in whose lines a keen observer might have detected a something inexorable and almost stern, which a revealed sinner would have shuddered to meet.

The gabled clock, which occupied a corner of the oak-panelled breakfast-room, chimed the three-quarters after eight. After the sound had died away Mrs. Strome said:

"Barbara, did Mr. Strome leave any word when he went out this morning?"

The question was addressed to the short, square-shouldered, immaculate elderly female, whose name has already been incidentally mentioned, and who was standing rigidly upright behind her mistress's chair, in a black gown and white apron, cap, and cuffs.

"If you please, ma'am, Mr. Strome did not."

"I hope none of the poor folk have been taken ill this cold weather," rejoined Mrs. Strome after a pause.

"If you please, ma'am, I 'ave 'eard that Mrs. Jackson have been worse."

"It is her intemperance, poor woman. I will see her again to-day. Was that tea sent to her yesterday?"

"A pound of the best in the house, as you ordered, ma'am."

"I will show her how to make it myself. If it is properly made, I think she must prefer it to—gin."

"If you please, ma'am, it was her Fanny's going wrong last spring as brought her to it. Tea don't seem strong enough for them sort of things. She was as sober as most before Fanny went away."

"Mrs. Jackson does not know that her daughter has gone wrong, Barbara; she only infers it from her having left home so suddenly and given no address. I do not like you to infer evil that you are not certain of either. Fanny may be innocent."

"I'm sure I do 'ope so, ma'am," said Barbara, with an emphasis sufficient to annihilate the strongest aspirate. "But if I was to speak my opinion, it's little good we shall 'ear of Fanny Jackson. Always haacting as one above her station, Fanny was, though only a poor linen-draper's daughter, and hinattentive both to her Bible and her duties when at the 'All."

"Barbara, it is you who are forgetting your Bible now," interposed Mrs. Strome, in a tone so clear and uncompromising that Barbara, who knew the significance of all her mistress's tones, instantly dropped the subject. Nothing more was said for a few moments, until the minister's wife, raising her face with a new light of tender interest in it, bade Mistress Trench put the coffee on the table, and bring the oatmeal from its place before the fire. "I hear Mr. Strome coming," quoth she.

In fact, the eager energetic step of the vicar was now audible on the outer door-step, and in a few moments the door opened breezily, and he came into the room.

He went quickly up to his wife, put one arm round her, and lovingly kissed the cheek that was lovingly upturned to him. Then he went round to his place at the opposite end of the table, and sat down. He said grace in a full-toned, vibrating voice; and without more ado the meal began. Mrs. Strome occasionally glanced across at her husband, but said nothing; and for a time he did not break the silence.

The entire man was an incarnation of self-forgetting enthusiasm; his abstraction was proverbial; but if you surprised its subject, it invariably turned out to be something or somebody other than himself. The nervous energy that stirred within him seemed to belie the thin grey hair that lay in soft disordered locks about his head. Beneath his straight forehead stood boldly forth an aquiline nose; but its effect was modified by the exceeding sensitiveness of the mouth. His eyes, overshadowed by thick eyebrows, were made additionally expressive by the wrinkles that surrounded them—the handwriting of life upon human faces, revealing with austere faithfulness the nobility or ignobility of the soul behind. His figure was slight; his hands slender and restless—hands whose grasp on yours was fuller of meaning than a spoken greeting. He was a man towards whom confidence went forth like metal to the loadstone, because not only was he quick with charity, but he had kept fresh, through all the stress and strain of manhood, the guileless candour and ingenuousness of a child.

When Mrs. Strome had poured out his coffee, and Barbara had brought it to him, the minister gave the latter leave to retire, which, not without manifest reluctance, she was fain to do. When the door had closed behind her, husband and wife looked in each other's eyes. They knew each other so well that they often used looks as a comprehensive sort of speech. Mrs. Strome gathered from this glance that her husband had had some adventure which touched his heart; not so unusual a circumstance after all. He had pushed his chair a little back from the table, his clasped hands had fallen on his knee, and for a moment he appeared weary, aged, and sad.

"I have been with poor Mrs. Jackson," he said presently. "There has been news about Fanny."

Mrs. Strome, before speaking, laid her hands softly on some of the objects on the tea-tray in front of her, moving them into more orderly position, as if to establish a kind of external correspondence with the inward ordering of her thoughts. It was characteristic of her, as of many sincere and unaffected people, to give the like visible indications of the movements of her mind.

"Is Fanny well?" she asked at length. "I fear not—in any sense of the word," the minister answered. He knew the

ansterity of his wife's attitude towards some forms of sin, and perhaps shrank a little from the prospect of arousing it in the present case. However, he must needs go on. "Someone who knew her happened to catch sight of her in London a day or two ago. He was riding in an omnibus, and saw her from the window. She was looking pale and anxious. He thought, from her appearance, that she had suffered a foul wrong from some villain who has abandoned her—when she needed most support."

The minister's face showed that he suffered acutely in saying this. The nerves beneath his thin cheeks and around his lips twitched and quivered, and his voice was dry in his throat. "Poor little Fanny! I remember when I held her in my arms to christen her," he said, grasping the edges of the table tightly with his hands.

Mrs. Strome had cast down her eyes, and a faint colour showed itself in her clear countenance. Her husband, apparently gazing fixedly through the window, was in reality away in London, holding out protecting hands to a sad drooping figure amidst the crowd; he was certainly not prepared for the question that brought him back to Cedarhurst:

"How was Fanny dressed?"

"She—why, Susan, I don't know."

"I mean, Arthur, if she was dressed showily it would be more difficult for us to help her. She can have no money of her own."

"Oh, she wasn't showily dressed; she couldn't have been I'm sure," exclaimed the minister, with all the more earnestness because he had no particular grounds for his assurance. "Poor child, she must be destitute indeed," he murmured; adding immediately: "Phillips can take my place at the Bible-class this afternoon. I'll go directly up to London myself and see her." And he rose animatedly from his chair.

"Have you her address, Arthur?"

The minister's face fell; he resumed his seat. "What a zany I am! Oh, Susie, if I could only learn to think of everything, like you. No; we know no more than I've told you."

"If she is in extremity I think she will write."

This observation also had to travel a long way before it reached Mr. Strome's ears; but his wife knew how to wait for him. He sat up and began fumbling in his pockets. "Talking of writing, I met the postman outside, and he gave me the

letters. There may be some news—who knows? No. Here is one for you, from Mary Dene. Ah! this is from our dear boy. I suppose they'll explain each other, eh?"

The vicar tore the envelope of his letter across, and let it fall to the ground; Mrs. Strome cut hers open quietly with a knife, and put on her spectacles before she began to read. The husband muttered now and then to himself as he turned the pages brusquely one after the other; the wife perused Miss Dene's handwriting with tranquil thoroughness, holding the paper daintily with the tips of her fingers.

"Sebastian is coming down here," exclaimed Mr. Strome, looking up with the joyousness of a boy; "he'll be here Friday."

"Yes, Mary has decided to have her Christmas-tree after all. She is very earnest that we should all be there."

"Let us see; to-day is Thursday, isn't it?"

"Wednesday, Arthur."

"True, so it is; Saturday is Christmas Day—day after to-morrow. I think you will be able to manage it—that we shall, I mean—for an hour or so, at all events. What a delight it will be, Susie, to see that splendid couple together. I don't see why they shouldn't be as happy as we are when they're married. God grant they may!"

"I could not wish her anything better," said Mrs. Strome softly.

"Dear wife! Yes, Mary is a noble girl; but I can hardly imagine any wife's being quite such a blessing to her husband as you have been to me all these thirty years. . . . Poor little Fanny!"

"If we succeed in finding out where Fanny is," said Mrs. Strome, after a short silence, "nothing could be better for her than to go to this new Home that Mary has established. Mary would take an interest in having her there, Fanny having been formerly in her service."

"Nothing could be better, indeed," responded the vicar, feeling about abstractedly for the envelope of his letter. "It was like you to think of that, Susie. Oh, I believe here's another letter in the bottom of this pocket. Yes. From some poor woman, who needs a little money, I suppose. . . . Ah! thank God, thank God!"

Mrs. Strome looked up, and saw the light break out over her husband's face; and she divined at once who must be the writer of this unexpected letter.

"From Fanny? I thought she would send word."

"Poor soul, what she has suffered," murmured the vicar, reading and re-reading the drooping lines, and wholly absorbed in them for the time being. "Oh, the villain, how could he have the heart to do it? 'All alone'—yes, and—hem—'afraid to die in a hospital.' No; that, indeed, she shall not. Susie, I will go to her at once."

"Does she give the name of the man who—"

"The villain who betrayed her? No, no; a girl like Fanny would sooner die than do that," exclaimed Mr. Strome warmly. "No, he's abandoned her; she's alone with her sin and her burden; but she won't tell. I'm glad I do not know him, wife. I could not keep my hands from taking him by the throat. The man's heart must be flint." Here the minister's voice faltered; his own heart being manifestly made of quite other substance.

"Is it just, Arthur, to make such a distinction between his sin and hers?"

"Oh, wife. Think of poor little defenceless, unsuspecting Fanny——"

"Dear husband, let me say this," interposed Mrs. Strome, with the resolute, yet tremulous courage which she was wont to oppose to the vicar's passionate and often hasty and mistaken impulses: "God has left no young girl without defence against deeds that destroy her purity; and the unsuspectingness that leads to actual sin, is little better than a wilful shutting of the eyes. You feel so much affection and pity for Fanny because you held her in your arms at her baptism——"

"It is not that; it is not that only, Susie," exclaimed Mr. Strome, getting up from his chair and coming round to her side of the table; "but she is a woman."

The wife took her husband's hand in her delicate grasp, as he stood beside her, perturbed and restless. "Women are weak in many ways," said she; "but in some they are stronger than men. I think Fanny—or any woman—could have saved herself if she would. I don't think that she is less to blame than the man. Would you think she was, Arthur, if he were someone you knew as you do her?"

"If he had been my own brother—if he had been my own son——" the minister began vehemently, but checked himself, adding in an inward tone: "No, you are right, you are just. My charity is but a blind partiality and prejudice. Ah, Susie, what should I be without you?"

"You could never be anything but the noblest man on earth, my husband," returned Mrs. Strome proudly and tenderly, as he raised her hand to his lips and kissed it. "But your generosity makes you sometimes separate the sin altogether from the sinner; and I am as far the other way, for it is hard for me to separate them at all. And I fear that, if anyone I loved and trusted greatly were to be guilty of a great sin, I should find less forgiveness for him than for a stranger. I should have been a very hateful old woman, Arthur, if I had not been your wife."

Arthur Strome looked down upon his wife with a sort of arch astonishment at this speech: he had never been able to entertain the idea that she could be anything less than a born angel. Nor, apparently, did he now consider her self-depreciation worthy even of being refuted, for after a few moments' pause he reverted to the original question.

"But don't you think I ought to go to London, Sue?"

"Why should not I go? You have more than enough to do here, and you might not be able to get back to-night."

"Oh, it would never do to have you go hunting about the slums of London; and, besides, I'm afraid you—I mean, Fanny might——"

"I would not be harsh with her, Arthur, indeed," said Mrs. Strome, with a little quiver in her voice. "I know that, but for the mercy of the Lord, I might be as much in need of pity and forgiveness as she. Don't think I would not do all I could for her."

"I know you would, Sue; and when she has been brought here, I know you will. But the bringing her here is a man's work; and who but I could do that?"

"Is it quite certain that she will be willing to come? Some women would rather die than face the people who knew them before their disgrace."

"Oh, she will come. I can make her see why she should come. She has not herself only to think of now, poor girl; she has that sacred responsibility on her that even the most hardened woman cannot wholly neglect; and she isn't hardened—she can't be hardened—no, no!"

Mrs. Strome took the letter and read it—not without a perceptible constraint laid upon herself. "I should judge from this," she said, putting it down, "that she wished rather to be helped where she is, than to be brought back to Cedarhurst."

"The truth is, she doesn't know what she wants, except sympathy, and some friendly voice to speak to her, and neither to insult her nor condemn her. She feels herself drifting away from everything trustworthy and good, and she sends forth this involuntary cry for succour. Oh, if our Sebastian were but in my place now! What a heart and strength he would bring to this work."

Mrs. Strome saw things with rare clearness and impartiality when they were placed before her; but she was almost entirely wanting in that teeming fertility of suggestion and resource which was one of her husband's characteristics. Consequently his next proposal, made as it was with all his customary abruptness and vehemence of conviction, gave her something of a start.

"What difference need that make?" he exclaimed. "Why should he have to wait for me? What a blockhead I have been! I'll write him to go to her at once! And how conveniently it happens, too, that he should be coming down here just at this time for Mary Dene's reception. He will bring Fanny with him. He is the man of all others, isn't he, Sue? And I remember he always took an interest in the poor child."

The good vicar, walking up and down the room in his excitement, pressing his hands together or opening them outwards ardently, had not yet looked at his wife; but when at length he did so, he was perplexed to find her not altogether so well-satisfied as himself.

"Do you think it would be wise, Arthur? His having formerly taken an interest about her would make it doubly painful for him; and he is but a young man, after all, without the protection or authority of a fixed position."

"Human beings must not wait for a position to succour one another," returned the minister. He sat down before his wife, leaning forward with his hands clasped between his knees, and his face illumined. "Sebastian is a Christian and a gentleman, and that will safeguard him. Yes; the task will be painful, but it will be wholesome too. It's not enough for a man, whose calling is to be the saving of souls, to theorise and argue merely about sin: he must look in its very face, and feel its deadly breath in the air."

"But is not that almost like saying that a man ought to commit sin in order to learn how hideous it is?"

"Heaven forbid I should say that, though men like Saint Augustine may have needed such a death struggle to rouse the angel in them; men by nature proud, passionate, and powerful, who could be made to acknowledge their personal helplessness only by their personal fall. But our Sebastian, thank God! doesn't need that awful experience; he is, if anything, too fastidious and refined; the grossness and ugliness of sin, not to the speak of its wickedness, would suffice to repel him. The only danger I have ever feared for him is that his heart won't ache and bleed enough for those who stumble in the mire; it will be well for him to learn that he can't touch his neighbour's heart with anything less precious than his own. So, I say, let him go to this girl whom he knew in her innocence, and see with his own eyes what sin has brought her to."

"Sebastian's reserve and self-control sometimes make him appear unsympathetic and cold, but he is not really so; he is as full of fire as Saint Augustine," said the mother, still unsatisfied. "But it was not of him I was thinking so much as of Fanny. He is both too high-minded and too humble for vulgar evil to harm him. I love and trust him next to you in the world, Arthur. But how could Fanny endure that her disgrace should be revealed to one so near her own age?"

"Oh, he's older than I in some ways," answered the minister smiling; "and charity has no age. Besides, she will look upon him as a being of a superior order, not as a young man with whom she could measure herself in any way. That needn't hinder."

"Perhaps," said Mrs. Strome after a pause, "this is a question which neither of us have a right to decide alone. Mary Dene is to be his wife, and it seems to me she ought to be consulted. She might object to it, and if she does—Don't you think she had better be asked?"

"You are right—you are right, Susie, as always!" exclaimed the husband, getting up and beginning to button his coat. "I'll walk over and see about it this very morning, for there's no time to lose; and if she objects, then, as you say, there shall be an end of it. But I hope she won't—I think she won't."

"I think so, too, after you have talked to her," said Mrs. Strome, looking up demurely.

The minister kissed his wife, and laughed. "No; I promise not to be persistent and

argumentative. I'll put the question in the baldest way. I won't even let her know that her decision is to be final. There! isn't that liberal?"

Mrs. Strome smiled back at him, but made no reply.

"I look like a fool, to be questioning your judgment," he said, pausing. "Are you quite sure I'm wrong, Sue?"

"My husband, you are wiser than I, for you are nearer heaven," she answered, rising and putting her arms round his arm, and her grey head against his shoulder. "I believe that what you do will be right. Go to Mary, and say to her all you have said to me."

So the Reverend Mr. Strome set forth on his errand to Dene Hall; and the wife and mother sat a silent hour in the eastern parlour, gazing out beneath the dark boughs of the cedars towards London, her hands folded on the open Bible in her lap.

AL FRESCO.

II.

In *Mist's Journal* for April 16th, 1720, it was announced that Belsize House had been converted into a place of public amusement. The advertisement was in these terms: "Whereas the ancient and noble house near Hampstead, commonly called Bellasis House, is now taken and fitted up for the entertainment of gentlemen and ladies during the whole summer season, the same will be opened on Easter Monday next with an uncommon solemnity of music and dancing. This undertaking will exceed all of the kind that has hitherto been known near London, commencing every day at six in the morning, and continuing till eight at night, all persons being privileged to admittance without necessity of expense." The proprietor of the place was one Howell, who enjoyed repute as a humourist, and was commonly known as the "Welsh Ambassador." He is referred to as "the man that keeps Belsize," in a letter from the Countess Cowper to Mrs. Clayton, afterwards Lady Sundon, dated June 21st, 1722: "We are very dull here this summer; for there have been so many deaths in this neighbourhood, among the gay part of it, that we have no sort of diversion. The man that keeps Belsize is setting up a long room at North Hall, and his music plays from sunrise to sunset, but vainly, for nobody here cares to go to him, especially since

they heard he intended to have forty beds for the accommodation of gentlemen and ladies from London." There were difficulties in getting back to town after a day at Belsize: the roads were by no means free from highwaymen and footpads. A handbill was issued, therefore, announcing that "twelve stout fellows, completely armed, do patrol between Belsize and London." As further inducements to visit Belsize, it was stated that "the park, wilderness, and gardens" had undergone great improvements and been "fitted with variety of birds, which compose a most melodious and delightful harmony." And information was conveyed to "persons who desire to walk and to divert themselves," that they might breakfast at Belsize on tea and coffee as cheaply as in their own apartments. In *Read's Journal* for July 15th, 1721, it is recorded: "Last Saturday their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales dined at Belsize House, near Hampstead, attended by several persons of quality, where they were entertained with the diversion of hunting and such others as the place afforded, with which they seemed well pleased, and at their departure were very liberal to the servants."

In a few years, however, Belsize ceased to be a place of public entertainment, and was again occupied as a private residence. The name is preserved, but nothing of the house now remains, and the extensive grounds are covered with streets and terraces. The old mansion-house of Belsize had been pulled down and rebuilt in the reign of Charles the Second; and this new house had been in its turn much altered and reconstructed early in the eighteenth century. The fine old carved staircase, disposed of by public auction in 1854, had pertained to the second house. The estate of fifty-seven acres, with the mansion-house, called in old writings the Manor of Belses, had been granted in 1317 to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster by Sir Roger le Brabazon, for the founding of a chantry at the altar of St. John the Evangelist, for the souls of Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, Blanch his wife, and the said Sir Roger. Belsize House had been tenanted by Sir Armigal Waad, Clerk of the Council to Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth, the first Englishman who made discoveries in America. He died at Belsize in 1568, and was buried in the parish church of Hampstead, where lies also interred his son Sir William,

Clerk of the Council to Queen Elizabeth, ambassador to Spain, and afterwards lieutenant of the Tower. At a later date Belsize became the seat of Thomas, Lord Wotton, whose eldest daughter and co-heir married Henry, Lord Stanhope, son of the first Earl of Chesterfield.

Pepys writes in his diary, May 7th, 1668: "Then we abroad to Marrowbone, and there walked in the garden, the first time I ever was there, and a pretty place it is." The manor or parish of Marylebone is supposed to owe its name to the same bourn, brook, or rivulet, from which Tyburn and Westbourne derive their appellations, the parish church being originally dedicated to St. Mary-le-Bourne—i.e. St. Mary on the Brook. Some, however, would regard Marylebone as an ungrammatical corruption of Mary-la-bonne. On this subject De Quincey wrote amusingly: "If I have read one I have read twenty letters addressed to newspapers, denouncing the name of a great quarter in London, Marylebone, as ludicrously ungrammatical. The writers had learned or were learning French, and they had thus become aware that neither the article nor the adjective was right. True, not right for the current-age; but quite right for the age in which the name arose: but for want of elder French they did not know that in our Chaucer's time both were right. 'Le' was then the feminine article as well as masculine, and 'bone' was then the true form for the adjective." The celebrated garden and bowling-green of Marylebone occupied the site of Beaumont Street, and of portions of Devonshire Street and Devonshire Place. The grand orchestra of the gardens stood on the site of No. 17, Devonshire Place. The bowling-green is referred to in Lady Mary Wortley Montague's well-known lines:

At the Groom-Porter's battered bullies play;
Some dukes at Marybone bowl time away.

Marylebone Gardens obtain mention in The Beggar's Opera. Indeed, in the course of a performance of that work at Drury Lane in 1820, Madame Vestris personating Captain Macheath, a new scene was introduced representing Marylebone Gardens "as they were about the time when The Beggar's Opera was written." An advertisement published in 1718 informed all persons of quality, ladies and gentlemen, that the usual illuminations in honour of His Majesty's birthday had been postponed, "by reason

there is a ball in the gardens at Kensington with illuminations, and at Richmond also." It was held, presumably, that the entertainments would suffer if they were all presented on the same evening. Before 1737 no charge was made for admission to the gardens; but in that year Mr. Gough, the proprietor, resolved to charge each visitor one shilling for entrance money, "returning an equivalent in viands." Mr. Gough greatly improved the property, erecting an orchestra, and offering musical performances, vocal and instrumental, "in the manner of Vauxhall." Fireworks also formed an important part of the entertainment. In 1772 a certain Signor Torr  was employed to prepare a representation of Mount Etna, in addition to the ordinary display of wheels, suns, stars, globes, &c., in honour of the king's birthday. A contemporary journalist writes: "A curtain which covered the base of the mountain presently rose, and disclosed Vulcan leading Cyclops to work at their forge; the fire blazed, and Venus entered with Cupid at her side, who begged them to make for her son those arrows which are said to be the causes of love in the human breast; they assented, and the mountain immediately appeared in eruption with lava rushing down the precipices."

It was to witness Torr 's fireworks that Dr. Johnson on a special occasion visited Marylebone Gardens in company with his friend Mr. George Steevens, and assumed, as Steevens relates, "a character in which perhaps even Mr. Boswell never saw him." The night had proved showery, and but few visitors were present; public notice was given, therefore, that the fireworks being injured by the rain, the usual exhibition could not take place. The doctor waxed indignant. "This is a mere excuse," he observed to his friend, "to save their crackers for a more profitable company. Let us both hold up our sticks and threaten to break those coloured lamps that surround the orchestra, and we shall soon have our wishes gratified. The core of the fireworks cannot be injured; let the different pieces be touched in their respective centres, and they will do their offices as well as ever." Some young men who overheard him immediately commenced the violent proceedings he had recommended, and attempt was made to fire some of the wheels which appeared the least damaged by the rain. These efforts proved in vain, however: the fireworks would not explode. Mr. Steevens

notes: "The author of *The Rambler* may be considered on this occasion as the ring-leader of a successful riot, although not as a skilful pyrotechnist."

Some few years later the gardens were devoted to "a representation of the boulevards of Paris." Temporary shops were erected in front of the ball-room; the names of the supposititious tradesmen being made legible "by means of transparent paintings:" Tête, a hairdresser; Newfangle, a milliner; Crotchet, a music shop; Pine, a fruiterer; Trinket, a toy-shop, &c., much in the manner of a harlequinade. There were other entertainments, among them the feats of eight acrobats, who "exhibited a dance called *The Egyptian Pyramids*, standing on the backs, arms, and shoulders of each other to an astonishing height." In 1776, Bonnel Thornton's burlesque ode was successfully performed in the gardens. It resembled in some sort the *Toy Symphony* of Haydn, and was entitled "*An Ode on Saint Cecilia's Day*, adapted to the ancient British music, viz. *The Salt Box*, *The Jew's Harp*, *The Marrow-bones and Cleavers*, *The Hurdy-gurdy*, &c." The music was composed by Dr. Burney. In a mock preface the author expressed a desire "to lessen our false taste in admiring that foreign music now so much in vogue." The author hoped that whatever opinion the audience might entertain of his ode, they would at least commend his endeavours to bring again into notice certain long neglected but noble instruments of music.

Upon the stage of a small theatre in the gardens burlettas were presented: among other works *The Portrait*, an adaptation of *Le Tableau Parlant*, by George Colman, and *The Revenge*, a burlesque written by Chatterton at the age of sixteen. Handel's *Acis and Galatea* was also performed; lectures were occasionally given with entertainments of conjuring and mimicry, and exhibitions of the *Fantoccini*. The gardens were finally closed in 1778, and buildings speedily covered the site.

Ranelagh Gardens claimed patronage because of the shelter they afforded the visitor. They professed to be a "Vauxhall under cover" for the most part, and offering attractions even in the depth of winter. No vestige of Ranelagh now remains. The road from Sloane Street to the Suspension Bridge leading to Battersea Park crosses the site of the gardens. The house, originally erected by Viscount Ranelagh, in 1691, on ground granted him by William

III., had been purchased by one Timbrell, a builder, in 1733, and was shortly afterwards offered for sale as "a freehold with garden, kitchen-garden, and offices, and a smaller house and garden with fruit trees, coach-houses, &c." In 1742 Walpole wrote of Ranelagh to his friend Sir Horace Mann: "I have been breakfasting this morning at Ranelagh Garden; they have built an immense amphitheatre with balconies full of little ale-houses; it is in rivalry to Vauxhall, and cost above twelve thousand pounds. The building is not finished, but they get great sums by people going to see it and breakfasting in the house." On May 26th, 1742, Walpole writes again to Mann: "Two nights ago Ranelagh Gardens were opened at Chelsea; the prince, princess, duke, much nobility, and much mob besides were there. There is a vast amphitheatre finely gilt, painted, and illuminated, into which everybody that loves eating, drinking, staring, or crowding is admitted for twelve-pence. The building and disposition of the grounds cost sixteen thousand pounds. Twice a week there are to be *ridottos*, at guinea tickets, for which you are to have a supper and music. I was there last night, but did not find the joy of it. Vauxhall is a little better, for the garden is better, and one goes by water." A landing-place was afterwards added to Ranelagh, however, so that it might be approached by the river. The chief entrance was in Ranelagh Walk, the visitors being driven through a long avenue of majestic trees; an open space in front of the gates was sufficient to contain a great number of carriages. The rotunda or amphitheatre was one hundred and eighty-five feet in diameter, with an orchestra in the centre, and tiers of boxes all round. It was projected by Lacy, Garrick's partner in the patent of Drury Lane. The huge building was warmed in the winter time by means of coal fires; and the chief amusement consisted in promenading round and round the central orchestra, listening to the music, vocal and instrumental, and taking refreshments in the supper-boxes. Dr. Johnson having seen Ranelagh "when the scene was enlivened with a gay profusion of colour," pronounced the spectacle "the finest thing he had ever seen." Yet he decided that such splendid places of amusement were but "struggles for happiness." "When I first entered Ranelagh," he confessed to Boswell, "it gave an expansion and gay sensation to my mind such as I

never experienced anywhere else. But as Xerxes wept when he viewed his immense army, and considered that not one of that great multitude would be alive a hundred years afterwards, so it went to my heart to consider that there was not one in all that brilliant circle that was not afraid to go home and think: but that the thoughts of each individual there would be distressing when alone." Boswell notes profoundly: "This reflection was experimentally just."

There were difficulties with the central orchestra. It was said to destroy the symmetry of the building by projecting some twenty feet too far; it was charged also with diffusing the sounds of the music "with such irregular rapidity that the harmonious articulations escaped the nicest ear when placed in the most commodious attitude." A new orchestra was therefore planned with "a well-proportioned curvature over it"—probably a sounding-board—to "contract into narrower bounds the modulations of the voice," and "operate upon the musical sounds in the same manner as concave glasses affect the rays of light, by collecting them into a focus." A stage was also erected to accommodate some thirty or forty choristers, and performances took place of admired catches and glees, "selected from the curious collection of the Catch Club; being the first of the kind publicly exhibited in this or any other kingdom." To give the catches and glees their proper effect in so large an area, choral and instrumental parts were added by the famous Dr. Arne.

For a time Ranelagh seems to have surpassed Vauxhall in the estimation of fashionable society. Walpole, a convert to the newer place of entertainment, wrote to his friend Conway in 1744: "Every night constantly I go to Ranelagh, which has totally beat Vauxhall. Nobody goes anywhere else; everybody goes there. My Lord Chesterfield is so fond of it that he says he has ordered all his letters to be directed thither." Four years later he wrote to Montagu: "Ranelagh is so crowded that going there t'other night in a string of coaches we had a stop of six-and-thirty minutes." At one time it was the vogue to remain at Ranelagh until the conclusion of the concert and the fireworks, and then to adjourn to Vauxhall for supper. The patronage of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George the Fourth, lent the place for a time great attraction. And Ranelagh could boast its romantic

incidents. It was the scene of Fighting Fitzgerald's attempt to abduct Perdita Robinson. In the gardens of Ranelagh the Prince of Wales first met the charming Mrs. Crouch, and there the foolish Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland, was first impressed by the beauty of the widow Mrs. Horton, whom he subsequently made his duchess.

Almost the last event of importance in the history of Ranelagh was the installation ball of the Knights of the Bath in 1802. The gardens were finally closed in 1803, after a festival had been held to celebrate the peace with France, and the Picnic Society had given a grand breakfast to 2,000 persons, when Garnerin made an ascent in his balloon. The buildings were demolished in 1804; the organ being transferred from the magnificent rotunda to the quiet parish church of Tetbury in Gloucestershire. It may be noted that etchings by George Cruikshank of Vauxhall, Marylebone, and Ranelagh Gardens, from contemporary drawings, appear as illustrations to Mr. Harrison Ainsworth's romance of *The Miser's Daughter*.

Bagnigge Wells does not strike one now as a particularly agreeable or picturesque place. It was much esteemed, however, in the last century. It possessed a spa-room then, and people attended there to drink the waters. It was first opened to the public about 1757, "in consequence of the discovery of two mineral springs upon the premises—the one chalybeate, the other cathartic." A certain Doctor Bevis wrote a treatise upon these waters, proclaiming their medicinal qualities. It is likely that the majority of the visitors preferred more palatable potations, however. The place offered attractions, as yet another imitation of Vauxhall, although on an inferior scale. Nell Gwynne is said to have occupied Bagnigge Wells House at one time, and to have retained for her exclusive use the bath or well in Cold Bath Fields. The place is described as "one of her country houses, where the King and Duke of York frequently visited, and where she often entertained them with concerts, breakfasts, &c." The river Fleet, better known, perhaps, as the Fleet Ditch, fed by the springs in the neighbourhood, ran through the grounds, and upon its banks seats were ranged, "for such of the company as choose to smoke and drink cider, ale, &c., which are not permitted in other parts of the gardens." Bagnigge Wells is mentioned in Colman's prologue

to Garrick's farce of *Bon Ton*, or *High Life above Stairs*.

"Ah! I loves life and all the joys it yields,"
Says Madame Fussock, warm from Spitalfields.
"Bon Ton's the space twixt Saturday and Monday.
And riding in a one-horse chaise o' Sunday;
'Tis drinking tea in summer afternoons,
At Bagnigge Wells with china and gilt spoons;
'Tis laying by our stuffs, red cloaks and pattens,
To dance cow-tillions all in silks and satins."

The Gardens were originally extensive, and adorned in the old-fashioned way with leaden statues, straight walks, clipped trees, fountains, grottoes, &c. The water was dispensed at threepence per glass, or eightpence per gallon, delivered in the pump-room. The famous Braham is said to have appeared, at the age of fourteen, as a singer at one of the concerts at Bagnigge Wells. In 1813, owing to the bankruptcy of the proprietor, there was a sale upon the premises. By this time the gardens were much reduced in size. Cubitt's building-yard now occupies a portion of the site. The entire structure was demolished in 1841.

Bagnigge Wells pre-deceased, by some few years only, the not less famous White Conduit House. A modern tavern in Penton Street registers the site of the old establishment, first opened about 1735. An ancient conduit, formerly standing in an adjacent field, gave its name to the place. It had been constructed originally to supply the Charter House with water, and on its face so late as 1815 could be deciphered 1641, the date of its erection, and the initials of Thomas Sutton, the founder of the Charter House. In 1744 the garden is described as "formed into several pleasing walks prettily disposed; at the end of the principal one is a painting, which serves to render it much longer in appearance than it really is, and in the middle of the garden is a round fish-pond, encompassed with a number of very genteel boxes for company, curiously cut into the hedges, and adorned with a variety of Flemish and other paintings." In later times White Conduit House possessed an orchestra in the grounds, a small theatre, and a hall of vast dimensions for balls, concerts, suppers, dinners, and public meetings. In 1826 White Conduit called itself the "New Vauxhall, Pentonville." During the excitement stirred by the first Reform Bill, and also in the course of the contested elections for the borough of Finsbury, when the Hon. "Tommy" Duncombe figured imposingly as a tribune of the people, the great hall at Pentonville

became famous for political harangues and vehement discussions, vying in that regard with Copenhagen Fields, or the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand. But White Conduit was passing away as a place of public entertainment. Buildings were already encroaching upon the gardens, and their popularity was ebbing fast. In 1849 White Conduit House was demolished. Warren Street, so called after one Stephen Warren, who died in 1827, and who had once owned the place, occupies a large portion of the site of the old gardens.

Cremorne Gardens, which have recently been handed over to the builders, may be viewed as the last of London out-of-door places of entertainment. But Cremorne can boast no long history; it came late into public life. The patronage of royalty was never extended to it. It was never fashionable, although for a while it enjoyed considerable popularity. An aristocratic fête was attempted upon a special occasion in the year 1858, when the general public was excluded, and admission could only be obtained by means of a high-priced ticket, and the voucher of a patroness of distinction. But the night proved cold and rainy, and disaster befell the enterprise. With this exception the gardens had to depend solely upon the support of ordinary people; and Cremorne resumed its position as a sort of vulgar Vauxhall. The property was originally known as Chelsea Farm. Early in the eighteenth century the Earl of Huntingdon, who died in 1746, built a villa upon the estate, which changed hands rapidly. Richard, Lord Powerscourt; Hannah Sophia, Dowager Countess of Exeter; Sir Richard Lyttelton, who married the Duchess of Bridgewater, are reputed to have owned the property in turn. To Viscount Cremorne, who became possessed of it in 1803, the estate owes the name by which it has since been known. "Anastasius" Hope afterwards purchased Cremorne, and in 1830 the mansion, which had been erected from the designs of Wyatt, became the residence of the Baron de Beringer, whose name had been notorious in connection with the Stock Exchange Hoax of 1814, for which Lord Cochrane so unjustly suffered. Cremorne was then first opened to the public as a gymnasium, but gradually acquired more and more the character of a pleasure-garden. De Beringer dying in 1845, Mr. T. B. Simpson, of the Albion Tavern, Great Russell Street, purchased the lease and opened the gardens for a regular

season of Vauxhall entertainments. The grounds, twelve acres in extent, were skilfully laid out; a theatre was built for the performance of ballets and burlettas; a circus was devoted to equestrian feats; an orchestral temple was erected with a circular "monster platform" for open-air dancing; a ball-room was also available when the weather proved unpropitious. The Thames, too, was pressed into the service of the gardens, and naval fêtes, in which the river steamboats took part, were occasionally given. A female Blondin crossed the river upon a tight-rope; an Italian Salamander or fire-king disported himself in a flame-proof dress in the midst of a bonfire; balloon ascents were frequent with occasional descents in parachutes, one M. Latour losing his life by such means in 1854; and fireworks abounded. But Cremorne too closely resembled Vauxhall in its decadence. The gardens closed at last, not from deficiency of patronage, but because of the boisterousness and disrepute of the patrons. And a neighbourhood had grown up, environing Cremorne and proclaiming it a nuisance. So it had to be abolished and built over.

Other like places had already departed: Rosemary Branch Gardens at Hoxton, and Rosemary Branch Gardens at Peckham; New Globe Gardens at Mile-End, and St. Helena Tea Gardens at Deptford; Tea Gardens at Bayswater, open so late as 1834; and Highbury Barn, long a popular suburban resort. All had imitated the admired Vauxhall pattern, proffering the visitor the delights of coloured lamps and supper-boxes, music, singing, and dancing, fireworks, and gravelled walks, with occasional balloon ascents, feats of horsemanship, trained dogs, ground and lofty tumbling, &c. But the same fate waited upon all. Each in turn gave offence to licensing magistrates, or was eventually "required for building purposes." The builder's reforming hand reached even so far as Anerley; and what were once popular gardens upon the banks of the old Surrey Canal, under the shadow of the hills of Norwood and Sydenham, were converted ten years since into villa residences, streets, and terraces. The tea-gardens of old have been gradually disappearing on all sides of London; our open-air places of amusement have departed one by one. Formerly, those who contemplated taking their ease in an inn or tavern, counted also upon the pleasures of its bowling-green or its dry skittle-ground,

with adjoining arbours of trellis-work, clothed with scarlet runners, 'neath whose shelter tea could be sipped, or, perhaps more frequently, ale-glasses emptied and pipes smoked. All the public-houses lining the roads leading to London had been wont to regard their fore-courts and back-gardens as pleasure-grounds, to fit them with arbours, and adorn them with flowers and walks and grass plots, possibly even fountains. But tastes change, and habits and customs vary and develop. The open-air it seems has lost its charm. The publican has enlarged his buildings, pressing every spare inch of ground into the service of a grand bar with many compartments, lofty ceilings, spacious counters, and numberless jets of gas. In lieu of the old tea-gardens, often harmless enough, and even wholesome in that something like fresh air sometimes blew about them, there flourish and flash and flare nowadays gorgeous gin-palaces, wherein the visitor must drink deep and often—he can stay upon no other terms—or the music-halls, with their too often unseemly dances and gross songs.

VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLET'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XLII. CRUMPLED ROSE-LEAVES.

VIOLET TEMPEST had been away from home nearly a year, and to the few old servants remaining at the Abbey House, and to the villagers who had known and loved her, it seemed as if a light had gone out.

"It's like it was after the squire's death, when miss and her ma was away," said one gossip to another; "the world seems empty."

Mrs. Winstanley and her husband had been living as became people of some pretension to rank and fashion. They saw very little of each other, but were seen together on all fitting occasions. The morning service in the little church at Beechdale would not have seemed complete without those two figures—the faded beauty in trailing silken draperies and diaphanous bonnet; the slim, well-dressed captain, with his bronzed face and black whiskers. They were in everybody's idea the happiest example of married bliss. If the lady's languid loveliness had faded more within the last year or so than in the ten years that went before it, if her slow step had grown slower, her white hand

more transparent, there were no keen loving eyes to mark the change.

"That affectation of valetudinarianism is growing on Mrs. Winstanley," Mrs. Scobel said one day to her husband. "It is a pity. I believe the captain encourages it."

"She has not looked so well since Violet went away," answered the kindly parson. "It seems an unnatural thing for mother and daughter to be separated."

"I don't know that, dear. Poor Violet was a discordant element in that household. Mrs. Winstanley must feel much happier now she is away."

"I can't tell how she feels," answered the vicar doubtfully; "but she does not look so happy as she did when Violet was at home."

"The fact is, she gives way too much," exclaimed active little Mrs. Scobel, who had never given way in her life. "When she has a headache she lies in bed, and has the venetian-blinds kept down, just as if she were dying. No wonder she looks pale and——"

"Etiolated," said the vicar; "perishing for want of light. But I believe it's moral sunshine that is wanted there, my dear Fanny, say what you will."

Mr. Scobel was correct in his judgment. Pamela Winstanley was a most unhappy woman—an unhappy woman without one tangible cause of complaint. True that her daughter was banished; but she was banished with the mother's full consent. Her personal extravagances had been curtailed; but she was fain to admit that the curtailment was wise, necessary, and for her own future benefit. Her husband was all kindness; and surely she could not be angry with him if he seemed to grow younger every day—rejuvenated by regular habits and rustic life—while in her wan face the lines of care daily deepened, until it would have needed art far beyond the power of any modern Medea to conceal Time's ravages.

"I am getting an old woman," sighed Mrs. Winstanley. "It is lucky I am not without resources against solitude and age."

Her resources were a tepid appreciation of modern idyllic poetry, a talent for embroidering conventional foliage and flowers on kitchen towelling, and for the laborious conversion of Nottingham braid into Venetian point-lace.

She had taken it into her head of late to withdraw herself altogether from society,

save from such friends who liked her well enough, or were sufficiently perplexed as to the disposal of their lives, to waste an occasional hour over gossip and orange pekoe. She had now permanently assumed the rôle of invalid, which she had always somewhat affected.

"I am really not well enough to go to dinner-parties, Conrad," she said, when her husband politely argued against her refusal of an invitation, with just that mild entreaty which too plainly means: "I don't care a jot whether you go with me or stay at home."

"But, my dear Pamela, a little gaiety would give you a fillip."

"No, it would not, Conrad. It would worry me to go to Lady Ellangowan's in one of last season's dresses; and I quite agree with you that I must spend no more money with Theodore."

"Why not wear your black velvet?"

"Too obvious a pis aller. I have not enough diamonds to carry off black velvet."

"But your fine old lace—rose-point, I think you call it—surely that would carry off black velvet for once in a way."

"My dear Conrad, Lady Ellangowan knows my rose-point by heart. She always compliments me about it—an artful way of letting me know how often she has seen it. 'Oh, there is that rose-point of yours, dear Mrs. Winstanley; it is too lovely.' I know her! No, Conrad; I will not go to the Ellangowans' in a dress made last year; or in any réchauffé of velvet and lace. I hope I have a proper pride that would always preserve me from humiliation of that kind. Besides, I am not strong enough. You may not believe me, Conrad, but I am really ill."

The captain put on an unhappy look, and murmured something sympathetic; but he did not believe in the reality of his wife's ailments. She had played the invalid more or less ever since their marriage; and he had grown accustomed to the assumption as a part of his wife's daily existence—a mere idiosyncrasy, like her love of fine dress and strong tea. If at dinner she ate hardly enough for a bird, he concluded that she had spoiled her appetite at luncheon, or by the consumption of sweet biscuits and pound-cake at five o'clock. Her refusal of all invitations to dinners and garden-parties he attributed to her folly about dress, and to that alone. Those other reasons which she put forward—of weakness, languor, low spirits—were to Captain Winstanley's mind mere dis-

guises for temper. She had not, in her heart of hearts, forgiven him for closing Madame Theodore's account.

Thus, wilfully blind to a truth which was soon to become obvious to all the world, he let the insidious foe steal across his threshold, and guessed not how soon that dark and hidden enemy was to drive him from the hearth by which he sat, secure in self-approval and sagacious schemes for the future.

Once a week, through all the long year, there had come a dutiful letter from Violet to her mother. The letters were often brief—what could the girl find to tell in her desert island?—but they were always kind, and they were a source of comfort to the mother's heart. Mrs. Winstanley answered unflinchingly, and her Jersey letter was one of the chief events of each week. She was fonder of her daughter at a distance than she had ever been when they were together. "That will be something to tell Violet," she would say of any inane bit of gossip that was whispered across the afternoon tea-cups.

CHAPTER XLIII. A FOOL'S PARADISE.

At Ashbourne preparations had already begun for the wedding in August. It was to be a wedding worthy a duke's only daughter, the well-beloved and cherished child of an adoring father and mother. Kinsfolk and old friends were coming from far and wide for whom temporary rooms were to be arranged in all manner of places. The duchess's exquisite dairy was to be transformed into a bachelor dormitory. Lodges and gamekeepers' cottages were utilised. Every nook and corner in the ducal mansion would be full.

There was to be a ball for the tenantry in the evening of the wedding-day, in a marquee on the lawn. The gardens were to be illuminated in a style worthy of the chateau of Vaux, when Fouquet was squandering a nation's revenues on lamps and fountains and venal friends. Lady Mabel protested against all this fuss.

"Dear mamma, I would so much rather have been married quietly," she said.

"My dearest, it is all your papa's doing. He is so proud of you. And then we have only one daughter; and she is not likely to be married more than once, I hope. Why should we not have all our friends round us at such a time?"

Mabel shrugged her shoulders, with an air of repugnance to all the friends and all the fuss.

"Marriage is such a solemn act of one's life," she said. "It seems dreadful that it should be performed in the midst of a gaping, indifferent crowd."

"My love, there will not be a creature present who can feel indifferent about your welfare," protested the devoted mother. "If our dear Roderick had been a more distinguished person, your papa would have had you married in Westminster Abbey. There, of course, there would have been a crowd of idle spectators."

"Poor Roderick," sighed Mabel. "It is a pity he is so utterly aimless. He might have made a career for himself by this time, if he had chosen."

"He will do something by-and-by, I daresay," said the duchess excusingly. "You will be able to mould him as you like, pet."

"I have not found him particularly malleable hitherto," said Mabel.

The bride elect was out of spirits, and inclined to look despondently upon life. She was suffering the bitter pain of disappointed hopes. The Tragedy of the Sceptic Soul, despite its depth of thought, its exquisite typography and paper, had been a dire and irredeemable failure. The reviewers had ground the poor little aristocratic butterfly to powder upon the wheel of ridicule. They had anatomised Lady Mabel's involved sentences, and laughed at her erudite phrases. Her mild adaptations of Greek thought and fancy had been found out, and held up to contempt. Her petty plagiarisms from French and German poets had been traced to their source. The whole work, so smooth and neatly polished on the outside, had been turned the seamy side without, and the knots and flaws and unravelled threads had been exposed without pity.

Happily the book was anonymous: but Mabel writhed under the criticism. There was the crushing disappointment of expectations that had soared high as the topmost throne on Parnassus. She had a long way to descend. And then there was the sickening certainty that in the eyes of her own small circle she had made herself ridiculous. Her mother took those cruel reviews to heart, and wept over them. The duke, a coarse-minded man at best, laughed aloud at his poor little girl's failure.

"It's a sad disappointment, I daresay," he said; "but never mind, my pet, you'll do better next time, I've no doubt. Or if

you don't, it doesn't much matter. Other people have fancied themselves poets, and have been deceived, before to-day."

"Those horrid reviewers don't understand her poetry," protested the duchess, who would have been hard pushed to comprehend it herself, but who thought it was a critic's business to understand everything.

"I'm afraid I have written above their heads," Lady Mabel said piteously.

Roderick Vawdrey was worst of all.

"Didn't I tell you The Sceptic Soul was too fine for ordinary intellects, Mab?" he said. "You lost yourself in an ocean of obscurity. You knew what you meant, but there's no man alive who could follow you. You must take a simpler subject and use plainer English if you want to please the multitude."

Mabel had told her lover before that she did not aspire to please the multitude, that she would have esteemed such cheap and tawdry success a humiliating failure. It was almost better not to be read at all than to be appreciated only by the average Mudie subscriber. But she would have liked someone to read her poems. She would have liked critics to praise and understand her. She would have liked to have her own small world of admirers, an esoteric few, the salt of the earth, holding themselves apart from the vulgar herd. It was dreadful to find herself on a height as lonely as one of those plateaux in the Tyrolean Alps, where the cattle crop a scanty herbage in summer, and where the Ice King reigns alone through the long winter.

"You are mistaken, Roderick," Mabel said with chilling dignity; "I have friends who can understand and admire my poetry, incomprehensible and uninteresting as it may be to you."

"Dear Mabel, I never said it was uninteresting," Roderick cried humbly; "everything you do must be interesting to me. But I frankly own that I do not understand your verses as clearly as I think all verse should be understood. Why should I keep all my frankness till after the first of August? Why should the lover be less sincere than the husband? I will be truthful even at the risk of offending you."

"Pray do," cried Mabel, with ill-suppressed irritation. "Sincerity is such a delightful thing. No doubt my critics are sincere. They give me the honest undisguised truth."

Rorie saw that his betrothed's literary failure was a subject to be carefully avoided in future.

"My poor Vixen," he said to himself, with oh! what deep regret, "perhaps it was not one of the least of your charms that you never wrote poetry."

Lord Mallow was coming to Ashbourne for the fortnight before the wedding. He had made himself wondrously agreeable to the duke, and the duke had invited him. The House would be up by that time. It was a delightful season for the Forest. The heather would be in bloom on all the open heights, the glades of Mark Ash would be a solemn world of greenery and shadow, a delicious place for picnics, flirtation, and gipsy tea-drinkings. Lord Mallow had only seen the Forest in the winter. It would be a grand opportunity for him.

He came, and Lady Mabel received him with a sad sweet smile. The reviews had all appeared by this time; and, except in the West Dulmarsh Gazette and the Ratcliffe Highway Register, there had not been one favourable notice.

"There is a dreadful unanimity about my critics, is there not?" said the stricken poetess, when she and Lord Mallow found themselves alone together in one of the orchid-houses, breathing a perfumed atmosphere at eighty degrees, vaporous, balmy, slumberous.

"You have made a tremendous mistake, Lady Mabel," said Lord Mallow.

"How do you mean?"

"You have given the world your great book without first educating your public to receive and understand it. If Browning had done the same thing—if Browning had burst at once upon the world with *The Ring* and *The Book* he would have been as great a failure as—as you at present imagine yourself to be. You should have sent forth something smaller. You should have made the reading world familiar with a style, too original, and of too large a power and scope, to please quickly. A volume of ballads and idyls—a short story in simple verse—would have prepared the way for your dramatic poem. Suppose Goethe had begun his literary career with the second part of *Faust*! He was too wise for that, and wrote himself into popularity with a claptrap novel."

"I could not write a claptrap novel, or claptrap verses," sighed Lady Mabel. "If I cannot soar above the clouds, I will

never spread my poor little wings again."

"Then you must be content to accept your failure as an evidence of the tendencies of an essentially Philistine age—an age in which people admire Brown, and Jones, and Robinson."

Here Lord Mallow gave a string of names, sacrificing the most famous reputations of the age to Mabel Ashbourne's vanity.

This brief conversation in the orchid-house was the first healing balm that had been applied to the bleeding heart of the poetess. She was deeply grateful to Lord Mallow. This was indeed sympathy. How different from Roderick's clumsy advice and obtrusive affectation of candour. Mabel determined that she would do her best to make Lord Mallow's visit pleasant. She gave him a good deal of her society, in fact, all she could spare from Roderick, who was not an exacting lover. They were so soon to be married that really there was no occasion for them to be greedy of tête-à-tête companionship. They would have enough of each other's company among the Norwegian fjords.

Lord Mallow did not care about riding under an almost tropical sun, nor did he care to expose his horse to the exasperating attacks of forest-flies; so he went about with the duchess and her daughter in Lady Mabel's pony-carriage—he saw schools and cottages—and told the two ladies all the grand things he meant to do on his Irish estate when he had leisure to do them.

"You must wait till you are married," said the duchess good-naturedly. "Ladies understand these details so much better than gentlemen. Mabel more than half planned those cottages you admired just now. She took the drawings out of the architect's hands, and altered them to her own taste."

"And, as a natural result, the cottages are perfection!" exclaimed Lord Mallow.

That visit to Ashbourne was one of the most memorable periods in Lord Mallow's life. He was an impressible young man, and he had been unconsciously falling deeper in love with Lady Mabel every day during the last three months. Her delicate beauty, her culture, her elegance, her rank, all charmed and fascinated him; but her sympathy with Erin was irresistible. It was not the first time that he had been in love by a great many times. The list of the idols he had worshipped stretched backward to the dim remoteness of boy-

hood. But-to-day, awakening all at once to a keen perception of his hapless state, he told himself that he had never loved before as he loved now.

He had been hard hit by Miss Tempest. Yes, he acknowledged that past weakness. He had thought her the fairest and most delightful among women, and he had left the Abbey House dejected and undone. But he had quickly recovered from the brief fever; and now, reverentially admiring Lady Mabel's prim propriety, he wondered that he could have ever seriously offered himself to a girl of Vixen's undisciplined and unbroken character.

"I should have been a miserable man by this time if she had accepted me," he thought. "She did not care a straw about the people of Ireland."

He was deeply, hopelessly, irrevocably in love; and the lady he loved was to be married to another man in less than a week. The situation was too awful. What could such a woman as Mabel Ashbourne see in such a man as Roderick Vawdrey? That is a kind of question which has been asked very often in the history of men and women. Lord Mallow could find no satisfactory answer thereto. Mr. Vawdrey was well enough in his way—he was good-looking, sufficiently well-bred; he rode well, was a first-rate shot, and could give an average player points at billiards. Surely these were small claims to the love of a tenth muse, a rarely accomplished and perfect woman. If Lord Mallow, in his heart of hearts, thought no great things of Lady Mabel's poetic effusions, he not the less respected her for the effort, the high-souled endeavour. A woman who could read Euripides, who knew all that was best in modern literature, was a woman for a husband to be proud of.

In this desperate and for the most part unsuspected condition of mind, Lord Mallow hung upon Lady Mabel's footsteps during the days immediately before the wedding. Roderick was superintending the alterations at Briarwood, which were being carried on upon rather an extravagant scale to make the mansion worthy of the bride. Lord Mallow was always at hand; in the orchid-houses carrying scissors and adjusting the hose; in the library; in the gardens; in the boudoir. He was drinking greedily of the sweet poison. This fool's paradise of a few days must end in darkness, desolation, despair—everything dreadful beginning with *d*; but the paradise was so delicious an abode

that although an angel with a flaming sword, in the shape of conscience, was always standing at the gate, Lord Mallow would not be thrust out. He remained in defiance of conscience, and honour, and all those good sentiments that should have counselled his speedy departure.

FAIRY LEGENDS OF THE QUEEN'S COUNTY.

In the suburbs of Portarlinton lived many poor people crowded together. One family consisted of a father, mother, and one daughter, a lovely fair-haired girl about sixteen, who was like a ray of sunshine in the wretched place.

Kathleen's speech was song, and her step a dance: she enlivened and beautified Doonane Row, and every toiling neighbour felt a kind of property in her. When one sorrowful day she missed her footing at the top of the stairs, fell to the bottom, and was taken up dead, there was general mourning.

Her parents waked and buried her with what pomp they could muster. Many candles blazed at the head of the bed; much whiskey was consumed in her honour; and a long train of neighbours on foot and on horseback accompanied the coffin to the old graveyard of Clonbrock. That very day something strange happened at a lonely cabin on the high road to Clonpook, about ten or twelve miles from the graveyard, where Mick Doogue and his son Patrick lived alone.

On the day of Kathleen's funeral they chanced to have company. Two young men had called to visit them, and had been hospitably entertained. Patrick got up to accompany them to the door, and they all paused on the threshold, falling back upon one another in alarm, for a coffin lay before the house.

"The saints preserve us!" cried one.

"God be betwixt us an' harm!" ejaculated another.

"Let's see who's in it," said the bravest of the group.

The coffin lid was not nailed down; they raised it, and saw a beautiful fair-haired girl, fully dressed even to her shoes. She seemed to be asleep, for there was a flush on her cheek, and her heart beat faintly. They carried her into the cabin, and nursed her carefully until she came to herself, but she could not tell them who had laid her in the coffin—could not even tell her name. She seemed as gentle and amiable as she

was lovely, but had no brightness, and could not answer the simplest question.

The father and son said to one another: "We're two very lonely men here, an' we've no woman to make our meat for us; let us keep her;" so Patrick married her.

As she could not tell her name, they called her Ellen, and sometimes "Fairy-wife." She was a very quiet mistress of the household. Grave and silent, and hating all company, she had no desire but to be left in peace at her own fireside.

Thus seven years passed by.

Kathleen's parents at Portarlinton still mourned her deeply, and told the neighbours' children who could not remember her how very beautiful and good she had been. The seventh fair day of Ballickmoyler came round since their loss. Kathleen used to go with them to the fair, and it was with heavy hearts they entered the crowd alone. The day wore on, and they went to a public-house for some refreshment. As they were eating their dinner, they looked up, and saw a young man and a tall fair girl seat themselves at a table in a corner of the shop. These were Patrick Doogue and his "Fairy-wife," whom he had with much entreaty persuaded to accompany him to the fair.

The bereaved mother from Portarlinton no sooner saw the unknown beauty than she became greatly agitated.

"What is it ails you, woman?" asked her husband.

"Oh! Dan, Dan," she whispered; "do you see that girl at the table. If my darlin' Kathleen wasn't dead an' buried, sure I'd be saying that was her."

The father looked also, and replied: "It's true she's featured very like our dear child; but be reasonable, an' do not cry this-away. Mind how we laid her low in Clonbrock. Thon handsome girl favours her surely, that's all," and he heaved a deep sigh.

But the mother could not cease gazing at her. "Dan," she persisted, "sure that's her very hair—her yellow hair—an' the brow of her like driven snow, an' the blue eyes—sure, sure there couldn't be two born into the world that like other. Who is he anyway, that young man that still stays near her?"

"She's like her, dear; but our Kathleen was still cheery an' light-hearted, an' thon girl never lifts her eyes."

The mother continued to gaze through fast gathering tears. At last she got up, and went over to the table. "Who is she,

that bonnie, yellow-haired girl?" she enquired, addressing Patrick.

"That's my wife," he replied.

"But what did they call her afore you married her, an' where is she from?"

No reply from Patrick.

Dan now joined the group, and both together urged him to answer. They told him the story of Kathleen's death, concluding: "We think that girl must be some friend o'ourn, though unknown to us, for she's as like Kathleen as she can be."

Meanwhile they had been treating the "Fairy-wife" to every delicacy the shop contained, regretting only that she would eat so little, for nothing was good enough for her in their eyes.

Patrick Doogues thought over what they had said, and then he took them apart, and told them how his wife had been left in a coffin at his door.

"My father an' me, an' the two boys that seen her first, never made known how she came to us; but I can't hide it from you-ones, for I think she's surely your daughter."

The parents went straight to that sacred spot in the old graveyard of Clonbrook, and dug to find the coffin on which so many tears had fallen. There was no coffin—no sign, even, that the clay had ever been disturbed. What could they think but that the fairies had stolen their child from them, had left her image on the bed, and had carried her to Patrick's door?

People crowded to the inn to see the mother hang, laughing and crying, over her child. Kathleen seemed like one awaking from a long sleep, and her old gaiety returned; so that there was no happier home in all Queen's County than the lonely cabin of the Doogues on the high road to Clonbrook.

In the rich district of Crettyard lived Tom and Mary Coogan and their son Tim. Tim was a beautiful boy of ten years old, and was very useful in herding his father's cows all day and driving them home at night.

But one warm summer day little Tim Coogan did a foolish thing—he fell asleep in the field.

He awoke presently to the consciousness that he was being carried, and he opened his eyes in wonder when he found himself set down at the top of the field close to the old fort, which was covered with scraggy thorns. He saw a door in the side of the mound, and silver keys were hanging in the lock. Before he had

time to notice who had carried him, the door swung back, and admitted him to the loveliest place he had ever seen. Bells hung everywhere, diamonds sparkled, cups of gold and dishes of silver stood on the tables. Richly-dressed people moved about the spacious rooms, and all were so glad to see him! Troops of merry children played the most fascinating games, and tried to lure him into their circle. The singing and laughter was very wild and sweet, but there were some grave faces in the crowd.

Tim looked closer at these, and recognised them. There was little Kitty Cody, who had been lost the previous winter in the bog, and was supposed to have been drowned; and Peggy Brennan, who was called to her door by sweet voices one Halloween, and went away, returning to her home no more; and others, who had met with what the neighbours called "unfair deaths," i.e. death from accident, and had been waked and buried in holy ground, as their friends supposed. Tim was frightened when he saw them, but the children took his hands and led him off to play, and he forgot his uneasiness.

That evening Tom and Mary Coogan went to their door to watch for their boy's return with the cows. There he came as usual, but there was something strange about him. He stooped more, and his face was not as merry and blooming, nor his eyes as clear as in the morning. There was an indefinable change in the boy that startled the mother, but it was so vague that she could not put it into words. Tim did, moreover, what she had never known him do before; he sprang into her arms, and covered her with kisses. She returned his embrace fondly, but felt puzzled at the same time, for he was wont to be undemonstrative and shy.

His father did not seem to observe anything odd; he watched the boy eat his supper and go to bed; and next morning, when Tim rushed back to hug his mother, and bid her an enthusiastic good-bye, he still thought it all right.

The poor woman was very restless all day, and strolled often out to the field where Tim was herding, just to look at him from a distance; and she rubbed her eyes, and shook her head after each look. He was not like Tim, and yet he was like Tim; and Tim had never before been so fond of her. Thus three days passed, but on the fourth she took the dog's chain over her arm, and her husband's clasp

knife in her pocket, and went to the field.

"Sit down by me, mammy, darlin'," said the boy, covering her face with ready kisses.

She slipped the chain over his neck, and held him fast. "Now," she cried, opening the knife; "now you wee fairy man, you're not my Tim at-all at-all. If you don't give him back to me, I'll just stab you once wid this knife, an' sure you know rightly the one stab wad kill you."

The fairy man shrank when he felt the iron chain, and was not able to move. All likeness to Tim vanished; his face became old and wrinkled, and his figure humpbacked.

"We'll give him back," he said, trembling; "he'll be home wid yez to-night; only let me go." Mary Coogan had to trust to his promise; she released him, and he sprang behind the ditch and was gone. That evening Tim awoke in the spot where he had fallen asleep some days previously, and getting up, he quietly drove the cows home. Ah! how glad was the mother, though her pretty boy merely permitted her eager kisses!

Tim had a strange tale to tell.

He took her to the old fort next day, and pointed out where the door with the silver lock had been. There was nothing to be seen now but the grassy bank; but a soft strain of music sounding deep in the earth came to their ears, filling little Tim with a longing that made his eyes grow dim with tears.

Turning wistfully away, his foot struck against a heap of gold. Quick as thought Mary Coogan spat upon it, thus making it hers, and she and Tim went home laden with treasure, that kept them in comfort all their lives.

The Gilliegoo is a mannikin who wears a red jacket, and is frequently to be seen in the shady lanes and rich pasture lands of the Queen's County. He can tell where money is hidden, but you must not take your eye off him from the moment you perceive him first, else he will escape.

Dan Mahony of Crettyard went to tether his goat one evening, with the chain in his hand, when he saw an ugly Gilliegoo peeping at him over the hedge. Being a man gifted with presence of mind, he flung the chain over the little fellow.

"Now, my little chap," said he, "I won't take that off of you, till you show me where there is money."

"Well," replied the Gilliegoo, "if you'll

come this-a-way, you will find plenty of gold," edging himself farther along the hedge.

Dan pulled him up sharply. "Show it this minute," cried he.

"Here, in under this tree; an' now off wid the chain!"

Dan marked the tree with the chain, and ran home for a spade to dig up the treasure. What was his rage to find on his return that there was a chain on every tree in the hedge; so that he had the labour of digging the entire ditch before he came upon the crock of gold!

Widow Cody of Clopook had seven sons, who determined to leave the Queen's County, and go north to seek their fortune. It was agreed that they should part at the seven cross roads in the middle of Ulster, and should meet there that day seven years, and return to their mother.

James, the youngest son, was extremely handsome, and only he had adventures that deserve to be recorded. He parted from his brothers at the cross roads, and went in the direction of the Braes of Tully. He grew weary, and wished for a night's lodging. He was mounting a hilly road, so different from the roads in his own county, when he saw a splendid carriage topping the brae, and the grandest gentleman he had ever seen driving it. The gentleman drew up when he came to James, and said:

"My poor fellow, are you in search of anything?"

"Ah, your honour, I'm lookin' for a night's lodgin'."

"Come with me," said the gentleman eagerly; "jump into the carriage, and I'll put you up for a year and a day."

"No, thank your honour; I'm only a poor labourin' boy; I'm no fittin' company for the likes o' you."

"Well, well, my lad, here's some silver to pay for a lodging," and the gentleman held out a handful of money.

James Cody again thanked his would-be benefactor, but refused the silver, saying he had money of his own to support him until he got work to do.

He went farther and fell in with two country lads who asked him what he wanted.

"A night's lodging," said James, now growing very tired and footsore; "could you tell me where to go?"

"Come with us, poor boy!" said one of them, and James started at the voice, and looked more closely at the speaker. He was

the grand gentleman, who had driven the carriage, dressed now in shabby clothes.

"Many thanks, but I'll not go wid yez," said James, turning quickly away.

The sun was setting, and he got very anxious for some safe resting-place. He soon came to a long shady avenue, with a handsome house at the end of it, and, as good luck would have it, the owner, Sir Thomas O'Hara, was coming towards him.

"Your honour," said James, taking off his cap, "I wish you would take me into your service;" and he told the story of his adventures that evening.

Sir Thomas listened very attentively, and said:

"The driver of that carriage is the King of Tully; his horses are stabled under Tully Fort, and he has more subjects than we could count. He is a far richer man than I. I went to drive in his carriage when I was a youngster, and if it had not been for an old servant of my mother's, who was in fairyland, I should never have escaped from Tully. But she cooked for me, so that I could do without their food; and at last, when the king found I would not eat, he ordered his courtiers to throw me away. I was tossed into my own garden, and got this lame leg by the fall; so take care, my poor fellow, and be on your guard, for the king will try for you again."

Sir Thomas engaged James Cody as gardener, and he was very happy and comfortable for a long time. But one morning, as he was pulling pea-cods, two men came towards him between the rows of peas pretending that Sir Thomas had sent them to call him. James left the garden with them, and soon found himself at Tully Fort.

It was too late to draw back. The gates of the king's stables flew open, displaying the horses and carriage that were known all over Ireland, and many wonders besides. In the palace the riches of the world seemed to be stored, and the courtiers blazed with diamonds. But James was not dazzled by any of this splendour. He moped, and would not eat, and as he lay crying a woman bent over him and whispered:

"The king will get angry, an' bid them throw you out. Lie quiet when they throw you, an' dinna cry, no matter how much hurt you may be, an' they'll think you're dead, an' lave you." She scraped up gold, and hid it in his clothes, and went away saying: "Tak' my bidding, an' you'll be well enough yet."

All happened as she said. James sulked a little longer, and the king getting provoked, he was ordered out, and was dashed

down into a quarry. He was much bruised, but remembering his friend's advice lay perfectly still, and overheard the fairies say to one another: "Is he dead?" "Yes." "Did he stir?" "No." "Throw a stone on him." "No, he's dead."

He waited until all was quiet, and painfully crept back to his master.

When the seven years came to an end he set out to meet his brothers at the cross roads, but he encountered adventures just as he had done on his first arrival in the enchanted country. Meeting a countryman he asked his way.

"Which eye do you see me with?" asked the man.

James looked closer at him, and to his great horror recognised the grand gentleman who had driven the carriage, the dangerous King of Tully.

"I don't see you at all; I'm blind, but I heard your step," he replied hurriedly.

He went on a mile farther and met a woman.

"Can you tell me the way to the seven cross roads?" he asked.

Without replying she asked: "How do you know I'm here?"

"Why, I see you, sure," said poor foolish James.

She gave him a blow across the eyes, crying: "You'll never see one of us again!"

It was true. He never saw either fairy or mortal again; and, as he was groping his way along the hedge, he heard the tread of six pairs of feet in country brogues, and his six brothers exclaimed: "There's James, an' we're at the seven cross roads!"

They led him home to the Queen's County, where they found their mother spinning beside the fire in her cabin. The six brothers had worked industriously, and saved a little money; but James was laden with gold, and he made a lady of his mother and gentlemen of himself and brothers. He founded a family, which is the greatest in the Queen's County to this day.

MY LAND OF BEULAH.

A STORY IN FIFTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VI.

"MY DEAREST LITTLE NELL, — This must be rather a business letter, but I know you will be very glad to get it for all that. I hope your school-friend, Miss Le Breton, has not thought herself forgotten all this while. However, even if she has, both you and she will know now that I have only been waiting to try and fulfil my little girl's loving request. Our good rector's wife confided to me the other day

that she intended to get a governess for her two little lassies, aged respectively seven and ten. Now where could your friend find a happier home than with Mr. and Mrs. Langley? He is the perfection of an English pastor; she is charming. I have said all that I can upon the subject to them, and Mrs. Langley is writing to Miss Sylvester at once. I told my friends that I ventured to think the best of all testimonies to Miss Le Breton's worth is the love my little Nell bears her. Now, wouldn't you have given me a kiss, child, if you had heard me say that?"

"No, not one, a thousand!" I said out loud, though there was no one but Polly to hear, as I came to this part of my letter.

I was transgressing rules by sitting in one of the carved hall-chairs to read it.

"Isn't it nice! Oh, my! isn't it nice!" said Polly hoarsely; at which I laughed.

"Nice? I should think so, Miss Polly!" said I. "You deserve to have your grey head scratched for half an hour, for making such an apt remark, but I can't stay to do it!"

In truth I hardly think I could have stayed for anything. It was "against rules" to go tearing down the passages at Summerfield; so I had to walk decorously, in spite of the joy dancing at my heart. However, as a sort of safety-valve, I sang to myself as I went. What possessed me to select the ill-omened song of *The Waterfalls*?

Te souvenirs tu Marie;
De notre enfance aux champs——

I stopped short.

After all, there was a drawback to this happiness of mine. Eulalie would leave Summerfield, and "notre enfance aux champs" in the wood—in the dear old rambling garden that stretched far out behind the house—on the green sward with the rocks cawing overhead—all that would be no more. Still, I should see my school-friend at intervals; and then came the happy thought of days at Hazledene that should outshine all past delights.

Eulalie was not in the school-room; from which arose the buzz-buzz of many voices, for it was "talking hour;" that is, the French mark—a medal the reverse of glorious to the wearer thereof—was put away in the head teacher's desk for the night, and five-and-twenty young voices were babbling in their native tongue.

Looking on to the garden, upon which it entered through a glass door, was a little snuggerly called "the teachers' room;" and truly a welcome retreat must

this "isle of rest" have been to minds jaded with long hours of work.

Here I found my friend—alone, too, by a happy chance.

"Eulalie, my darling girl!" I cried, casting off all decorum as I closed the door behind me, sprang to her side, flung myself upon my knees, and held up the precious letter before her eyes.

"What is it?" she said, under her breath, and growing white, or so it seemed to me in the light of the lamp that hung from the centre of the room.

"What is it?" I said eagerly; "read—read—read for yourself! Didn't I tell you there was no one in the world like papa? Oh, how dear and good he is! You will be quite near us too; fancy that! And you'll say you never saw such a lovely place as Hazledene Vicarage. It stands nearer the sea than the Hall, and there's a flight of steps cut in the rock, leading down to the shore. We can go looking for shells together; there never was such seaweed as one finds there: some like red branches of trees, and feathery things—golden-brown, don't you know? 'mermaid's curls,' I call them."

Thus my heedless tongue wagged on; until at last it dawned upon me that my companion did not hear a single word I said. All her heart seemed to be burning in her eyes, and these were fixed upon my father's letter, drinking in, as it were, each line of it, as a man perishing of thirst might drink water. When she had read it all through, she gave a sigh—as one laying down a heavy burden.

"Now," said I, kissing her in my effusive fashion, "come with me to Miss Mary; how glad she'll be to hear the news!"

But Eulalie had turned to the window, which, according to our primitive ways, was still uncurtained, and stood looking out into the night.

Right across the garden shone the glimmer of the moon, turning the fields to silver pastures, and in the distance you could see the wood, with its trees swaying sleepily against the clear purple of the sky. In the paddock that lay between the garden and the wood our white cow, Daisy, stood, a ghostly figure, fit for one of the fairy-cattle of a German legend. I thought I read the thoughts that kept my friend silent; and going to her side, I put my arm about her slender figure, and laid my head against her shoulder.

"You are feeling sorry to think of leaving Summerfield?" I said tenderly, as a mist came over my eyes, and the

light-bathed garden grew all blurred and misty before me. "You have forgotten 'one, two, three, the cat's in the cupboard, and can't see me.'"

I laughed through my tears, as I called to mind her petulant words.

But Eulalie did not join in my merriment, and the moonlight seemed to make her sweet face look pale, as she pushed me gently from her.

"Go and tell Miss Mary, show her the letter, and then come and tell me what she says," she said; and so I went.

"She is afraid that, after all their kindness to her, it may seem ungrateful to be glad to leave them," thought I, as I went towards the drawing-room door.

Then something set my face flaming in the dusk.

It was a disloyal thought: a sudden flashing thought, like a quick pain: and it accused Miss Mary of coldness and strange unkindness towards this dearest friend of mine. At Summerfield, to go to the drawing-room of an evening unsummoned, was to have some important affair on hand; but I knocked boldly enough with my letter in my hand, for what could be more important than that which concerned Eulalie's welfare so closely?

The door was ajar, and before anyone had bade me "Come in," I heard Miss Mary say, in a voice that told of much sorrowful perplexity: "I cannot speak of a thing upon which I have no sure knowledge—least of all now, when it would be to mar her young life at the very outset, Sister Maria."

"No," put in Miss Jane gently; "Mr. Girdstone was right there; and besides, remember how kind her mother was to poor dear Charley."

Here an intolerable sense of shame in hearing what was not meant for me urged me to knock again; this time so loudly that it might have meant an alarm of fire.

"Bless us all!" cried Miss Maria, jumping up, and overturning the basket of keys that stood at her elbow; "Who's there? Oh, it's you, child, is it? Come in—come in."

In I came, feeling, and, I doubt not, looking, the veriest culprit that ever faced three pairs of the kindest eyes in the world.

"I've had a letter from papa," I began, after I had made the usual reverence with which it was the custom for us to enter and leave a room; and at this communication my hearers seemed as much confused as I was.

"Hem!" said Miss Maria. "Yes, dear; and what does he say?"

By this time I was on my hands and knees, hunting up the keys, and dropping them one by one into their proper receptacle. Papa's letter lay on Miss Mary's lap where I had hurriedly placed it.

She took it up, and began to read it, and, as she did so, I saw to my amazement that the paper trembled with the trembling of her hand.

I stood silent by the table; and presently Miss Mary laid the letter down, and held out her hand to draw me to her side. "It is very kind of you, Nell, to have done this. I will write to Sir Charles to-morrow. I, too, have a letter—not from him, but from this lady, Mrs. Langley, whom he has spoken to on Eulalie's behalf."

I felt myself dismissed, and set off to find my friend. But the edge of my joy was taken off. As to the strange words that I had heard as I stood at the drawing-room door, I tried to put them away from me, for they weighed upon me, as unlawfully attained knowledge ever must upon any candid mind.

"What did she say? Is she pleased?" asked Eulalie, turning her face towards me as I entered the teachers' sitting-room.

She spoke with a certain air of indifference, for on the other side of the table sat "Mam'zelle"; her long fallow face, black curls, and little dark piercing eyes, turned full upon us.

"She did not say much," I answered; "she too has had a letter."

"From Sir Charles?"

"No; from Mrs. Langley."

Here the loud clanging of the prayer-bell "made night hideous," and I stood aside, to let "Mam'zelle" pass out first. Eulalie followed, and I brought up the rear—the victim of no little trouble and mystification of spirit. Miss Mary was always the one who read to us the Psalms for the evening, while Miss Maria sat by in a sort of judicial state, and kept a keen eye upon one Louisa Brandon, a girl much given to the habit of "sniffing"—a thing especially detestable in our principal's eyes at all times, but more particularly so at prayers and in church. It appeared to me that the very consciousness of being watched caused Louisa to be more irresistibly prone to "sniffing" than she would have been otherwise. She was always placed in a position well commanded by Miss Maria, and generally managed to control her unpleasant propensities during the reading; a suppression, however, that often resulted

in a perfect hurricane of "sniffings" once she was on her knees, with her back to the authorities; not only so, but her nervous restless, baulked in one mode of expression, was ingenious in evolving others. Girls wore short sleeves of an evening in those days, and Miss Brandon presently "broke out in a new place"; she "sniffed" less, but would sit calmly embracing each bare arm with its fellow, and pinching up the flesh in little bits; a habit that resulted in her elbows being mottled red and blue, and occasionally green. This was a new source of annoyance to Miss Maria, as may well be supposed. It was her task to supervise the deportment of the young ladies, and she used to draw terrible pictures of what would happen to Miss Brandon one day, when she should be presented at court, and stand nervously pinching those poor ill-used elbows in the presence of her sovereign.

Bitter tears were wont to chase each other down the said Louisa's face, as these gloomy sketches of her future were laid before her; but I don't know that they wrought any visible improvement in her.

"How is it," said Miss Maria with dignified indignation one day, "that Louisa Brandon is an earl's niece, and an heiress, and yet her deportment drives me to despair? If she and Eulalie could change places now!"

But they couldn't. There they were, the antithesis of each other, and each dowered with every apparent quality best fitted for the other! Poor Louisa's beauty would never be her bane, nor would life prove a difficult thing to her, because she was "too fair to go free." While Eulalie—why the very idea of Eulalie in a court-train, white plumes crowning the little classic head, and the slender figure bending before royalty, was a thing to take one's breath away.

Upon the occasion of which I am now writing it was evident to me that the few words I had overheard were part of a hot and troubled discussion between the sisters; for, as the three entered the long school-room, each after her kind showed unmistakable evidences of disquiet. Miss Mary—my dear Miss Mary—had a weary look, as if she were worn out by some long mental strain. Miss Jane, who always had a way of growing pink about the eyes, without shedding actual tears, if anything disturbed her equanimity, was like a ferret; while as to Miss Maria, I had never seen her look so handsome. A hot spot of colour burnt on either cheek,

and together with the bunches of snow-white curls upon her temples, and the sombre fire of her dark eyes, made her like some old picture by one of those dead and gone masters of art, who seem to have held the power of catching the actual, living individuality of their sitters, as no modern painter can.

The psalm for that day chanced to be the fifty-fifth—that matchless burst of eloquent words in which the "Sweet Singer of Israel" denounces the treachery of a trusted friend. As the reader came to the bitter reproach hurled at one who had been no "enemy," but the dear "familiar friend," her voice shook, and a kind of awe came over me, making my heart beat with slow and sickening pulsations.

Meanwhile, Miss Maria, who had unconsciously brought a pen with her into the room, and kept it in her hand, betrayed unwonted disturbance of mind by tapping it against the arm of her chair; for, unhappily, her irritation made her all the more ready to spy out the delinquencies of poor Louisa, then herself in an exceptionally limp condition from the fact of having been the last possessor of the French mark that evening. Finding herself the focus for Miss Maria's eyes, she began so to pinch and torture her poor bare arms, that it made my flesh creep to look at her, and on that indignant dame being unable to resist uttering a loud "hem," she suddenly changed her tactics, and took to sniffing. Sniffing, too, not in her usually subdued manner, but, from sheer nervousness, loudly and aggressively.

To speak during "prayers" would have been to do a thing unheard of in our school annals, so Miss Maria seized the only feasible means of reproof open to her, by pointing with the pen in her hand to the now crimson culprit, and once more coughing with angry significance.

At this the unfortunate Louisa suddenly ceased sniffing, gave the most astounding snort, and went off into strong hysterics, just as Miss Mary got to the last verse of the psalm.

I am not sure that the scene of confusion and excitement that followed was not a relief to some concerned. I know it was to me, and I held a bottle of smelling-salts to the sufferer's blunt snub-nose, with a conviction in my mind that she might have had that "fellow feeling," which is said to make us "wondrous kind," towards the scape-goat of old, who suffered for the sins of others.

By the time Miss Brandon had been

conveyed, gurgling and sobbing, upstairs to bed, I think Miss Maria recognised the fact that the troop under her command were too thoroughly disorganised to be summoned to form again upon parade. At all events, our devotions that night began and ended with the fifty-fifth psalm, and the rule of "silence in the dormitories" was broken to an extent unparalleled in my previous remembrance. Neither did I see Eulalie alone again, or have any chance of further alluding to papa's letter; and the next day grew to afternoon, and still nothing was said. I did not like to reply to the letter until Miss Mary said more to me upon the subject, and strange discomfiting thoughts, like spots upon the sun, marred the completeness of my happiness in the fair prospect opening before my friend. These took no definite form; for I was but a child after all, and children cannot put that and that together to form a whole. It needs the bitter experience of life to teach us how to build up a fabric with suspicions.

I was pleasantly tired (for there is such a thing) with a good morning's work, and glad to think it was holiday-afternoon, and could be legitimately devoted to Ivanhoe, my first step in the enchanted land of fiction.

Through the library—that small oak-panelled room on the left of the hall, of which I have already spoken—was a second chamber, called the music-room, and chiefly used for the purpose its name denoted by the elder girls. I wonder what people would say nowadays to the piano that stood in the recess beside the fire-place? It had a back so high that it almost touched the ceiling, and was narrow, out of all proportion to its towering height. Countless flutings of amber silk radiated from a round picture—hand-painted—in the centre; and this picture, for the encouragement and edification of the performers, represented a girl, with a waist up to her armpits, and huge bows of hair, like wings, upon her head, toiling up a flight of steps, at the top of which was poised on one toe a sort of mythological angel, with a stringed instrument—name unknown—in one hand, and a wreath of laurel in the other.

In the corner of the music-room stood Miss Mary's harp, clad ordinarily in a holland garment that tied behind with strings, like a

child's pinafore. I daresay the harps of these days are vast improvements upon that glorified instrument; but what could be sweeter than Poor Mary Anne as played by Miss Mary in that wonderful fantasia called Recollections of Wales? Why it makes the tears come into my eyes to think of it now! At the end of this room that I am describing was a mirror—not a pier-glass, like those we have in our drawing-rooms now, but a round glass, framed with great taste, and further adorned by a golden eagle, with chains depending from his beak. As you crossed the room, and looked into this mirror, you saw a dear little miniature self coming to meet you, every detail clear and perfect, but the whole as if seen through a diminishing-glass. Between the two low windows was a canterbury, that is—a stand for music-books; and running round each of these windows was a low seat, the same as those in the drawing-room.

Behold me, then, installed in perfect comfort upon one of these cosy nestling-places by the open window, whence came that concerted music that is never out of tune, however many voices join in its sweet diapason: the song of birds.

If I raised my eyes from the pages that told of Rebecca's sad ill-omened love and fair Rowena's happiness, I could see in the concave surface of the mirror Miss Mary seated at the writing-table in the library adjoining; her ringlets drooped so that I could not see her face, and now and again the busy pen ceased to move upon the paper, as she rested her head upon her hand, deep in thought.

"I wonder if she knows I am here," I thought to myself; for there was a second door to the music-room, and by that I had come in, and settled myself down in the corner of the window-seat, like a cat basking in the sunshine.

"I wonder when she is going to say anything to me about papa's letter," was wonder number two that ran through my mind. Then all wonders were absorbed and lost in the page before me.

Presently, however, having come to the end of a chapter, I chanced to glance upwards at the face of the old mirror.

In a moment my book fell upon my knee; my eyes were strained towards the glass; my breath came short and fast, for I was watching a strange drama.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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SEBASTIAN STROME.

CHAPTER II. DENE HALL.

DENE HALL was a mile and a half distant from Cedarhurst Vicarage—not counting the half-mile of avenue; and there will be time, while the Reverend Arthur Strome is walking these two miles, to give you some notion about the place and people he is going to see.

The house looks its best under the slanting beams of an afternoon sun, which bring out the warm ruddy hue of its Elizabethan brick walls, and cast afar the shadows of its fantastic chimneys. It encloses a square court, with an arched cloister; and a fountain splashes into a circular basin in the central glass-plot. It stands on a sort of artificial plateau, some six or seven feet above the level of the surrounding park, the boundaries being built up solidly with stone, and the descent from the higher to the lower level being accomplished by flights of broad steps. This raised area, some ten acres in extent, is laid out in elaborate gardens. Along the front of the house extends a broad gravelled walk, and from a point in front of the main entrance four straight paths radiate fanlike, bordered with thick yew-trees, which, in the brightest sunshine, seem to retain in their foliage the gloom of night. Between, spread broad lawns of fathomless turf; huge carven vases mounted on pedestals occupy the corners of the walks, their grey outlines softened by the sprays of creeping plants which have been planted in them. The flower-beds are replanted every two or three

patterned out according to the latest refinements of chromic art; and there are grey stone benches among the rhododendrons, whence this painting in petals may be enjoyed at leisure.

Under the southern wing of the house a smaller walled-in garden is kept in the Queen Anne style. Here the eye follows down rigid vistas, till it rests upon a rococo statue at the farther end; the paths are bordered by narrow rims of white stone, and the trees are pruned into shapes of monstrous regularity. Nature seems to have donned ruff and farthingale, and to be stepping on high-heeled shoes. In a circular open space at the centre stands a sun-dial a hundred and fifty years old, whose green bronze disk, engraved with a medley of astronomic and astrologic signs, still tells the hours when they are sunny. A gigantic wisteria is trained against a southern wall, its clusters of faded-purple blossoms filling the air with fragrance, and in the warmest weather a dozen orange-trees in boxes are ranged along the terrace, and small green and yellow oranges venture forth on the boughs, and try to pretend that they fancy themselves in Italy. It is a wonderful garden for sentiment.

The great park outside, with its three thousand rolling acres of turf and brake, is diversified with clumps of burly oaks and ancient distorted thorns; and a stately avenue, half a mile in length, bordered with towering horse-chestnuts and lime-trees, three deep on either hand, leads up to the Hall. Beautifully does the sunshine filter down through the deep boughs and gild the shadow-haunted turf beneath; and when, far down the green corridors, a group of deer with slender limbs and

ing visitor, the world seems almost too gracious to be true.

But unfortunately in no part of England that has yet been discovered do June and July last all the year round; and even Dene Hall in December is not altogether so paradisiacal a spot as in the leafy months. Naked boughs and grey immitigable heavens make the broad park dreary; and although the Hall itself, thanks to its lofty site, never falls into that state of mouldy dampness which besets so many English country-seats, yet cheerfulness is a thing which not even gravel and drainage always suffice to ensure. The best way to enjoy December weather here, as elsewhere in Britain, is to stay within doors before a big fire and try to forget all about it.

Such is, or was, Dene Hall, whose foundations were laid by Sir Richard, the first baronet, in the middle of the sixteenth century, and which has never once passed from the possession of the family. The last male child destined to bear the name was born in 1795, and died the year before our story opens. Sir Hubert's will bequeathed to his only child, Mary, his entire personal and landed property without reserve—Lady Martha Dene having been dead many years—and she thereby became the richest heiress in the county. Inasmuch as she was handsome and accomplished into the bargain, that valuable class of persons who do their neighbour's prudence for him, opined that the estate should have been afforded some sort of security against the wiles of fortune-hunters.

"What," cried Mrs. Musk-Mandalay, thinking of her five-foot-seven of unbaked, sandy-haired male offspring, "what, my dear major, is to prevent the first immoral Frenchified adventurer that comes along from bamboozling that headstrong girl, and stealing away that superb property from those who deserve to possess it?" And the melancholy major shook his head.

It is possible, however, that Sir Hubert Dene, who was not a fool, did not draw up his will in so reckless a manner as Mrs. Musk-Mandalay supposed. He had enjoyed ample opportunities for studying his daughter's character, and may have acted with an eye to the knowledge he imagined himself to have acquired of it. She had been her father's constant companion ever since her seventh year, and he had taught her many things not included in the ordinary feminine curriculum. She could not only saddle her horse and ride it, but

she could exchange it for a better at a horse-fair. She could mow a field, drain it, plough it, and rotate its crops. She could bring a pheasant down with a gun, as well as cook and carve it. She could not only listen to gentlemen's small-talk in the parlour, but she could oversee workmen digging a well or building a wall, and discourse such sense to them as to make their ears tingle. She could as easily instruct the London solicitors—Messrs. Fry and Griddle—when to sell stock and when to hold on to it, as she could check the housekeeper's weekly account. She was not very skilful at trilling Italian airs, or warbling French chansons, but she could sing a hymn in a way to make your heart beat. When she walked about the grounds she did not hitch herself along by her shoulders, with her skirts in one hand, her parasol in another, and her elbows in her ribs; but she stepped out boldly, on elastic feet nine inches long, and with her arms hanging at her sides, like Juno's in the Greek statue. She had the full use of all her limbs.

Once, as she was returning home after pruning some trees in a neighbouring preserve, with her axe in her hand, and dressed in a dark serge gown, with a thick quilted under-petticoat of scarlet cloth, she was chased into a corner by a bull. As she ran she loosened the petticoat, and, watching her chance, stripped it off in a moment, and cleverly tossed it on the animal's horns as he was charging her. At the same time she sprang to one side, and as he passed brought down her keen hatchet just behind his ears, and tumbled the huge creature dead at her feet.

This deed of prowess was witnessed by Sir Hubert, the gamekeeper, and another man, as they were racing headlong across the adjoining field to her assistance. The bull was a prize animal, valued at five hundred guineas; and Sir Hubert, after heartily thanking God for his child's safety, turned to the gamekeeper, and said with a rueful twinkle in his eye:

"After all, Wilkins, you see, we were not in time to save him! He's quite dead."

Miss Mary overheard this remark and the laugh which followed it.

"No bull or anything else shall chase me across a field and live to tell of it," said she very grimly. "If I hadn't killed him this afternoon, I would have shot him this evening. Wilkins, give me my petticoat."

And yet a mouse or a bat had the power to thoroughly terrify this redoubtable young woman; and she was a firm believer in apparitions, which she had never seen, and in omens, which she saw everywhere.

On her nineteenth birthday she shut herself up in her room, and cried there for seven hours, off and on, because she had boxed the ears of her favourite maid, Fanny Jackson, for telling a fact which she (Mary) believed at the moment to be a falsehood. A bouquet had been sent, addressed to Miss Dene, and she had somehow taken it into her head that it was the gift of Sebastian Strome. Fanny, the maid, affirmed that it came from Mr. Selim Fawley, and suffered for her truthfulness as above intimated. Well, when at the end of the seven hours Mary Dene came out of her room, she called Fanny to her and humbly begged her pardon. This having been accorded, with many asseverations of affection, Miss Dene next handed the girl a year's advance wages and a written testimonial of character. "You must go to-morrow, Fanny," said she. "I shall miss you more than you will miss me; but I won't have anyone staying in my house whom I have unjustly insulted!" Fanny was fain to obey; and this was the first and last occasion on which the heiress of Dene Hall so forgot herself with a servant.

It would be easy to multiply anecdotes of her girlhood; but enough has been said. After this nineteenth birthday she began to grow rather more orthodox. "We shall civilise her in time," said Lady Featherstone (who had been, though the circumstance had quite slipped her memory, the daughter of Madame Marigolde, the once famous milliner of Old Bond Street). "There is good material in Mary, and I am sanguine we shall be able to make her up into something quite distinguée." Miss Dene, in short, began to give up tramping about the farm, and taking the spade and scythe from the hands of the labourers. She recognised, though late, the fact that it was as a woman and a lady, and not as a man, that she must take her place and show an example in society; and so, without useless repinings, though not, perhaps, without some reasonable regrets, she set herself to the task.

She went up to London and had some dresses made; and it was then discovered for the first time, by everyone except Sir

Hubert, who had known it all along, that her figure and bearing were as noble as her face. She attended church regularly to hear the Reverend Arthur Strome preach; partly, no doubt, to show her bonnet; partly, from religious motives—though she had never been given to theological bigotry; partly, in the interests of social order, of which she had always been a staunch supporter; but chiefly by reason of her thorough-going and reverent affection for the vicar and his wife. She idolised those two persons with all the ardour of an outwardly cool and reserved nature. They sympathised with her, and understood her as no one else did; for the generality of her acquaintance regarded her as proud, cold, hard-headed, masculine, and so forth. Even her patroness, Lady Featherstone, admitted that she was "a bit antiquated yet;" while Mrs. Musk-Mandalay openly declared her opinion that the heiress of Dene Hall was "aughty."

But to win her friendship, and cause her to respect yours, it was necessary either to be very sincere and single-minded, or to possess a really great genius. She loved the Reverend Arthur Strome on the former account, as she would have loved a Mirabeau or a Napoleon on the latter. The surest way to influence her was not to wheedle but to command her; and she could best be commanded by truth and power.

Her father's death, occurring at the close of her twentieth year, matured her character. Her features, which were of the antique Roman type, easily assumed an air of gravity; she did not look like a mere unmarried girl, scarcely out of her teens. Indeed, however feminine may have been the secret qualities of her heart and soul, her intellectual part seemed less that of a woman than of a man. She had had the freedom of her father's library, and she read enough there to open her eyes to some of the infirmities and diseases of the social fabric, and had pondered over those old problems that have puzzled all ages until she fancied that she could devise solutions of most of them. She was not shy of speaking about them to what she supposed were fitting ears, and astounded more than one humdrum old dowager by the straightforward composure of her comments upon matters deeply affecting the welfare of mankind; while her friend, the vicar, and Doctor Stemper, the

physician of the neighbourhood, found that they could consult with Miss Dene quite as frankly as with the late Sir Hubert about the condition and needs of the parish. Should it be inferred from this that the young lady was less pure-minded than became a daughter of the English aristocracy, I can only say that one look from her full, slow-turning brown eyes would have dissipated the most fastidious misgivings. But hers was a large nature which could not satisfy itself with a life of effeminate jots and tittles.

Her widowed maternal aunt, Mrs. Fawley, was invited down to live at the Hall after Sir Hubert's decease. She had been Miss Sophia Cambrey, second daughter of the Honourable Gambleton Cambrey, brother of Lord Welshford. Joshua Fawley, the hero of her young affections, had been a good-looking young Hebrew, belonging to the younger branch of a highly respectable family in the City. But Mr. Cambrey did not approve of the match; and the handsome Joshua was rash enough to suggest an elopement. The idea perfectly suited Sophia's romantic nature, and it was successfully carried out. But the marriage turned out badly. Joshua had no money of his own, though his uncle the banker was wealthy enough, and his involuntary father-in-law would have nothing to say to him. Thinking that it might be his Judaism that was the difficulty, Joshua took an early opportunity of becoming a convert to the doctrines of the Church of England; but fate thereupon played a counter-stroke and lost him the game. The Honourable Gambleton Cambrey had staked everything that he possessed against his horse Ab Gwylim, the favourite for one of the great handicaps of that year. He saw Ab Gwylim pass the winning-post first by a length; and five minutes afterwards he retired into a private chamber connected with the grand stand, and there blew out his venerable brains (he was near seventy at the time). Ten minutes after that it transpired that Ab Gwylim, not having carried the proper weight, had not won after all. But the news came too late to do Mr. Cambrey any good—or Joshua Fawley either.

The latter gentleman went abroad with his wife, and very little was seen or heard of them for some twelve years. Lord Welshford occasionally sent them money, and so, it may be hoped, did their uncle the banker. At last Mrs. Fawley reappeared in England, a widow and childless.

She was provided with a decent maintenance by her relatives; and occasionally made long visits to her "darling brother-in-law, Sir Hubert." It seemed natural, therefore, that she should be selected as companion for her orphaned niece. She was a lean, graceful woman, with an insinuating smile and a handsome instep, both of which she was fond of exhibiting. Her face also had been handsome once, but now the whites of her eyes were brown, and her skin yellow and criss-crossed with innumerable fine wrinkles. She suffered from neuralgic headaches, and took morphia and the like drugs to relieve them. She, however, filled her post in the Hall admirably, displaying surprising tact in her behaviour to Mary, and often showing an amusing wit in her remarks upon persons visiting the house. Upon the whole the elderly lady and the young one got on together better than could have been expected of two natures so radically unsympathetic.

At this period Miss Dene received a great deal of sentimental attention from the bachelors in the vicinity, both the young ones, and those not so young; but such was the singularity of her behaviour under this infiction, that of all who presented themselves with intentions, two only mustered resolution sufficient to make an explicit declaration thereof. The heiress entirely failed to show a proper feeling under the circumstances; she was too much for her suitors; she disconcerted them. When it came to putting their fate to the touch they too much feared it, and so lost it all. It was found impossible to get up what is known as an interesting conversation with the young woman. Her talk was of cattle, of subsiding, or of her schemes for a local Home for destitute women and children. The difficulty of giving a tender turn to topics like these is obvious, and to break baldly in upon them with an avowal of passion would be a suicidal absurdity. Aunt Sophia contributed to the discomfiture of the aspirants by good-humoured but telling ridicule; until by degrees one after another dropped away, and the field was left clear to the pair of unterrified ones above alluded to.

The first of these was Mr. Selim Fawley, who possessed the formidable advantage of Aunt Sophia's support. Whether she gave this out of the pure love of her heart for her young nephew, or whether for this and something else we need not now enquire. Being the son of David Fawley, Esq.—the

elder brother of Joshua, and a partner in the banking-house—he was a sort of second or third cousin of Mary's, and was considered a very eligible match. He had taken high honours at Oxford, and after finishing his education on the Continent, had come up to London and mingled with highly respectable society there. His person was handsome, his address pleasing, and his expenditure profuse. As for his Jewish proclivities, they must have been of the mildest sort, for he had been known to devour a pork-pie at a railway-station, and had not seldom escorted Miss Dene and Aunt Sophia to church, where he had listened with devout attention to Mr. Strome's sermons. He was a member of some of the most fashionable clubs in London, and his name was among the candidates for several more. Finally, he was unaffectedly desirous to marry Miss Dene, and paid his attentions in the most assiduous and flattering manner.

His only rival was Sebastian Strome, and it was not until almost the last moment that the latter was known to have entered the lists at all. Mary Dene and he had been acquaintances since childhood, but neither of them had ever betrayed a disposition to become anything more. Moreover, during the last year or so Sebastian had been generally in London, where he was pursuing his studies in divinity; and when he came down to Cedarhurst, he had other things to do than to make calls on the heiress. But of course it is unsafe to assert, on the testimony of outward behaviour, what may be the secrets of the heart; and certainly Mr. Selim Fawley and Aunt Sophia would have done well not to rely, in this instance, on appearances.

Fawley and Strome had once been great friends, inseparable at Rugby and during the first year or two of their Oxford career; but then there occurred a quarrel, or at least a coolness. They were no longer seen in each other's company. Strome never vouchsafed any explanation of the change; but it was commonly believed—and Fawley did not deny it—that the breach had been occasioned by some rivalry in scholarship, in which Strome had come off second best. Afterwards, when, as often happened, they met in clubs or drawing-rooms, they noticed each other with civility, but never had any conversation together. There was no cordiality, but neither was there any perceptible animosity; they simply agreed

to let each other alone, and make no fuss about it.

The rumours of Fawley's infatuation for Miss Dene, and of her not unfavourable attitude towards him, were not long in reaching the ears of Mr. and Mrs. Strome, and gave them no pleasure. Not that they had anything against Fawley; but it had long been the unuttered wish of their hearts that Mary should become Sebastian's wife. One day, Sebastian having come down from London for a week's holiday, the subject of the anticipated match happened to be broached at the dinner-table.

"Fawley is a lucky fellow," said Mr. Strome. "There will never be another Mary Dene."

"What has that to do with his luck?" enquired Sebastian, looking up with his quiet, inscrutable face.

"It is said they are going to marry, my son; haven't you heard it?" said Mrs. Strome.

Sebastian filled his wine-glass, and remarked: "Well, Fawley was always a good-looking young gentleman."

"If that were all, I suspect she thinks you as good-looking as he is!" said the minister with a laugh.

"Me! What does a prelate want with a wife?"

"What, indeed, Susan?" rejoined the father, smiling at his wife. "Why did you and I never happen to think of that?"

"I should have liked my son to marry some such woman as Mary," said Mrs. Strome, folding her white hands against the table.

"Well, mother, since you wish it, I will," said Sebastian, and drank off his wine. But the words were not taken seriously.

Either by accident or intention, however, and without saying anything about it to his father and mother, Sebastian Strome spent a part of every day of this week at Dene Hall. Aunt Sophia found that he had a great deal to say to Mary on the subject of the new Home, but she did not think it necessary to make a third at their conversations; there was nothing more to be apprehended from this impassive young man than from Dr. Stemper, or from his own father. Besides, he always treated the elderly, but still coquettish gentlewoman, with a chivalrous gentleness that put it out of her power to be other than well-disposed towards him. On the last day but one before the time fixed for his return to London, she said to him, when he

sought her out in the garden to bid her good evening:

"Really, I don't know what we should have done without you this week, with Selim away: luckily he'll be back to-morrow."

"Mary is a good girl, and much improved of late, under your care. Fawley deserves all the congratulations he will get. Is the date of the marriage settled yet?"

"Why, as to that, you see, there's the formality of the proposal to be gone through with first," said Mrs. Fawley, playing among the fallen leaves with her arched slipper. "We ladies mustn't think about the wedding-day, until after our swains have asked us in so many words whether we'll be married."

"I haven't mentioned the subject to Mary, as she didn't introduce it; but you will give her my kind wishes whenever the right time comes? You mustn't let your nephew be a laggard," he added smiling.

"Oh! my trouble has been to keep him from going too fast. Mary is not like other girls—she won't be driven. However, to-morrow—but this is a great secret!"

"From whom?"

"From everybody; even Mary herself doesn't know it yet. To-morrow, at three o'clock, he is to come here and make his offer. There, sir! See how favoured you are."

"We clerical gentlemen know how to deal with ladies' confidences, Mrs. Fawley. Well, good night. I shall try and get up here to-morrow evening to leave those designs for smoke-flues for the chimneys of Mary's Home—that is, unless I shall be in the way?"

"You know you can never be in the way! Besides, Selim cannot stay later than till five o'clock; he has to take the evening train to London."

"Whether he is accepted or not?"

"They are going to make him a partner in the bank, you see; and to-morrow night they are all to meet at dinner, and get it settled. But, of course, there is really no doubt about her accepting him. I know the dear child's heart so well!"

"A lucky fellow, Fawley—always was," remarked Strome musingly: "and luckiest of all now, to have you for an ally. I wish I could count on a friend like you, when the time comes for me to fall in love," he added, taking her hand; "only in that case I might happen to fall in love with the friend instead of the—object!"

"Oh, you naughty boy! you will never need an ally to help you out in your love-making," returned Mrs. Fawley, looking up at him with that pose of the head that so well became her: "that tongue of yours, and that voice, are allies enough and to spare. There! I protest it's too bad of you to be standing there and making fun of a poor vain old woman;" and with a laugh, and a playful pat with the flower she held in her hand, she dismissed him, and he departed.

The next afternoon Selim duly made his appearance; and he and Mary Dene had a rather prolonged interview in the drawing-room.

He came out at length, alone; and Aunt Sophia, joining him with an interrogative expression, noticed that his face was not altogether so radiant as it should have been.

"How is it, dear boy?" she enquired.

"She says she'll let me know to-morrow."

"Oh, but you should have made her say Yes to-day."

"Get your hat, and come across the short out with me. Of course, I did what I could, and she was kind enough; but, hang it! she seems to have changed somehow in the last week."

"The trouble is, I fancy, that you showed too much anxiety. When a woman feels she has power, she likes to use it."

"It's deuced inconvenient. What am I to say to-night?"

"My dear boy, don't you fret! She'll be all right to-morrow."

"But they expect me to be able to promise my twenty thousand by the first of January; and how am I to do that, unless I know that she will marry me in December?"

"You can as good as promise it; and if the worst comes to the worst, you will always be as well off as you are now."

Selim pushed out his red under-lip, and drew his wide and short black eyebrows together discontentedly. "You know our interests are the same, Sophia," said he, looking round and fixing his small dark-brown eyes upon her. "If I lose her, you lose your chance of an annuity. You must back me up for your sake as well as mine."

"Selim, dear, do you think I need any other inducement than my affection for you? But I tell you there's no danger. She has told me herself that she believes you are the only man who cares for her on her own account."

"Well, and so I do care for her. By-the-way, I hear Sebastian Strome has been here."

"Pooh, my dear! Do you suppose she would think of a creature with four hundred a year? Besides, they never cared twopence for each other."

"Ah! you don't know Sebastian Strome as I do. He could make himself Archbishop of Canterbury if he chose. However, he'll be too late to make mischief in this business, I suppose. But mind and keep him out of the way until all's settled."

"Trust me!" said Aunt Sophia reassuringly, and reflecting that at that very moment, perhaps, Strome might be on his way to the Hall. They had walked nearly half a mile during this conversation. "I think I'll be going back, dear boy," said she; "and mind you are here as early as you can manage it to-morrow."

They parted, and Aunt Sophia hastily retraced her steps along the narrow path, and should have regained the house in seven or eight minutes. Unfortunately, however, in passing through one of the oak-tree groves, she caught her pretty foot in a creeping root, and fell forward. As she came down on a mass of soft turf and ferns, she was not much hurt so far as that went; but she felt immediately that she had sprained her ankle. It was not a very bad sprain, but she was still a third of a mile from home; and making what speed she could, three-quarters of an hour elapsed before she had covered the distance. It was then six o'clock.

She hobbled into the drawing-room, and found Mary there, apparently asleep, with her face against the sofa-cushion. The girl raised her head, however, and smiled, without seeming quite to know what she was smiling at. Aunt Sophia dropped into a chair with a groan. It was at all events satisfactory that there were no signs of Strome having been there. She looked at Mary, and noticed that her cheeks were wet, and that there was a lovely softness in her great Junonian eyes.

"Oh, my darling, I am suffering so! I stumbled over a nasty root, and sprained my poor ankle. I thought I should have to spend the night in the park."

Mary's gaze rested upon her, but there was a dreamy abstraction in it. She had risen, and was standing with her back to the window, languid, softened, superb; a ray of the afternoon sunshine fell upon her hair, and made a red gold halo round

her head. She was hardly aware of the present; she was living in the hour that had just gone by.

"Yes—I am very glad—sorry. Oh, auntie, he has been here, and I am so happy!" and to her relative's vast surprise the young Juno came forward, and laid her warm white arms about her neck, kissed her yellow cheek, and proceeded to cry gently on her shoulder.

"Well, nothing could be better than this!" said Aunt Sophia to herself, as soon as her surprise allowed her to think; "and Selim was a goose to be anxious, just as I told him." And she proceeded to murmur all manner of sympathetic and appropriate phrases into her niece's ear.

But Mary Dene heard none of them: the voice of an emotion hitherto unknown filled her ears. She did not know that her aunt had sprained her ankle; she had forgotten that such a person as Selim Fawley existed; she was scarcely even aware that she was crying on her aunt's shoulder. She had fallen into a divine dream, wherein new sight and new senses were opened to her—a dream from which she wished never to awake to the old dull-eyed indifference. And when, at length, Aunt Sophia hobbled off to her room, to embrocate her ankle and congratulate herself on the fortunate aspect of affairs, Mary, left to the unlonely solitude of her heart, wandered into the old garden, and paced the prim paths, and put her lips against the drowsy sweetness of the September roses, and gazed at the red sun, sinking earthwards in a peaceful glory that seemed like sympathy from heaven. Gradually shadows crept over the earth; but then the stars took up the tale of the girl's happiness. She paused by the old sundial, leaned her arms on it, and pillowed her cheek upon them. Time had ceased to record itself upon that mystic disk, as upon her own soul. Suddenly she started, with a low shriek of horror! A bat, flitting swiftly along in the twilight, had brushed her face with its noiseless wing. The sacredness and the harmony were dispelled; and the girl hastened back to the house, never to dream that wondrous dream again.

Next morning, at the breakfast-table, Aunt Sophia had the gratification of listening to a full explanation of her niece's distraught behaviour the previous afternoon. But we shall do better to hear the briefer disclosure which was made, about the same hour, at Cedarhurst Vicarage.

Sebastian Strome, who was to return to London by the morning train, having finished his egg and driven his spoon through the bottom of it, remarked: "Fawley is not going to marry Mary Dene, after all."

"Indeed! When did you hear that?" exclaimed the vicar, setting down the coffee-cup which he had been in the act of raising to his mouth.

"At the Hall, yesterday afternoon. She is going to be married, though."

"What a strange—— To whom?"

Sebastian rolled up his napkin and laid it down on the table with a quiet tap, composedly meeting, the while, his parents' questioning looks.

"To me!" he said. "You recommended me some such girl, mother; and since no other such girl seemed to be available, I took Mary herself."

When Mr. Selim Fawley arrived at the Hall, at eleven o'clock, he was met by Aunt Sophia, and after a prolonged interview with her, retired without seeing Mary Dene. But the next day came an admirable letter from him, expressing his best wishes for the lady's happiness, together with a generous and really quite noble recognition of his rival's talents and virtues. It concluded with a hope that Miss Dene would continue to receive him on a friendly footing, and he trusted his conduct would justify her condescension.

"Poor fellow! I could never have loved him, but it will be a privilege to have such a friend," was Mary's comment to her aunt on this epistle; and she added immediately, "Oh, auntie, I do love him so!" But Mrs. Fawley knew what she meant this time. That worthy woman had taken the line of sympathising ardently with her niece's choice, and thereby came in for a great many valuable confidences.

As for society, of course it called Mary Dene a fool, and Sebastian Strome a fortune-hunter; but neither of them seemed to mind that. All these things occurred some three or four months before the date at which our story begins.

SPRING TROUTING IN KENT.

It is Holy Thursday, and I admit with sorrow and heartfelt contrition that the remarks which have just issued from my lips are hardly in character with the occasion. For I had made up my mind

to enjoy the opening day at the handiest trout-stream to London, and the rain is pouring in torrents: a drenching downpour of that gelid rain which one feels would be snow if it could, and only waits upon the thermometer to operate a transformation. My friend and companion upon this sorrowful jaunt reproves me as he takes his eternal cigar from his lips. Professor Dunkelwitz is a philosopher. In the University of Dummeresselberg he has clothed his mind by turns with the raiment of Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, and has lapsed at last into a species of mild eclecticism, finding amusement in everything, edification in nothing. He speaks thus: "I bewonder myself much at thy impatience, and enjoy thy spite against thy native climate when thou shouldst rather rejoice at the downfall of silly prophecy and the emptiness of popular beliefs. Did not everyone say in the midst of the dreadful past winter, 'This is good. This is an old-fashioned winter. There will be no trifling, no uncertainty after this; no long cheerless spring as after a mild winter; no capricious smiles and frowns, but genuine winter, true spring, and splendid summer.' You mark what has come of all this. There has been winter since the first of last October; it is colder than it was weeks ago; and my rheumatism, caught at the royal wedding under a treacherous sun, is back again; but I console myself that the superstition of the old-fashioned, seasonable winter is exploded. Ach," and here the professor refreshes himself with a mighty draught of the fluid which he calls "shtout," "the world is very sad, my friend, but is the better for every fallacy shattered into dust."

Parenthetically I may remark that this is a condition into which the professor has resolved six of my largest cigars since he partook of a light breakfast of coffee, eggs, sausages, and beefsteak, finished off with a pot of marmalade; and that as he is, for a foreigner, an enthusiastic angler, I am morally bound to see that he gets some trout to-morrow. Moreover our rooms are engaged in the pleasant townlet by Darent side, and rain or no rain we must go. "What says the French proverb," asks Dunkelwitz: "the wine is drawn and must be drunk. We must go if it snows." I bethink me of a Scotch proverb touching the wilfulness of people who will persist in going to Cupar—though why any human being not actually demented should feel a burning desire to visit the capital of

Fifeshire is beyond my powers of explanation; but the professor is right after all. We have refused several invitations to quiet country houses because there is nothing to do in them at Easter, and we have now no choice between The Lion at Farningham, and London without a soul to speak to. It is of no use repining. We must out—as the professor puts it—and away we go through a cataract of rain and sleet till we reach the station known as Farningham Road, some couple of miles from our destination, after the manner of country stations generally. A fly is in waiting, and away we go through a blinding rain, blessing our stars that we are dry and comfortable within, till we drive through a charming specimen of all that an English village ought to be to the door of The Lion, somewhat translated during the last few years from The Lion we first knew. Otherwise there is no change in Farningham. Above the bridge, which a hundred years ago was built over the ford, is the flour-mill, and between this and the bridge is a tit-bit of water, strictly preserved with the very practical and rational object of giving the persecuted trout a city of refuge from their tormentors. In this sanctuary repose trout of gigantic size—that is, for all things are comparative, for this part of the Darent. In Wales, for instance, a six-ounce trout will cause a rush for the steel-yard, while in Scotland one of as many pounds will hardly be noticed. In the Darent “pounders” are accepted as good things, and a two-pounder is, as the Scot said of a fifty-pound salmon, a “maist serious grand fish”—wherefore, the two and three pounders lurking under the tail of the mill are viewed with wonder and awe by the anglers of that part of the Darent. The patriarch, who might weigh between three and four pounds, is a fish of a contemptuous and sarcastic turn of mind. Gorged with the fat feeding of the mill he daily takes a quiet swim into the water belonging to The Lion, and looks calmly on the anglers whipping the water for dear life. Among the young hands his appearance creates a sensation; and as he pops in and out of the bridge, and sails majestically past the chestnut-tree, many attempts are made to attract his attention. Every known kind of fly is offered to him, from the red-spinner to the blue dun, from the coachman to the Alexandra, but, alack! all in vain. The big trout has seen this

kind of thing for years, and laughs it to scorn. In sheer spirit of mischief he darts up and down under the chestnut-tree, and watches the attempts made upon him with calm contempt, till, his daily promenade being over, he slowly proceeds up stream, followed by admiring eyes until he is lost in the swirl of the mill-tail. New comers witness this performance with dismay, and go on fishing with less eagerness than before, as if some great possibility had faded out of their lives; but the old hands merely remark that “he” is looking in good condition and colour this year, and having long ago given up all hope of capturing Leviathan, rejoice in his presence as if he were the tutelary stream-god.

Now Friday is the opening day at Farningham, and as it is only Thursday afternoon, and the rain is moreover coming down in torrents, I suggest to the professor, who is admiring the landscape, so far as he can see it through the downpour, that retirement to the rooms allotted to us, and the enjoyment of sound philosophy and good tobacco by the side of a roaring fire, will prove the most agreeable programme for the day. He yields gracefully, and we then proceed on a reconnaissance in search of our apartments—no slight undertaking, for The Lion has gradually broadened down from a little wayside inn to a red-brick hotel. Round the corners of the red brick façade, opposite the Darent, the lawn, and the chestnut tree, it is quite possible to catch a glimpse of the quaint gable-ends of the old house, or rather houses, which, from a vast old-fashioned kitchen-garden, looked upon the road. The old Lion has been only partially masked, and the wayfarer who finds himself ensconced within its thick walls will have reason to congratulate himself on the efficient rampart between himself and the weather. My room is perfect in its way, and so happily placed that no vestige of the modern building offends my eye, which rests contentedly on the queerly-shaped windows and picturesque roof of the wayside inn, enclosing three sides of a garden full of shrubs, just putting forth their early leaves of tender green. The room itself is quite as curious as the out-look from it. A low ceiling is crossed by two enormous beams, and the height of the room is still further reduced by a high wainscot or dado painted green, like the coffered window sills and all the woodwork. Now

green is so eminently fashionable as a colour for walls just at this present moment, that I must warn my readers that the green of my old room at The Lion is neither the Morris, the Peacock, nor one of the bilious shades now believed in as the last expression of artistic decoration; but a bright pea-green, verdant as the coat of the celebrated Mr. Hayne, and matching the leafage outside very nearly. Between this pea-green dado and the whitewashed ceiling is a striped wallpaper, of much the same design as that selected by Polly Eccles and Sam Gerridge for their dwelling when the serious story of "Caste" shall come to an end. There is no compromise of conventional flowers in this remarkable pattern, no attempt to make "daisies pied," and "lady-smocks all silver white," together with ranunculus and sun-flowers, wry-necked as mediæval saints, do all the work of decoration. Far from it: the artist has revelled in roses and hollyhocks with the result of producing a pattern which would drive Mr. W. Burgess out of his mind at one sitting. The carpet is in keeping with the wallpaper, and conveys the impression that it is made of bouquets somewhat the worse for wear, as if after a hard week at theatre, concert, and ball. But in revenge for these evidences of the taste of the generation before last there is the charm of Brummell's great delight, "country washing;" the dimity curtains and other drapery white as snow, and breathing sweetly of lavender. Behind the tall fire-guard, a massive structure, roars a fire worthy of Sheffield itself, and big enough to warm and air an entire family. As the professor drops into a solid oak chair with very pretty brass work in the back he mutters: "It had then its merit, this old unæsthetic England that I have heard of, this England of beef, beer, and port wine, of fox-worship and hatred of foreigners. It was not so bad after all." I take this as kind of the professor, for the rain is now sleety, the cold intense, and all hope of anything like out-door exercise given up; but Dunkelwitz is not in despair, for he is a convert to fly-fishing of only three seasons' standing, and like most young hands he is luxurious in his tackle. He has choice of rods and eke of landing nets, and of flies and casting lines galore. Since he first became a Waltonian, he has never missed a chance of plying the rod, and his passion has stomach for all and every kind of fishing, from gudgeon to salmon. He is quite

enthusiastic about the tiny trout of the Darent, and discussing the character of the flies likely to prove deadly on the morrow, proceeds by the process of exhaustion to remove from his mind all the impossible flies.

Happily just as we are involved in an argument touching the comparative merits of red and yellow duns, the aleet suddenly dies away, and the sun peeps out in a shy, tearful kind of way. My friend springs to his feet at once, and insists that we must explore the fishing, marking the troutful spots and observing the hue of the water. So clear is this, despite the heavy rain, that it is easy to count the fish by scores in the mill water. Having admired these, and glanced at the hundred yards of fishing from the lawn, we next make our way across the bridge and past the grey old church of Farningham, and then turn to the left across a pair of big fields towards the lower part of the Lion water. As we stride over the soddened grass, and a pale daffodil hue streams from the still half-reluctant sun, my German friend, who is perversely determined to be pleased with everything, bursts into something like rhapsody concerning the fiendish season through which we are passing.

"It was not well said by the Frenchman that spring is a shabby excuse for prolonging the winter by three months. That is a bright saying truly, but bright as a mirror, reflecting only surface and telling nought of the inner 'geist' of things. What is the beauty, may I ask, of the Russian, the Canadian springs, which takes you at one step from winter to summer, and shine out revealed at once in their meretricious splendour? There is much more poetry in your abused English winter-spring, held overlong in the cold arms of winter, and yielding reluctantly and with frequent flashes of repentance to the blandishments of summer. How pretty is all this coyness, these frequent relapses into ice, from the moment when the snowdrop peeps out till the perfume of the hawthorn fills the air with sweetness! How altogether indescribably lovely is the modest peering of the primrose and wood-anemone, the shy advances of the daisy, the sullen yielding of the violet. Is there not something more heart-filling, more soul-awakening in the waywardness of thy English spring than in the all-too-sweet richness of that of Provence, with its mass of early

flowers and richness of verdure, soon to be parched into dustiness by a pitiless sun? Are not delicate smiles mingled with an occasional frown more sweet than eternal laughter? What said Schiller of the Vier Elemente, I ask thee? It is true, as thou objectest, that the poet's words refer to that never-to-be-too-much-landed fluid known as punch, but did he not show its composition to be an epitome of life; and what is life?"

This question opens up so vast a field of thought that I call the attention of my companion to the cawing of the rooks, to me the sweetest of all possible lullabys. The rooks have a pleasant time of it at Farningham. Their nests are on every tall tree-top, their cawing so incessant that it forms a kind of thorough bass to the song of the sky-lark and thrush and the twittering of the finches. The air is full of melody as we strike across the field in the direction of the first line of pollard willows, marking the presence of the Darent. Crossing the narrow bridge we find the little stream swollen and swift, ruffled with the wind, and swirling viciously round the corners, wherein many a handsome trout must lie feeding snugly at the bottom on such provender as he can get, and knowing well enough that nature has provided no flies on the surface for his nourishment. Down stream we trudge patiently enough, surveying the scene of forthcoming battle. We have it to ourselves, and walk pleasantly through a wind of surpassingly incisive powers to the limit of the grounds abutting on Frank's Hall, a modernised relic of Tudor times sunk to the level of a mere farmhouse a few years ago, and now a triumph of the genius of comfort, restored and furnished at enormous expense. It is fitted with every possible luxury, and has even a Turkish bath magnificently decorated. On the same line with Frank's is a line of lofty elms, another rookery highly appreciated by the intelligent birds for whose benefit it is maintained; and a little lower down stream is Horton Kirkby, wherein dwells a certain butcher, who captures trout of remarkable size and beauty. By this time the evening has become so bitterly cold that the poetry departs from Dunkelwitz, who murmurs that present schnapps and dinner within some reasonable period will fulfil his yearnings so far as the "immediate" is concerned. So we march gravely back to The Lion, to find that hostelry alive with visitors arrived during our absence—

anglers from north and south; those accustomed to the dainty fishing of the Itohen and Test, and others less delicate but equally killing in their method; fishers who swear that the up-stream cast is your only wear; others who fish down stream for choice, and pooh-pooh the curious in trout flies.

At the square table in the midst of the coffee-room we commence a heavy onslaught on the salmon and lamb, and we note that the conversation is of fishing, and fishing alone. At this early stage of the evening there are, however, far more questions than answers; more seeking for information than giving it. The new comers are anxious to discover the killing fly in the Darent, but the old hands are chary of giving information. A wary, cool old angler with grey hair replies that he has killed Darent trout with every fly in his book at different times, but that he can form no opinion till he has seen the condition of the water and sky on the morrow. There is not much to be got out of him, and the strange fishermen try a communicative young man faultlessly attired in the perfection of fishing costume; but even he, although he apparently "knows something," is hazy and indefinite to an extraordinary degree. Nothing can be more amusing than the dinner of anglers the night before the fray, except the final false confidences in the billiard-room to which we presently repair to play at pool for modest sixpenny lives. There are among the group gathered round the billiard-table men known to be anglers of wondrous skill. There is, for instance, the Scotch gentleman, who is known to have taken a greater weight of fish out of The Lion water than any living person. Whatever the wind, whatever the weather, wherever the place, this redoubtable hero of the rod is, I am told, certain to land a heavy basket. Not, as they tell me enviously, an elegant fisherman, but one who always catches fish. An artistic enthusiast holds that the method of the fortunate Scot is by no means his method, which is, of course, the best, and "how the deuce the man kills as he does is a mystery." This question is answered by a very smart, well-dressed young man, who says he knows for certain that the Scottish champion has a secret fly of mysterious make and shape, acceptable to fish when others are simply loathsome, appetising enough to conjure the wary "salmo fario" from snug holes when all others are in

vain. Plots have been laid to discover the make of this fly, and carried out with all that ruthless treachery and cruelty that only anglers and blood-relations are capable of. Once, I am told, a wicked trick was played, unworthy of sportsmen. The famous angler's drink was drugged, and his fly-book stolen, with the result of affording its unscrupulous captors several entirely blank days by the side of excellent trout streams. Whether the flies were only dummies to defeat the inquisitive, like the "bogus" cast always left in the angler's quarters, or not, is not very certain, but the fact remains that the nefarious scheme was an absolute failure. With more talk of duns and spinners, and a few marvellous stories of great trout scaling any number of pounds by "fishermen's weight," the last pool is brought to a division, and the eternal "yellow on red, player in 'and" is hushed. Meanwhile, however, my professor and I have made several compacts with other anglers to fish with them "for company" on the first day of the season. We solemnly swore, by the ashes of Izaak Walton, to begin and "fish fair" and evenly with our friends of this evening, and, moreover, made sundry little speeches to the effect that getting up "at ungodly hours was worthy neither of a gentleman, a sportsman, nor an angler," and that a fair start "after breakfast when the day was well aired" was the best thing in the world in such weather. It was also set forth that trout would not bite early in cold weather, and that a little sun might be waited for with advantage. Having made appointments for eight and nine in the morning, we at last return to the pea-green room with Dunkelwitz much amazed. Lighting his eighteenth cigar he says solemnly: "I bewonder me that you make appointments at eight and nine, and talk of cold weather and late hours. This, my friend, is not a fox-hunt, but a trout-fish." It needs a long explanation to reassure my friend, who is far too young a hand to have the slightest idea of the duplicity of anglers. I explain to him with a pitying smile that the water belonging to The Lion will be crowded with anglers in the morning early, and that nobody believed a word anybody said in the billiard-room. Dunkelwitz stares: "I had thought the Englander a truth-loving man. Yet another illusion gone." I repeat that all is fair in love, war, horse-dealing, picture-dealing, angling, and a few other things,

and that with these exceptions we English confine ourselves to the severest truth, and add to this asseveration: "We have appointments at eight and nine—mind you are up and ready at six." The pale blue eyes of Dunkelwitz flash out a response, he is gone, and the clock strikes eleven as I plunge under the sheets in my pea-green chamber, and listen, or seem to listen, to the roaring of the fire as I doze off to sleep.

It is cold—infernally cold. The fire is out, the sun is not up, and why should I—wretched mortal that I am—take precedence of Phœbus Apollo. I hesitate, and still hesitate, when a fearful uproar at my door announces the arrival of my German friend. The first intelligible sound is "Sechs uhr gut geschlagen," and I flounder into my clothes to the tune of a lecture from the apostle of the veracities of yester even. "Der Schottländer ist schon aus," adds Dunkelwitz grumpily, as a thrill of terror runs through my veins. Has somebody got the start of us after all? Horrible thought! Luckily, all is ready, and a moment suffices to grasp one's gear and dash out on to the lawn. It is too true. Our friends whom we were to meet at eight and nine have doubtless ordered themselves to be called at six and seven, but we are forestalled nevertheless. "Firm and erect the Caledonian" stands, his huge blue bonnet on the back of his head, and his robust form displayed to the best advantage in a plain workmanlike fishing suit, which has obviously seen service by flood and field. By Jove, he has got one, and we are at his elbow as he lands a plump three-quarter-pounder in famous colour and condition. Despite the severe winter the spots gleam rosy-red from his fine dark sides—altogether a nice plump "takeable" fish anywhere. I note Dunkelwitz trying to see the magic fly, but he is no more successful than myself; and while we are getting ready we have the satisfaction of seeing the Scot take out a brace of nice fish, as like the last as if they were made in the same mould. Five brace and a half has that hardy Norseman conjured out of the little stream in an hour and a half, with the water just about freezing point, and the icy wind blowing a sort of polar hurricane. Then he makes off, and we flog the lawn water for an hour with the result of a brace of fish. As eight o'clock approaches our friends of last night appear one by one, some clad in garments fearfully and

wonderfully made with mysterious pockets in unsuspected places, fishing-baskets of amazing newness and unnecessary amplitude, fly-books, and the regulation coronet of flies around the hat brim. Good fellows all and quiet, going about their sport with a single remark concerning the weather, and fishing away with all the patience and seriousness demanded by the occupation. Towards nine o'clock, however, there is a general determination towards breakfast, and the consumption of the excellent fare of The Lion is swift and great. Salmon and soles, home-cured ham and new-laid eggs, mutton chops and kidneys in relays, flanked as it were by huge joints of cold meat and great edifices of pie-crust, and guarded by outworks of jam and marmalade, vanished like a dream before the little army of anglers. Few have had luck approaching that of the North Briton, whose deeds and probable whereabouts afford a theme for speculation; but all are in high spirits and gigantic appetite. Anglers, by-the-way, have a dash of Dugald Dalgetty in them. They love to take in "provant," and invariably eat as if the next meal were by no means to be counted upon with certainty. They are infected as it were with a superstition that the fish "might begin to rise" just at luncheon-time, and of course it would never do to leave them at such a moment. Breakfast demolished, there is a move for the lower water; not general, but furtive, the fishers dropping away one or two at a time, for there is strong competition for good places on The Lion opening day. Once more past the grey old church and the hostelry sacred to the Bull, and across the meadows dotted with shy primroses and daisies peering out at the chilling blast, but yet reluctant to throw open their outward wraps. The perpetual chant of the rooks is going on, the church-bells are ringing, the skylark is lavish of his sweet song. Over the red roofs of the houses hangs the smoke, blown hither and thither by the cutting blast. Despite Dunkelwitz's æsthetic view Farningham will be prettier presently, when the long series of blossom commences with almond, apple and pear, plum and cherry, with horse-chestnut and sweet hawthorn to bring up the rear of the floral army which precedes the roses and honeysuckle, the hollyhocks and peonies of summer, never more lovely than when embedded in these Kentish chalk-hills. There is little suggestive of the soft breath of June in the air this morning,

and our fingers grow blue as we tempt the swirling eddies ridged and furrowed by the chilling north-easter. It is not all labour in vain, for a few plump victims reward our patience, and the enthusiasm of Dunkelwitz knows no bounds. I may premise that my eminent Teuton displays very little of that tendency to nervousness which affects weaker vessels towards mid-day, and is due mainly to the want of sustenance. He is far too wise a man to separate himself by any great distance from the commissariat. In one of the pockets of his roomy fishing-jacket, he, unheeding the copious breakfast taken between eight and nine o'clock, had bestowed the butt-end, weighing a pound or so, of a magnificent "Cervelat-Wurst," or sausage of finely minced meat highly spiced, together with a few French rolls. Shortly after eleven he draws my attention to the fact that a slice of sausage fits a slice of roll very neatly, and that a sandwich of this kind is a most attractive kind of "circular." This consumed, he pulls from the companion-pocket a huge flask of "Kümmel," and explains to me that taken in the morning, and in conjunction with sausage, this caraway cordial is a sovereign remedy against indigestion, colic, biliousness, rheumatism, and the gout. The medicament is at least pleasant, and having thus supplied ourselves with animal heat, we fish on with varying success till human nature can endure the wind no longer, and we seek shelter from a shower of hail followed by a downfall of sleet. Fishing is clearly over for to-day at least. One by one from Otford, where the big trout lurk, from Eynsford, from Horton-Kirkby, and other famed spots, the anglers drop in at The Lion, where they find the salt-fish and hot-cross buns all gone long ago, and soles and joint in strong demand. Dunkelwitz and I fare well on a slice of cod-fish—trout being reserved for our London friends—a certain "target" of lamb, and an omelette aux fines herbes of admirable flavour. As it is Good Friday, there is no billiard-room to-night, and the guests fill the smoking-room to the brim. If the talk was of fish fishy last night, how much the more is it so now! I hear of forty-two dozen of little ones taken with a couple of rods, and more interesting news of three and four pounders not far off. "Half-a-dozen in a day," adds my informant. "Real salmon-trout; they put in a lot years ago, and you can have

a day when you like. I can take you, and know every inch of the water." Many readers of *ALL THE YEAR ROUND* would, doubtless, like to know too; but their servant is a true angler, and never forgets the golden rule: "It's canny to say nowt."

DAISIES.

How bare the garden borders lie
Beneath a changeful, dappled sky!
The snow has passed away;
But sudden gusts of sleet and rain
Beat hard against the window-pane,
This February day.
Yet in the pauses of the storm
The mellow sunshine flickers warm
On mossy garden-ways;
The thrush we fed the winter long
Pours forth at intervals his song
Of love and lengthening days.
The plot of freshening grassy sward,
In all its length is thickly starred
With daisies gold and white,
That skyward lift, in fearless grace,
Through sun and shower each smiling face,
With equable delight.
They crave not culture's cunning care,
But blossom brightly everywhere,
With spring's first breeze and beam;
Coeval with the thrushes' song,
They bloom the sunny summer long,
By meadow, lawn, and stream.
We tread them down with hasty feet,
To pull some fairer blossom, sweet
With coveted perfume;
But from the pressure rough and rude
They gaily spring, afresh adorned
With honest, hopeful bloom.
They mind us in their silent way,
Of love that blesses every day
Our pathway on the earth;
Of love that wakes while calm we sleep,
Of love that aches when'er we weep,
Yet counted little worth.
Of love we trample down to reach
A lighter love, that will but teach
Our hearts a dreadful care;
Of love that springs, as daisies do,
For ever strong, for ever new,
In rapture or despair.
They mind us in their humble guise
Of homely duties that arise
In every human life;
We tread these lowly duties down,
And grasp at shadowy flowers to crown
A vain ideal strife.
Yet in each path, like daisies set,
These humbler duties still are met;
God guide our feeble will!
That when our wild ambitions fade,
We, turning humbly to the shade,
May find our daisies still.

VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XLIV. "IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN."

"THEY are the most curious pair of lovers I ever saw in my life," said one of the visitors at Ashbourne, a young lady who had been engaged to be married more

than once, and might fairly consider herself an authority upon such matters. "One never sees them together."

"They are cousins," replied her companion. "What can you expect from a courtship between cousins? It must be the most humdrum affair possible."

"All courtships are humdrum, unless there is opposition from parents, or something out of the common order to enliven them," said somebody else.

The speakers were a party of young ladies, who were getting through an idle hour after breakfast in the billiard-room.

"Lady Mabel is just the sort of girl no man could be desperately in love with," said another. "She is very pretty, and elegant, and accomplished, and all that kind of thing—but she is so overpoweringly well satisfied with herself that it seems superfluous for anyone to admire her."

"In spite of that I know of someone in this house who does immensely admire her," asserted the young lady who had spoken first. "Much more than I should approve if I were Mr. Vawdrey."

"I think I know——" began somebody, and then abruptly remarked: "What a too ridiculous stroke! And I really thought I was going to make a cannon."

This sudden change in the current of the talk was due to the appearance of the subject of this friendly disquisition. Lady Mabel had that moment entered, followed by Lord Mallow, not intent on billiards, like the frivolous damsels assembled round the table. There were bookcases all along one side of the billiard-room, containing the surplus books that had overrun the shelves in the library; and Mabel had come to look for a particular volume among these. It was a treatise upon the antiquities of Ireland. Lord Mallow and Lady Mabel had been disputing about the Round Towers.

"Of course you are right," said the Irishman, when she had triumphantly exhibited a page which supported her side of the argument. "What a wonderful memory you have! What a wife you would make for a statesman! You would be worth half-a-dozen secretaries!"

Mabel blushed, and smiled faintly, with lowered eyelids.

"Do you remember that concluding picture in My Novel," she asked, "where Violante tempts Harley Lestrangle from his idle musing over Horace to toil through blue-books; and, when she is stealing softly from the room, he detains her, and

bids her copy an extract for him? 'Do you think I would go through this labour,' he says, 'if you were not to halve the success? Halve the labour as well.' I have always envied *Violante* that moment in her life."

"And who would not envy *Harley* such a wife as *Violante*," returned Lord Mallow, "if she was like—the woman I picture her?"

Three hours later Lord Mallow and Lady Mabel met by accident in the garden. It was an afternoon of breathless heat and golden sunlight, the blue ether without a cloud—a day on which the most restless spirit might be content to yield to the drowsiness of the atmosphere, and lie at ease upon the sunburnt grass and bask in the glory of summer. Lord Mallow had never felt so idle, in the whole course of his vigorous young life.

"I don't know what has come to me," he said to himself; "I can't settle to any kind of work; and I don't care a straw for going sight-seeing with a pack of nonentities."

A party had gone off in a drag, soon after breakfast, to see some distant ruins; and Lord Mallow had refused to be of that party, though it included some of the prettiest girls at *Ashbourne*. He had stayed at home, on pretence of writing important letters, but had not, so far, penned a line. "It must be the weather," said Lord Mallow.

An hour or so after luncheon he strolled out into the gardens, having given up all idea of writing those letters. There was a wide lawn, that sloped from the terrace in front of the drawing-room windows, a lawn encircled by a belt of carefully-chosen timber. It was not very old timber, but it was sufficiently umbrageous. There were tulip-trees, and copper-beeches, and Douglas pines, and deodaras. There were shrubs of every kind, and winding paths under the trees, and rustic benches here and there to repose the wearied traveller.

On one of these benches, placed in a delicious spot, shaded by a group of pines, commanding the wide view of valley and distant hill far away towards *Ringwood*, Lord Mallow found Lady Mabel seated reading. She was looking delightfully cool amidst the sultry heat of the scene, perfectly dressed in soft white muslin, with much adornment of delicate lace and pale-hued ribbon: but she was not looking happy. She was gazing at the open volume on her knee, with fixed and dreamy

eyes that saw not the page; and as Lord Mallow came very near, with steps that made no sound on the fallen pine-needles, he saw that there were tears upon her drooping eyelids.

There are moments in every man's life when impulse is stronger than discretion. Lord Mallow gave the reins to impulse now, and seated himself by Lady Mabel's side, and took her hand in his, with an air of sympathy so real that the lady forgot to be offended.

"Forgive me for having surprised your tears," he murmured gently.

"I am very foolish," she said, blushing deeply as she became aware of the hand clasping hers, and suddenly withdrawing her own; "but there are passages of *Dante* that are too pathetic."

"Oh, it was *Dante*!" exclaimed Lord Mallow, with a disappointed air.

He looked down at the page on her lap.

"Yes, naturally."

She had been reading about *Paolo* and *Francesca*—that one episode, in all the catalogue of sin and sorrow, which melts every heart; a page at which the volume seems to open of its own accord.

Lord Mallow leaned down and read the lines in a low voice, slowly, with considerable feeling; and then he looked softly up at *Mabel Ashbourne*, and at the landscape lying below them, in all the glow and glory of the summer light, and looked back to the lady, with his hand still on the book.

The strangeness of the situation: they two alone in the garden, unseen, unheard by human eye or ear; the open book between them—a subtle bond of union—hinting at forbidden passion.

"They were deeply to be pitied," said Lord Mallow, meaning the guilty lovers.

"It was very sad," murmured Lady Mabel.

"But they were neither the first nor the last who have found out too late that they were created to be happy in each other's love, and had by an accident missed that supreme chance of happiness," said Lord Mallow, with veiled intention.

Mabel sighed, and took the book from the gentleman's hand, and drew a little farther off on the bench. She was not the kind of young woman to yield tremblingly to the first whisper of an unauthorised love. It was all very well to admire *Francesca*, upon strictly æsthetic grounds, as the perfection of erring womanhood, beautiful even in her guilt. *Francesca* had lived so long ago—in days so

entirely mediæval, that one could afford to regard her with indulgent pity. But it was not to be supposed that a modern duke's daughter was going to follow that unfortunate young woman's example, and break plighted vows. Betrothal, in the eyes of so exalted a moralist as Lady Mabel, was a tie but one degree less sacred than marriage.

"Why did you not go to see the ruins?" she asked, resuming her society tone.

"Because I was in a humour in which ruins would have been unutterably odious. Indeed, Lady Mabel, I am just now very much of Macbeth's temper, when he began to be a-weary of the sun."

"Has the result of the session disappointed you?"

"Naturally. When was that ever otherwise? Parliament opens full of promise, like a young king who has just ascended the throne, and everybody is to be made happy; all burdens are to be lightened, the seeds of all good things that have been hidden deep in the earth through the slow centuries are to germinate all at once, and blossom, and bear fruit. And the session comes to an end; and lo! a great many good things have been talked about, and no good thing has been done. That is in the nature of things. No, Lady Mabel, it is not that which makes me unhappy."

He waited for her to ask him what his trouble was, but she kept silence.

"No," he repeated, "it is not that."

Again there was no reply; and he went on awkwardly, like an actor who has missed his cue.

"Since I have known you I have been at once too happy and too wretched. Happy—unspeakably happy in your society; miserable in the knowledge that I could never be more to you than an unit in the crowd."

"You were a great deal more to me than that," said Mabel softly. She had been on her guard against him just now, but when he thus abased himself before her she took pity upon him, and became dangerously amiable. "I shall never forget your kindness about those wretched verses."

"I will not hear you speak ill of them," cried Lord Mallow indignantly. "You have but shared the common fate of genius, in having a mind in advance of your age."

Lady Mabel breathed a gentle sigh of resignation.

"I am not so weak as to think myself a genius," she murmured; "but I venture

to hope my poor verses will be better understood twenty years hence than they are now."

"Undoubtedly!" cried Lord Mallow, with conviction. "Look at Wordsworth; in his lifetime the general reading public considered him a prosy old gentleman, who twaddled pleasantly about lakes and mountains, and pretty little peasant girls. The world only awakened ten years ago to the fact of his being a great poet and a sublime philosopher; and I shouldn't be very much surprised," added Lord Mallow meditatively, "if in ten years more the world were to go to sleep again and forget him."

Lady Mabel looked at her watch.

"I think I will go in and give mamma her afternoon cup of tea," she said.

"Don't go yet," pleaded Lord Mallow, "it is only four, and I know the duchess does not take tea till five. Give me one of your last hours. A lady who is just going to be married is something like Socrates after his sentence. Her friends surround her; she is in their midst, smiling, serene, diffusing sweetness and light; but they know she is going from them—they are to lose her, yes, to lose her almost as utterly as if she were doomed to die."

"That is taking a very dismal view of marriage," said Mabel, pale and trifling nervously with her watch-chain.

This was the first time Lord Mallow had spoken to her of the approaching event.

"Is it not like death? Does it not bring change and parting to old friends? When you are Lady Mabel Vawdrey, can I ever be with you as I am now? You will have new interests, you will be shut in by a network of new ties. I shall come some morning to see you amidst your new surroundings, and shall find a stranger. My Lady Mabel will be dead and buried."

There is no knowing how long Lord Mallow might have meandered on in this dismal strain, if he had not been seasonably interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Vawdrey, who came sauntering along the winding shrubbery-walk, with his favourite pointer Hecate at his heels. He advanced towards his betrothed at the leisurely pace of a man whose courtship is over, whose fate is sealed, and from whom society exacts nothing further, except a decent compliance with the arrangements other people make for him.

He seemed in no wise disconcerted at

finding his sweetheart and Lord Mallow seated side by side alone in that romantic and solitary spot. He pressed Mabel's hand kindly, and gave the Irishman a friendly nod.

"What have you been doing with yourself all the morning, Roderick?" asked Lady Mabel, with that half-reproachful air which is almost the normal expression of a betrothed young lady in her converse with her lover.

"Oh, pottering about at Briarwood. The workmen are such fools. I am making some slight alterations in the stables, on a plan of my own—putting in mangers, and racks, and pillars, and partitions, making sanitary improvements and so on—and I have to contend with so much idiocy in our local workmen. If I did not stand by, and see drain-pipes put in and connections made, I believe the whole thing would go wrong."

"It must be very dreadful for you," exclaimed Lady Mabel.

"It must be intolerable!" cried Lord Mallow. "What, when the moments are golden, when 'Love takes up the glass of Time, and turns it in his glowing hands,' when 'Love takes up the harp of life, and smites on all the chords with might,' you have to devote your morning to watching the laying of drain-pipes and digging of sewers! I cannot imagine a more afflicted man."

Lady Mabel saw the sneer, but her betrothed calmly ignored it.

"Of course it's a nuisance," he said carelessly; "but I had rather be my own clerk of the works than have the whole thing botched. I thought you were going to Wellbrook Abbey with the house party, Mabel?"

"I know every stone of the Abbey by heart. No; I have been dawdling about the grounds all the afternoon. It is much too warm for riding or driving."

Lady Mabel strangled an incipient yawn. She had not yawned once in all her talk with Lord Mallow. Rorie stifled another, and Lord Mallow walked up and down among the pine-needles, like a caged lion. It would have been polite to leave the lovers to themselves, perhaps. They might have family matters to discuss, settlements, wedding presents, Heaven knows what. But Lord Mallow was not going to leave them alone. He was in a savage humour, in which the petty rules and regulations of a traditionary etiquette were as nothing to him. So he stayed, pacing restlessly, with his hands in his pockets, and inwardly

delighted at the stupid spectacle presented by the affianced lovers, who had nothing to say to each other, and were evidently bored to the last degree by their own society.

"This is the deplorable result of trying to ferment the small beer of cousinly affection into the Maronean wine of passionate love," thought Lord Mallow. "Idiotic parents have imagined that these two people ought to marry, because they were brought up together, and the little girl took kindly to the little boy. What little girl does not take kindly to anything in the shape of a boy, when they are both in the nursery? Hence these tears."

"I am going to pour out mamma's tea," Lady Mabel said presently, keenly sensible of the stupidity of her position. "Will you come, Roderick? Mamma will be glad to know that you are alive. She was wondering about you all the time we were at luncheon."

"I ought not to have been off duty so long," Mr. Vawdrey answered meekly; "but if you could only imagine the stupidity of those bricklayers! The day before yesterday I found half-a-dozen stalwart fellows sitting upon a wall, with their hands in their corduroy pockets, smoking short pipes, and, I believe, talking politics. They pretended to be at a standstill because their satellites—the men who hold their hods and mix their mortar—had not turned up. 'Don't disturb yourselves, gentlemen,' I said. 'There's nothing like taking things easy. It's a time-job. I'll send you the morning papers and a can of beer.' And so I did, and since that day, do you know, the fellows have worked twice as hard. They don't mind being bullied; but they can't stand chaff."

"What an interesting bit of character," said Lady Mabel, with a faintly perceptible sneer. "Worthy of Henri Constant."

"May I come to the duchess's kettle-drum?" asked Lord Mallow humbly.

"By all means," answered Mabel. "How fond you gentlemen pretend to be of afternoon tea, nowadays! But I don't believe it is the tea you really care for. It is the gossip you all like. Darwin has found out that the male sex is the vain sex; but I don't think he has gone so far as to discover another great truth. It is the superior sex for whom scandal has the keenest charm."

"I have never heard the faintest hiss of the serpent slander at the duchess's teatable," said Lord Mallow.

"No; we are dreadfully behind the

age," assented Lady Mabel. "We contrive to exist without thinking ill of our neighbours."

They all three sauntered towards the house, choosing the sheltered ways, and skirting the broad sunny lawn, whose velvet sward, green even in this tropical July, was the result of the latest-improvements in cultivation, ranging from such simple stimulants as bone-dust and wood-ashes to the latest development of agricultural chemistry. Lady Mabel and her companions were for the most part silent during this leisurely walk home, and when one of them hazarded an observation, the attempt at conversation had a forced air, and failed to call forth any responsive brilliancy in the others.

The duchess looked provokingly cool and comfortable in her morning-room, which was an airy apartment on the first floor, with a wide window opening upon a rustic balcony, verandahed and trellised, garlanded with passion-flowers and Australian olematis, and altogether sheltered from sun and wind. The most reposeful sofas, the roomiest arm-chairs in all the house were to be found here, and covered with a cool shining chintz of the good old-fashioned sort, apple-blossoms and spring-flowers on a white ground.

A second window in a corner opened into a small fernery, in which there was a miniature waterfall that trickled with a slumberous sound over moss-grown rock-work. There could hardly have been a better room for afternoon tea on a sultry summer day; and afternoon tea at Ashbourne included iced coffee, and the finest peaches and nectarines that were grown in the county; and when the duke happened to drop in for a chat with his wife and daughter, sometimes went as far as sherry and Angostura bitters.

The duchess received her daughter with her usual delighted air, as if the ethereal-looking young lady in India muslin had verily been a goddess.

"I hope you have not been fatiguing yourself in the orchid-houses on such an afternoon as this, my pet," she said anxiously.

"No, indeed, mamma; it is much too warm for the orchid-houses. I have been in the shrubbery reading, or trying to read, but it is dreadfully sleepy weather. We shall all be glad to get some tea. Oh, here it comes."

A match pair of footmen brought a pair of silver trays: caddy, kettle, and teapot, and cups and saucers on one; and a lavish

pile of fruit, such as Lance would have loved to paint, on the other.

Lady Mabel took up the quaint little silver caddy and made the tea. Roderick began to eat peaches. Lord Mallow, true to his nationality, seated himself by the duchess, and paid her a compliment.

"There are some more parcels for you, Mabel," said the fond mother presently, glancing at a side-table, where sundry neatly-papered packets suggested jewellery.

"More presents, I suppose," the young lady murmured languidly. "Now I do hope people have not sent me any more jewellery. I wear so little, and I——"

Have so much, she was going to say, but checked herself on the verge of a remark that savoured of vulgar arrogance.

She went on with the tea-making, uncurious as to the inside of those dainty-looking parcels. She had been surfeited with presents before she left her nursery. A bracelet or a locket more or less could not make the slightest difference in her feelings. She entertained a condescending pity for the foolish people who squandered their money in buying her such things, when they ought to know that she had a superfluity of much finer jewels than any they could give her.

"Don't you want to see your presents?" asked Rorie, looking at her, in half-stupid wonder at such calm superiority.

"They will keep till we have done tea. I can guess pretty well what they are like. How many church-services have people sent me, mamma?"

"I think the last made fourteen," murmured the duchess, trifling with her tea-spoon.

"And how many Christian Years?"

"Nine."

"And how many copies of Doré's Idylls of the King?"

"One came this morning from Mrs. Scobel. I think it was the fifth."

"How many lockets inscribed with A. E. I. or Mizpah?"

"My darling, I could not possibly count those. There were three more by post this morning."

"You see there is rather a sameness in these things," said Lady Mabel; "and you can understand why I am not rabidly curious about the contents of those parcels. I feel sure there will be another Mizpah among them."

She had received Lord Mallow's tribute — an Irish jaunting-car, built upon the newest lines, and altogether a most perfect vehicle for driving to a meet in, so light

and perfectly balanced as to travel safely through the ruttiest glade in Mark Ash.

Rorie's gifts had all been given, so Lady Mabel could afford to make light of the unopened parcels without fear of wounding the feelings of anyone present.

They were opened by-and-by, when the duke came in from his farm, sorely disturbed in his mind at the serious indisposition of a prize cart-horse, which hapless animal had been fattened to such an inflammatory condition that in his case the commonest ailment might prove deadly. Depressed by this calamity, the duke required to be propped up with sherry and Angostura bitters, which tonic mixture was presently brought to him by one of the match footmen, who looked very much as if he were suffering from the same plethoric state that was likely to prove fatal to the cart-horse. Happily, the footman's death would be but a temporary inconvenience. The duke had not given six hundred guineas for him.

Lady Mabel opened her parcels, in the hope of distracting her father from the contemplation of his trouble.

"From whom can this be," she asked wonderingly, "with the Jersey post-mark? Do I know anyone in Jersey?"

Roderick grew suddenly crimson, and became deeply absorbed in the business of peeling a nectarine.

"I surely cannot know anyone in Jersey," said Lady Mabel, in languid wonderment. "It is an altogether impossible place. Nobody in society goes there. It sounds almost as disreputable as Boulogne."

"You'd better open the packet," said Rorie, with a quiver in his voice.

"Perhaps it is from some of your friends," speculated Mabel.

She broke the seal, and tore the cover off a small morocco case.

"What a lovely pair of earrings!" she exclaimed.

Each eardrop was a single turquoise, almost as large, and quite as clear in colour, as a hedge-sparrow's egg. The setting was Roman, exquisitely artistic.

"Now I can forgive anyone for sending me such jewellery as that," said Lady Mabel. "It is not the sort of thing one sees in every jeweller's shop."

Rorie looked at the blue stones with rueful eyes. He knew them well. He had seen them contrasted with ruddy chestnut hair, and the whitest skin in Christendom—or at any rate the whitest he had ever seen, and a man's world can be but the world he knows.

"There is a letter," said Lady Mabel. "Now I shall find out all about my mysterious Jersey friend."

She read the letter aloud:

"Les Tourelles, Jersey, July 25th.

"DEAR LADY MABEL,—I cannot bear that your wedding-day should go by without bringing you some small token of regard from your husband's old friend. Will you wear these earrings now and then, and believe that they come from one who has nothing but good wishes for Rorie's wife?—Yours very truly,

"VIOLET TEMPEST."

"Why, they are actually from your old playfellow!" cried Mabel, with a laugh that had not quite a genuine ring in its mirth. "The young lady who used to follow the staghounds, in a green habit with brass buttons, ever so many years ago, and who insisted on calling you Rorie. She does it still, you see. How very sweet of her to send me a wedding present. I ought to have remembered. I heard something about her being sent off to Jersey by her people, because she had grown rather incorrigible at home."

"She was not incorrigible, and she was not sent off to Jersey," said Roderick grimly. "She left home of her own free will; because she could not hit it with her stepfather."

"That is another way of expressing it, but I think we both mean pretty much the same thing," retorted Mabel. "But I don't want to know why she went to Jersey. She has behaved very sweetly in sending me such a pretty letter; and when she is at home again I shall be very happy to see her at my garden-parties."

Lord Mallow had no share in this conversation, for the duke had buttonholed him, and was giving him a detailed account of the cart-horse's symptoms.

The little party dispersed soon after this, and did not foregather again until just before dinner, when the people who had been to see the ruins were all assembled, full of their day's enjoyment, and of sundry conversational encounters which they had had with the natives of the district. They gave themselves the usual airs which people who have been laboriously amusing themselves inflict upon those wiser individuals who prefer the passive pleasures of repose, and made a merit of having exposed themselves to the meridian sun in the pursuit of archaeological knowledge.

Lady Mabel looked pale and weary all that evening. Roderick was so evidently

distract that the good-natured duke thought that he must be worrying himself about the cart-horse, and begged him to make his mind easy, as it was possible the animal might even yet recover.

Later on in the evening Lady Mabel and Lord Mallow sat in the conservatory and talked Irish politics, while Rorie and the younger members of the house party played Nap. The conservatory was deliciously cool on this summer evening, dimly lighted by lamps that were half hidden among the palms and orange-trees. Lady Mabel and her companion could see the stars shining through the open doorway, and the mystical darkness of remote woods. Their voices were hushed; there were pauses of silence in their talk. Never had the stirring question of Home Rule been more interesting.

Lady Mabel did not go back to the drawing-room that evening. There was a door leading from the conservatory to the hall; and while Rorie and the young people were still somewhat noisily engaged in the game of Napoleon, Lady Mabel went out to the hall with Lord Mallow in attendance upon her. When he had taken her candle from the table and lighted it, he paused for a moment or so before he handed it to her, looking at her very earnestly all the while, as she stood at the foot of the staircase, with saddened face and downcast eyes, gravely contemplative of the stair-carpet.

"Is it—positively—too late?" he asked.

"You must feel and know that it is so," she answered.

"But it might have been?"

"Yes," she murmured with a faint sigh, "it might have been."

He gave her the candlestick, and she went slowly upstairs, without a word of good-night. He stood in the hall, watching the slim figure as it ascended, aerial and elegant in its palely-tinted drapery.

"It might have been," he repeated to himself: and then he lighted his candle and went slowly up the staircase. He was in no humour for billiards, cigars, or noisy masculine talk to-night. Still less was he inclined to be at ease and to make merry with Roderick Vawdrey.

MY LAND OF BEULAH.

A STORY IN FIFTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VII.

TEN minutes later Ivanhoe lay on the floor of the music-room, and I was wandering about the wood, and round the meadow, where Daisy stood knee-deep in

king-cups and rushes by the pool beneath the alder-trees.

What had I seen in the face of the old mirror?

Miss Mary must have risen and left her writing-table, going out by the door leading into the hall, for when I looked up from my book her place was empty, and as I looked another figure took that place. It was Enlalie—yet another Eulalie to any I had as yet known. Hurry and eagerness were expressed in every line of her beautiful face, in each movement of her form; fear, too, was written in the quick glance now and again cast over her shoulder. She hastily searched for something, then, lifting a letter from the table, gave one more swift, cautious look towards the hall—pulled the paper from the envelope, read it, replaced it—looked up with a strange, defiant smile playing round her lips—and glided quickly from the room.

I flung my book upon the floor, and in a moment stood beside Miss Mary's desk. There lay an unsealed letter. Without a moment's thought I raised it and turned it to look at the address. Yes, it was as I had fancied. "Mrs. Langley, The Rectory, Hazledene, Cumberland."

It came to this then.

Eulalie had had some reason to fear what Miss Mary might say of her. Urged on by this dread, she had been guilty of a dishonourable action. My idea was then—and added experience of life has given me no reason to alter it—that the educated gentlewoman who will dishonourably read a letter not intended for her is capable of anything, and that her wrong-doings will be limited only by her opportunities. Thus then had my idol fallen from the pedestal whereon my love had set her.

Hurrying to the garden, I met Miss Mary and Miss Jane. They were speaking earnestly, and, I doubted not, the writer of the letter to Mrs. Langley had sought "Sister Jane" to give an opinion on its contents. I stood aside to let them pass; and, as they did so, Miss Mary touched my flushed cheek with her finger.

"What have you been doing, child?" she said; "reading yourself into a fever over some book or other? Go into the wood and see if there are any violets left; the little basket on my desk is empty."

The mention of her desk brought the colour still more hotly to my face. Happily the two ladies were greatly absorbed in some topic of unusual interest, and my confusion passed without further notice.

I was longing to get out into the open air, but, before getting my tippet and hat, went into the lower schoolroom, to see if Eulalie chanced to be there. I found her, and no fairer picture of the quiet fulfilment of duty could have been presented to the eye than that on which I gazed, door in hand. She sat on a low chair near the window, and grouped about her were three of the youngest members of our flock. Of these, the tiniest maid, Amy Ladbroke, stood resting her round red arms on Miss Le Breton's knee, her dark eyes fixed upon her face.

Hunched up in a most ungraceful attitude upon a neighbouring form, and listening to Eulalie's fairy tale with her mouth agape, as though her hearing were in some way assisted thereby, sat Louisa Brandon, of whom Mam'zelle presently caught sight. With lively gesticulations and much excitement, the little Frenchwoman dilated upon the "affreux" state of mademoiselle's "deportment" at the present moment; adding, that if "ce gentil Monsieur José" could see her in such an attitude, he would——what he would do Mam'zelle did not specify, but with a shrug of her neat shoulders passed on, leaving the penitent Louisa sitting bolt upright, with her clumsy feet displayed to the utmost in the "first position." Why did I linger to watch these things? Why did I feel as if there were a certain fascination to me in letting my eyes rest on Eulalie's sleek head, bent towards the little ones gathered about her?

I can hardly tell, if it were not a sort of longing to give her a chance of explaining about the letter; a wholly foolish feeling that she must know by instinct that I had seen her read what did not belong to her, and that she stood arraigned before that troubled judge, my heart.

As Mam'zelle stood gesticulating before Louisa, Eulalie's eyes, full of laughing amusement, met mine over Amy's curly head. In their limpid depths was no shadow of a wrong done; they were unconscious, full of gentle merriment, with a sadness underlying all as usual——nothing more.

"Don't t'ay, Nellie, de-ar," pleaded Amy, pointing out her rose-red lips; "do let us fin'is our tody."

My countenance was doubtless suggestive of conversation, and the little maid craved for silence just then.

I was turning to leave the room when Eulalie spoke.

"Nell, dear, do you know if Miss Mary has answered your father's letter?"

As she spoke she laid her hand on

"Yes——no——I'm not sure; perhaps she has," I stammered.

"Oo's dot a welly yed face, Nellie," put in Amy, gravely observant.

Which of us looked like a culprit at that moment, Eulalie or I?

"It does not matter, only I can't help feeling anxious, and I thought she might have told you. Now, Amy, let us finish our 'tody,' darling."

One defiant glance the little one flung at me, as she settled herself down into a comfortable listening attitude; and then the thread of the fairy-tale was taken up again:

"Truth was a lovely little fairy all dressed in a glistening white dress, that looked like the snow when the sun shines upon it——"

Thus far I heard; then I fled up the wide shallow stairs, and dashed into my room in search of hat and tippet. "Was I dreaming, or did the mirror lie? Have I been wronging Eulalie in my thoughts? How could she look like that if——?"

Life had hitherto been such a smooth thing to me, sheltered from all harm in my Land of Beulah, that this, my first perplexity, was a very hard thing to bear. Like most evils that come upon us, it was easier thought out in the open air. I wandered about the garden, searched for the last violets under the brown leaves in the wood, patted Daisy, took a look at the poultry-yard, visited Amy Ladbroke's guinea-pig, and fed it with an apple. All these things I did and many more with restless energy, striving to stifle strange protesting thoughts that were unwonted visitants to my childish mind. But all in vain; they would make themselves heard.

Nestling here and there in shady nooks I found a few sweet-scented violets, and gathered them for Miss Mary's writing-table, arranging them with the best taste I could command, with little branching bits of moss here and there, and a tiny yellow-tipped fern frond by way of background. As I did this it seemed to me as though I were not the same Nell as the light-hearted girl who filled that same vase a week ago. Now, I had secrets from Miss Mary; things I could not tell her of. To speak ill of my school-friend would be, I felt, a sin unpardonable against all school traditions from the earliest ages.

And then there was papa; what was I to do about him?

The next time that I sat upon his knee, with my arm about his neck, if he should say to me: "Well, how many kisses, Nell,

friend?" what should I do? Could I say: "She stole into a room like a thief; she read another person's letter on the sly; she can never be a lady any more?" No, I could not speak such words as those.

I had read in books, and in the best book of all, of fierce and sudden temptation assailing men and women, and bearing them onward like a resistless flood into dreadful depths of sin. And I reasoned myself into thinking that it had been like this with Eulalie. Her desolate, homeless position, her dependence on her own exertions, had made her the prey of intense fears as to what Miss Mary would say to Mrs. Langley. There had been some misunderstanding, some coldness, I knew, between Miss Mary and Eulalie; and this, no doubt, had made her doubly anxious in the matter. She had passed the window of the library and seen the former at the desk; passed again, and seen her place vacant; and so the temptation had come upon her, and she had yielded to it. Should I, her chosen friend, be the one to judge her hardly? I, to whom no greater temptation had ever yet come than a love of mischief might dictate? I, who had been so loved, so shielded, so tenderly nurtured; while she—my poor Eulalie—had known but a stormy childhood, in a home full of sorrow and wrong? As these softened thoughts came over me, I scarce could see the violets for tears. What should I ask papa to give me for Eulalie? She was going among strangers, people who lived well and dressed well, and her slender purse would not allow of any luxuries. She had her cross and chain like mine for evening wear, but—yes, let me see now: those white and taper fingers were without ornament, except one poor ring—a poor twist of gold—nothing like any of those rings that had belonged to my mother, and which papa had locked up in what had been her jewel-case at home. There was one—a serpent with a diamond eye—I would ask papa to let me give that to Eulalie, as a kind of parting gift.

Had a few more years passed over my head, I should have had better sense in my choice of an offering for Mrs. Langley's future governess; but nothing could in my eyes be too good or too beautiful for Eulalie, more especially in my present repentant state of mind, when I had reasoned myself into the conviction that I was somehow the sinner—she the sinned against.

After tea that night Miss Le Breton was sent for to the drawing-room, and after an

absence of half an hour came back very pale, but with a glad light in her eyes that had in it something of defiance, and rather puzzled me.

"Is it all right?" I whispered, as I passed her with a pile of lesson-books in my arms.

"Yes, Nell, thanks to you, dear," she answered; and I went to my place and entered into an encounter with my task, with a jubilant energy that made short work with all difficulties. Naturally the pupil-teachers at Summerfield were under fewer restrictions than we scholars, so I was not much surprised late that evening to see Eulalie come in from the garden by the glass-door of the teachers' room. She had a shawl folded over her head, and looked wonderfully lovely. Prayers and supper were over, and I was just going up to bed, when Mam'zelle had asked me to fetch her netting from the teachers' room, and that was how I chanced to encounter Eulalie.

"Out so late!" I said, setting down the candle I held upon the table, and forgetting all about Mam'zelle's behest.

"Yes," she said; "the night is so lovely, and I have a weary headache; I thought the cool air might do it good."

She sat down by the table, resting her head upon her hand—and oh, what a white, wan, hopeless face the light of my candle showed me!

I knelt beside her and took her hand, whose deathly chill struck to mine.

"You have been worrying yourself too much about Mrs. Langley," I said, frightened by her looks; "it is all over now, dear, and you must not worry any more."

"Yes," she said, echoing my words, "it is all over now; and I should be glad, should I not? glad—and—content—"

But her lip quivered as she spoke; and her eyes, dim and heavy, seemed to be looking at all things through a mist.

"Are you ill, dear Eulalie? shall I call Miss Mary?" I said, alarmed. "Do let me fetch her."

"No, no, fetch no one," she answered hastily. "I'm not ill, Nell—only tired—tired out, dear."

"Tired with telling fairy tales?" I began; then I broke off suddenly into a new subject. All this time I had held her hand in both my own, gently chafing it to try and warm the poor chilled fingers. Now I noticed that the little hoop of gold was gone, only a tiny red mark round the finger where it had been remaining.

"Oh, Eulalie!—your ring—see, it is not there!"

"No," she said, speaking in a tired, weary voice, the like of which I had never heard from her lips before; "it—is—not there. I have lost it, Nell."

"Lost it? Well, that's a pity; but it was not of much value, was it, dear?"

"No—it wasn't of much value," she answered once more, like an echo. "But it's a pity, as you say."

"Did you lose it while you were out just now?"

"Yes—I dropped it—I was standing by the pool in the fields—at the deepest side—under the alders."

"Then you will never see it again."

"No—I shall never see it again." This time she gave a shudder as she played the part of echo.

"Never mind—don't mind—don't think about it," I said eagerly "I'll ask papa to give me a better one for you—a golden serpent with a diamond eye."

Something in my words wrought a strange change in her mood. She laughed a hard laugh that had a mocking sound, and pushed me from her.

"That would be a good exchange for my poor little gold hoop," she said, with something that seemed like a strangled sob, "wouldn't it, Nell?"

At that moment the sound of tapping heels, and a shrill voice came along the passage:

"Que faites-vous donc, Mademoiselle Nellée? Dépêchez-vous—dépêchez-vous, mon enfant."

"Run away; don't let her come here," whispered Eulalie; and I, picking up Mam'zelle's netting, hurried to meet that irate personage, carrying my candle with me, and leaving the teachers' room lighted only by the shadowy haze of the star-shine outside.

I went up to bed, and there lay still, but widely wakeful. I slept in a small room leading off the large dormitory, and could hear the subdued chatter and flutter of the girls; a sound that died away at last, as if a flock of birds had gone to roost, and settled down, after many chirpings and rustlings, on their several perches.

The old house was so still that I could hear, muffled by distance, the clock of Bromley church tolling out the hour of ten.

At eleven Miss Mary would come upstairs, look in upon me, from the sheer force of the habit of old times, and so pass to her room on the other side of the passage. How I could look back to the days of my baby-hood, for I was little more than a

baby when I first came to Summerfield, and remember the soft touch of her long ringlets on my cheek as she bent over my pillow to "kiss me good-night!"

That time seemed very far away now, for the weight of my first perplexity was heavy upon me; thoughts, and fears, and strange surmises, that could not be spoken of to her, that could not be told to papa, seemed to bow my young head as with the burden of years.

Night and solitude are strange magnifiers, and I soon felt that I was thinking myself into a fever. "I will go to sleep, and forget it all till to-morrow," I resolved. But, as we all know, to resolve to sleep is inevitably to lie awake, and find oneself in the clutch of the demon, restlessness; so, after tossing about for half an hour longer I slipped out of bed, and took up a wholly unlawful position, namely, a corner of the low seat in the window of my room. All the windows at Summerfield had those dear devices, cushioned with crimson chintz, and very havens of rest and delight in summer-time; but I had no manner of business sitting there at that hour of the night. Perhaps for that very reason did I enjoy it the more. To pull up the blind was the next step I took, and I had my reward in the sight of the loveliest of night landscapes. My room looked out at the back of the house on to the wide garden, and the coppice lay between that and the wood. Under the alder-trees was a black shiny patch, just now bridged by a line of light, for the fair young moon was making a mirror of our pool, and turning to silver the rushes that fringed its margin. The whole world looked ghostly in the shimmer, and full of mysterious shadows; wherein might lurk, I fancied, elves of various kinds. I was just calling to mind my stock of fairy lore, when lo! a veritable ghost—a restless, wandering shade—came out from the shadow of the alders; a tall slight figure, with its bowed head shrouded in white folds.

Slowly up and down by the margin of the pool this figure paced; then, to my affright and sore amaze, it raised its clasped hands aloft, and wrung them as in the throes of some ineffable despair.

The next day I was almost fain to persuade myself that I had fallen asleep in the wide old window seat of my room, and dreamt of that weird figure on the margin of the pool; the figure that wrung its hands, and that I knew to be Eulalie.

No summer day could be calmer or

nore perfectly placid than was my friend, now setting herself seriously to work upon preparations for prompt flight to Hazlelene Rectory.

After true school-girl fashion her companions and pupils presented her with many parting presents; and if being amply provided with pin-cushions, pen-wipers, book-markers, and such-like gear, could ensure a happy future for Miss Le Breton, she would assuredly have never known "a carking care." I gave her no parting gift. I was waiting until I should see my father, and find a fitting opportunity to broach the subject of the serpent with the diamond eye.

Gradually the events of that strange evening, when I had seen Eulalie come in from the garden to the teacher's room, seemed to grow less vivid to me. I was, after all, but a child still, and impressions glided off me like the figures that came and went in the surface of the old round mirror that had reflected Eulalie's wrongdoing. I was very miserable when the actual parting with my school-friend came, very damply sad and limply sentimental; and, as we all stopped our work to kiss and say "Good-bye" to the pupil-teacher, my young heart seemed well-nigh ready to burst with grief.

Eulalie, perfectly beautiful in her plain new travelling-dress and little snood-like bonnet, took a quiet farewell of each, and kissed little solemn-faced Amy twice over. Then came my turn; but, with a pleading look at Miss Mary standing by, I slipped my hand through her arm, and so went out on to the hall-steps. Here stood Miss Maria, with the key-basket, shaped like a boat, on her arm; and "ce gentil Monsieur José," with his little fiddle in his hand, was assisting at "speeding the parting" traveller.

I caught, through my tears, a glimpse of the sweet face smiling at our assembled group from the fly-window; saw Miss Maria wave her key-basket, Miss Mary kiss her hand, and Monsieur José perform a series of bows of ideal grace, and then—

My school-friend was gone, the bell rang for the dancing-class to assemble, and squeak, scrape, squeak, went the little fiddle as its owner glided down the passage towards the lower school-room. I was very lonely, and used to sing the song that

always seemed to be associated with my thoughts of her:

Te souviens-tu Marie.
De notre enfance aux champs;

throwing all my heart and soul into the last refrain:

Le temps que je regrette.
C'est le temps qui n'est plus!

One night, when the Christmas holidays were drawing near and Eulalie's departure had become but a misty recollection to the rest of my companions, I was sitting by the school-room fire reading, when Miss Mary came into the school-room, looked round to every group, and then crossed over to my side.

As she laid her hand upon my shoulder I felt it tremble, and looking up met her soft eyes, filled with what seemed half pity and half love, that held a mother's tender yearning. "Nell," she said—and what a strange tremble was in her voice as she spoke—"the snow being so deep has delayed the post-boy until now; there is a letter for you, love, on the library table."

"Is it from papa, Miss Mary?" I said, starting up, and laying my book upon the mantelshelf.

"Yes, Nell."

She said no more, and turned away and left me. Left me to make the inevitable reverence at the school-room door with impatience at my heart, and then to hurry to the library with more speed than grace. I was hungry for a letter from papa; for those dear epistles had been few and far between of late.

It struck me afterwards, though not at the time, that it was by design I was sent to read my letter alone in that quiet room. I read it—all its loving expressions of tenderness—all its bright, happy anticipations of sunny days to come for him, and for "his little girl"; but of all the words I read, the only sentence that seemed real to me was this:

"And the name of my wife that is to be, dear Nell, is — Eulalie."

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SEBASTIAN STROME.

CHAPTER III. AN EMBARRASSMENT AND A DOUBT.

THE morning of the minister's visit to Dene Hall had not begun very pleasantly for Mary Dene. She had received by the early post an anonymous letter.

Although without date and signature, it was in other respects all that a business letter ought to be. It was written in a legible business hand, and was brief and to the point. "Miss Mary Dene," it ran, "the address of a former servant of yours, Fanny Jackson, is Number Ninety-seven, Falkirk Road, Camden Town. It will be to your interest to make immediate enquiries about her."

Miss Dene opened and read this missive at her toilet-table, handling it rather gingerly. It made her cheeks grow a trifle pale at first, and her heart beat faster for a stroke or two, for she had never forgotten Fanny, or ceased to feel responsibility on her account. After the pallor came a flush of haughty resentment at the liberty taken in thus addressing her. Finally, she put the letter down, and sat in thought, her thick hair falling over her white shoulders, and her eyes cast down.

When, several months after her dismissal of Fanny, the girl had left her home secretly, leaving behind her only a few lines to say that she was "going to be happy," Mary had charged herself with some degree of blame for the catastrophe; for if she had not lost her temper, and unjustly boxed Fanny's ears, Fanny might still have been in her service, and if in her service she would not have been likely to

go wrong. This was a tolerably straightforward syllogism, and had Mary's been a morbid temperament it might seriously have disturbed her peace of mind. Certainly she would have given almost anything to have saved Fanny from her disgrace; and, should opportunity ever offer, she would do what she could to put her in the way to retrieve it.

But she had reflected that there must, after all, have been in Fanny a latent tendency to wrong, which would in all probability have made itself felt sooner or later. Her mistress's fondness for her had been the result rather of the personal attractiveness of the girl's manner and appearance than of any special aptitude that she showed for her duties. Beyond a pretty face and a graceful figure, a light deft hand and a native sweetness of disposition, Fanny had been in no way superior to the ordinary run of ladies' maids. She was prone to idleness, to forgetfulness, even to occasional prevarication; her habits were not orderly, and she was somewhat over-fond of dashing and coquettish costumes. Moreover, on leaving Dene Hall, with a letter of hearty recommendation in her pocket, and thirty pounds advance wages, she did not trouble herself to seek a new situation, but went home to her father and mother, who idolised and spoiled her, and entirely approved of the intention she announced of taking a good long rest. In their opinion it was just what the poor dear needed.

One of Fanny's first acts of repose was to take a trip up to London to see her cousins—Mr. Jackson had a married sister living at Hammersmith—and when she came back she was wearing a stylish new bonnet and mantilla, with gloves and boots

to suit. This display gained her the envy of all the tradesmen's daughters in Cedarhurst, who not only had not thirty pounds to dress on, but, given the clothes, would still have lacked Fanny's air and figure to set them off. Fanny, perhaps, found some compensation for their ill-will in the undisguised admiration of all the tradesmen's sons; and also, as was afterwards remembered against her, in the flattering importunities of a certain handsome recruiting-sergeant, who was at that time in the neighbourhood.

Thus nearly a year slipped away, during which Fanny made five or six more visits to her cousins in Hammersmith; and then came the seventh expedition on which she started, but from which she never returned. Her letter gave no clue to her whereabouts; and on enquiry being made in Hammersmith, it transpired that she had been seen there but twice; so that there were five absences, including the present one, to be accounted for. It is needless to remark that ninety-nine hundredths of the honest folk of Cedarhurst accounted for them in only one way; they revelled in the stern joy of repeating "I told you so!" and were chiefly concerned at there being so few people besides Mr. and Mrs. Jackson to whom the phrase would give the requisite mortification. Pretty flighty Fanny had left few friends behind her.

But the minister, and Mary Dene herself, set their faces against the worst interpretation of the girl's conduct, and advocated the view that she was honestly married, and had been somehow prevented from communicating that important fact to her family. But the charity that aims at robbing a scandal of its sting is resented as an injury by that considerable class of persons who find their chief moral comfort and support in being scandalised. The majority of the inhabitants of Cedarhurst clung with pathetic fervour to the belief that an indelible stain had been inflicted upon the fair fame of the parish; nay, these capacious souls could easily have found room for as much more of virtuous reprobation as might have been necessitated by a discovery of Fanny's fellow-criminal among their own friends and neighbours. Unfortunately, the recruiting-sergeant was the only conceivable scapegoat, and no ingenuity could show him to have been born in Cedarhurst. But nothing ever is perfect in this world, not even the horrors.

This anonymous letter addressed to

Mary Dene contained the first news of Fanny that had been received since her disappearance a year before. The fact of its being anonymous indicated that the writer's motive, whatever else it might be, must be dishonourable; and the conventionally proper course for Mary would be to ignore it. And yet was it not her duty to find out whether Fanny were in need of help? Was it not, indeed, a foregone conclusion that the girl must be in need of every ministrations that Christian hands and hearts could afford her? Here, then, was a dilemma.

"Why was the letter sent to me rather than to anyone else?" Mary asked herself. "How can it serve my interests to make enquiries about her?"

On the other hand, could the making of such enquiries do Mary any harm? It seemed not.

After pondering over the matter for awhile Miss Dene was visited with an idea, which was to submit the difficulty to the Reverend Arthur Strome, and ask his advice upon it. Composed by this determination she finished her toilet and went down to breakfast.

Aunt Sophia was pacing the room with her arms crossed and an elbow in each hand, and looking down at her pretty feet as one after the other emerged from beneath the hem of her black skirt. At Mary's appearance she underwent a sort of spasm of graceful vivacity, and tripped forward, smiling a good-morning with insinuating unction. The tenderness and devotion uniformly manifested towards her niece by this lady were wonderful to behold, and were not without effect upon its object. Mary had a healthy belief in the reality of her own charms and virtues, and was not obstinately sceptical as to the honesty of her aunt's avowed admiration.

"How do you feel, Mary, darling?" enquired Aunt Sophia, taking the young woman's firm soft hand between both her own dry slippery ones. "Aren't you looking a little pale? You haven't a headache, surely?"

"Nonsense, auntie; when did I ever have a headache?" answered Mary, in her full deep voice.

"No bad news, then?"

"What put such a notion into your head?" Mary demanded, withdrawing her hand rather abruptly. It occurred to her that her aunt might have seen the outside of the anonymous letter, and be on the watch to surprise some information about

it. But Aunt Sophia only said: "Forgive me, dear, but you know I can't help being troublesome with those I love;" and with that they took their seats at the table. Mary opened the previous evening's Standard—a journal which she read regularly and conscientiously; and for a time there was silence, broken only by the tinkle of tea-spoons, and the rustle of the paper, as Mary folded and unfolded it.

"So I look pale, do I?" said Mary at last, putting aside the Standard and taking up the butter-knife. "Well, I'm growing old and lazy, and losing my complexion. I don't take exercise enough. I think I'll walk over to Cedarhurst this morning and make a call at the Vicarage."

"This raw morning! Wouldn't it be wiser to wait till the afternoon?"

No answer from the heiress, who sometimes allowed herself the luxury of ignoring undesirable questions. But the elder lady returned to the charge.

"I believe Donald is to go over this forenoon about the new bridle. He might take any message you wanted to send."

"Donald might deliver my message—if I had any message; but how could I appoint him deputy to enjoy the vicar's society for me?"

Aunt Sophia laughed. Laughter was her least graceful manifestation, though she was an adept at smiling; and this may have been one reason why she laughed but seldom. It was, with her, a short-lived and guttural affair, accompanied by a thrusting out of the chin and a pained contraction of the brow.

"I was only thinking, dear," she said, on recovering her gravity, "that you might, perhaps, have some commissions for Mr. Strome about the Christmas presents for the parish children, you know."

"You had no private reasons, then, for wishing me to stay at home this morning?"

"Private reasons, Mary, dear! You know, darling, I'm the frankest creature in the world. I always blurt out whatever is on my mind. A hidden motive—if that is what you mean—is something I never was capable of. I often wish I were!"

"Did any letters come this morning?" Mary asked abruptly.

The normal hue of Aunt Sophia's countenance was proof against variation; but she half closed her eyes for a moment.

"I think Jane did mention something about a letter—but it wasn't for me. Why do you ask, dear?"

"Only so as to get the matter off our minds," replied Mary, with a sarcastic little smile. She leant her cheek on her hand, balanced her spoon on the edge of her cup, and continued: "The letter was for me, but there was nothing in it—of general interest. By-the-way, did you write to your nephew yesterday inviting him here for Christmas Eve?"

"To poor Selim? Yes, indeed! And I am so glad, Mary, dear, that he and your Sebastian are to meet under your roof. Both such noble fellows, and both so devoted to you—it seems a shame that old boyish misunderstanding should keep your Sebastian from feeling kindly towards my poor boy. I'm sure it's not every one would speak of a successful rival as Selim always does of your Sebastian. You will see that they make peace, won't you?"

"My Sebastian, as you are pleased to call him, has no petty enmities!" remarked Mary superbly.

"And so I say, two such noble fellows should love each other."

"Well, I think it depends on Selim."

"Oh, where my Selim has loved once, he loves always! It only needs Mr. Strome to hold out his hand, for Selim to take it."

"Then he never could have loved me."

"Mary, darling! Selim never loved you!"

"Else he would never take his rival's hand while I lived."

This was spoken gravely; and Aunt Sophia, glancing nervously at her niece, was inclined to think that she meant what she said. The good lady was never slow to take a hint, and she mentally noted and corrected several past errors before answering.

"It may be as you say; you have more insight than I into human nature; very likely you understand dear Selim better than I do. Yes; I suppose there is a point beyond which magnanimity becomes meanness. And you are quite right in feeling that Selim could never pass that point. As for poor little me, you mustn't notice my chatter; in these matters I am a mere child compared with you, and I defer to your judgment entirely!"

"Of course I was only in fun," said the perverse heiress after a few moments. "There is no reason why they shouldn't be just as good friends as ever—at least, so far as I am concerned. Men are not like women—they have other

things to think of. Your nephew has behaved with dignity and generosity so far, and probably needs neither you nor me to tell him what he ought to do."

In regard to this speech Aunt Sophia committed herself no further than by an inarticulate murmur in her throat, and a pensive gaze at the clock on the mantelpiece. Mary presently left the table and moved to the window, where she stood looking out at the broad paths, with their sentinel yew-trees erect and motionless in the pale sunshine, and at the smooth lawn dusted over with last night's frost.

"I think I'll go now," she said, without turning round.

"I suppose you will meet Mr. Sebastian Strome there?" observed Aunt Sophia.

Mary's hands, which were lightly clasped behind her back, tightened their hold upon each other as the elder lady spoke; but she only answered carelessly:

"Nothing is less likely."

Aunt Sophia made no rejoinder; and after waiting a little, Mary added, with a touch of impatience:

"How could he be there?"

"I had a notion the young men were not obliged to be so busy at this season," said the other innocently.

Mary turned and faced her aunt. "Sebastian could leave his studies to come and see me at any time he chose," she said, with a subdued accent of defiance in her tone. "But I am not one of those girls who expect their lovers to be always dancing attendance on them. Sebastian and I are betrothed, and that is enough. We don't need to see each other every day to keep ourselves true!"

Aunt Sophia's faded eyes gleamed for an instant, and the corners of her long mouth twitched, but her voice was as gentle and caressing as ever.

"Young people were so much less sensible in my day," she remarked. "Your attitude is so much more dignified, Mary, darling. But I can remember when my poor old Joshua and I—we were together the livelong day, actually; and Joshua would neglect everything and travel any distance just to kiss my hand, or to hear me call him darling. Heigho! It was all very foolish, I know; and I dare say it would have been far better for us, in a worldly point of view, not to have permitted ourselves any passionate feelings. Still, there was a kind of sweetness in it—there was a delicious, foolish sort of

triumph in knowing that his love for me was too mighty for his strength; and it seems to me even now, when I ought to know better, as if I would go through again all the suffering I have since endured for the sake of living over those tender, loving days."

Aunt Sophia broke gracefully down at this point, pressing her handkerchief lightly to her eyes, and catching her breath gently. Mary, with her face in shadow, frowned a little and bit her upper lip.

"There! you won't laugh at your poor old auntie?" resumed this romantic and emotional personage after a decent interval. "I appreciate how much wiser and better in every respect your way of looking at such things is than mine; but I can't help being what I am, can I? I suppose my peculiar nature demanded some tangible expression and, as it were, experience of affection. No; I'm sure I couldn't have been satisfied, as you are, with the mere abstract assurance. Ah, Mary, dear, how much ache and turmoil of heart you will escape! That refined, passionless atmosphere that you breathe renders you independent of our lowlier joys and sorrows. But you mustn't despise us altogether, will you?"

The petition was, perhaps, gratuitous—possibly, malicious; at all events, Mary remained silent and undemonstrative. But Aunt Sophia, who seemed to be in an unusually confidential mood, flowed on artlessly.

"And that is why—although he is my nephew, and I love him so dearly—that is why I was glad when you gave him up. Selim, you know, is in many ways so like what my poor Joshua used to be. If you had returned his love, he would never have felt happy out of your sight. He would always have been bothering you with little tokens of his love—you would have been quite out of patience with him. He would write you a note even if he knew he was to meet you two hours later; he'd have wanted to tell you all his thoughts and plans, and to make his whole life yours, so to say. Poor Selim! I know him so well. He never could have held himself aloof from you in that grand, lofty way that Sebastian Strome does. He would have thought it the same as saying that he didn't really care for you, or that he cared for someone else more. And, in Selim's case, it would have meant that—I mean, he is so different from your Sebastian, you know. So I always anticipated,

from the first, that you would tire of Selim—such clinging devotion and self-surrender—poor dear boy! I used to tell him so, but of course he wouldn't believe me. I only wish I could believe that he would ever recover the blow—would ever be like his old self again."

"I thought he was very well resigned," said Miss Dene coldly.

"I know, you judge by that letter he sent immediately after his rejection; yes, dear Selim has a great deal of pride. But you haven't seen him since then, or heard from him, as I have. Ah, me! well, it's a thing he would not, of course, wish me to speak of. But I wish he had more of that royal indifference that Mr. Sebastian Strome displays. One needs it in this hard world."

"Why doesn't he get it, then?" Mary demanded with some sharpness.

Aunt Sophia arose, smiling sweetly. "It is not so easy to acquire as those who possess it might suppose. Perhaps, if those who have it in superfluity were able to share with those who have none, it might be better for both." Having despatched this neat little shaft, the good lady gracefully glided from the room, only pausing at the door to ask whether her dear Mary would return home to lunch, or take that meal at the Vicarage. Miss Dene replied curtly that it would depend upon circumstances; and thus the dialogue—if dialogue it could be called—ended.

The heiress, on feeling herself alone, pressed her hands against both sides of her face, and drawing them slowly down the cheeks till the fingers interlaced beneath the chin, let them fall thence to the full length of her arms. Why had she been so cross to poor Aunt Sophia? Perhaps Mary would have found it more difficult to answer that question than would Aunt Sophia herself.

She crossed the room slowly, and entered the adjoining conservatory through the broad arched doorway. It was a luxurious lounging-place on a winter's morning like this, but it was with no purpose of being luxurious that Mary sought it now, save in so far as solitude is sometimes a luxury. The warmth, the fragrance, the fresh green stillness, all those lovely inarticulate influences that could make her happiness happier, were rendered ineffective by her pain. For she was suffering pain—a vague, indignant, anxious pain, whose roots penetrated far inward. When the young woman reached her favourite seat, in a rocky niche

overarched by giant plantains, tears burned in her eyes; but she would not let her face falter, or her lip tremble, in spite of the ache in her throat. "What is there for me to cry about?" was her self-contemptuous question. So she sat proudly beneath the plantains, with her chin upon her palm, and her eyes pregnant of the unacknowledged tears. But by-and-by, as memory began its story to her heart, her expression and attitude softened; she forgot her pride and dignity, and all her present self, and was for a time only the sensitive and feminine creature that God, apart from civilisation, had made her. Only one human being had ever seen her in this mood, and he but once!

On that autumn evening, not so long ago, when a vision of earthly heaven had suddenly been opened to her, a host of ardent and pure potencies, till then unsuspected, had started into tender life in her heart and brain. For a while they had thriven and rejoiced, and an unending future of happy activity had seemed to await them. But the light that called them forth had gradually waned and darkened; and she, throughout that slow tragedy of change, had tried to believe, first that it did not exist, and then, that it was right it should. Not even to herself, and still less to another, would she admit that her lover was less a lover than he ought to be. Rather than doubt him, she chose to doubt her own ideal of life, and all the beauty and glory in which her maiden faith had trusted. And since she must perforce deem him best and highest, it was incumbent on her to deny, or to contemn as visionary and unpractical, the standard of goodness and nobility which intuition had revealed to her. For the woman who has pledged her soul for a lump of glass, in the belief that it is a diamond, there seems to be no choice between regarding all glass as diamonds or losing her soul. It is an alternative that leads to cynicism.

It is the glory of first love that everything connected with it seems unprecedented and peculiar: such chances, such mysteries, have never been known in love's annals before. So Mary had marvelled, in the secret retirements of her soul, at the strange blindness that had kept her from knowing that she loved Sebastian until the moment when he had first spoken to her of love. Not till then had she realised, with a thrill of hot surprise, that he had ruled her heart even from childhood. How

well she remembered every word and look of that great interview; and, still more, the thoughts that could not be spoken, and the emotions that could not be revealed! And at what a critical juncture he had come—the true prince: just when she was miserably trying to persuade herself that no such thing as a true prince existed, and that she might as well yield herself to the very commonplace, but apparently devoted and honest mortal, the sound of whose piteous pleading was still in her ears. What a peril to have escaped so narrowly!

What had Sebastian said to her? Not much; and yet how infinitely more than voluble Selim could have uttered in a twelvemonth. It was all strong and to the purpose; at once masterful and tender. These were the words that her unconscious life had waited to hear; they interpreted its meaning to the past, and forecast the future. They made her precious to herself in the assurance that she was dear to him. They gave her a place and a motive in the world, who had before been homeless and objectless. And when the consecrating kiss had been given and he was gone, then, in her solitude, had she first perceived how intimately he was near her. He had passed out of her bodily sight, but into her spiritual being, there to dwell for ever. She could not lose him unless she first lost herself; she could not lose herself except to find herself in him.

So had it seemed then; yet there had been a disappointment somewhere, which every passing day had rendered more undeniable. Who was to blame for it?

Mary Dene had hitherto shrunk, even from a discussion with herself of this question, as from a kind of disloyalty. Afterwards she decided that whatever fault there was must be on her side. She had anticipated something more than the world had to offer. Sebastian was the highest type of lover possible, and it showed either ignorance or ingratitude in her to be dissatisfied. She therefore framed any number of self-satirising rebukes and arguments to convince herself that being neglected was far more proper and comfortable than to be overwhelmed with loving observances; and that the passionate affection, with which her very heart sometimes ached, was much better veiled under an aspect of coldness and reserve than allowed any natural outlet. She had read a different account of love in poetry and romance; but

poetry and romance were graceful misrepresentations.

These pathetic sophistries in so far failed to dominate the girl's righteous instincts that she took pains to keep them and the cause of them to herself. She would have given the world for a confidant and a counsellor; but she would not sacrifice a jot of her maidenly pride for all the counsellors and confidants in the world. And again, it hurt her pride to feel that she was concealing anything; and the only way out of this dilemma was to conceal from herself that concealment. A naturally sincere soul manages such refinements painfully; and Mary pulled to pieces her mental serenity and self-respect, in order to get materials for the construction of her factitious happiness.

Now when Aunt Sophia, in her artless and impulsive way, took to describing the ardour and chivalries of her own love affair, she touched her niece in a tender spot; for certainly Sebastian had never displayed the frenzy of devotion that Joshua was credited with; and Mary's chief sustaining hope all along had been that all report of such frenzy was mere caricature, and never by any means matter of actual fact. But if what Aunt Sophia said were true, or anything like the truth, how should Sebastian be vindicated? Not that a Joshua or a Selim, or twenty thousand times both of them, could have realised to her that vision which rose before her as she leant upon the old sundial in the starlit garden. No; but if a trumpery Joshua or Selim could so devote themselves, then she knew a man whose ardour ought to be to theirs as is the sun to a candle. What was the logical issue of this deduction?

Mary raised her pale face, and the hands that lay in her lap clasped each other so tightly that the amethyst of her engagement ring bit the flesh. Her lips were dry, and her eyes strained and bright.

"My love, shall I insult you with a doubt?" she whispered. She moved her hands and arms apart with a slight but powerful gesture. "The devil tempted me! I know you love me better than I love you."

She arose after this, and walked up and down the fern-shadowed pathway that extended the length of the conservatory. She felt tremulous and tired, yet restless. At last she thought, with relief, of her intended expedition to Cedarhurst. How long had she been sitting here? It was

already late, perhaps. Before going in she cast a glance towards the park through the glass door that gave in that direction. A slender black figure was advancing swiftly along the path, with his face bent towards the ground, and a stout walking-stick swinging in his hand. It was the Reverend Arthur Strome himself, appearing as if in answer to her thought.

OLD ENGLISH TRAVELLERS IN RUSSIA.

THE collections of worthy Hakluyt are a perfect treasury of information of voyages, travels, and adventures. A society bearing his name and inspired by his example—the Hakluyt Society—from time to time publishes similar collections, enriched with valuable annotation. Mr. Bond, the newly-appointed keeper of printed books in the British Museum, has edited a narrative of one of the early travellers in Russia. There are several of those travellers whose narratives are replete with interest. We propose to bring together some interesting notes from writings contained both in Hakluyt's collection and those published by the Hakluyt Society. In these old writings we find some interesting touches of personal adventures, some curious and little-known passages of English history, and we shall all the better be able to understand the ways of the Russian people at the present time if we know their antecedents.

It is about the middle of the sixteenth century that we hear of the great Muscovite Company, and of the doings of their captains and mariners. We may combine some of the more scattered notices before we proceed to the regular narratives. One worthy captain goes so far north as Lappia. "There came aboard us certain Lappians in a boat to the number of sixteen persons, and amongst them there were two wenches, and some of them could speak the Russe tongue. They told me they had been to seek meate among the rocks, saying: 'If we get no meate we eat none.' I saw them eat rock weeds as eagerly as a cow doeth grass when she is hungry. I saw them eat fowls' eggs raw, and the young birds also that were in the eggs." We think it best to modernise the spelling, although the Vandyke looks best in its ancient frame. Then one Mr. Anthony Jenkinson, sent on an embassy to the czar himself, gives an account of his

reception and entertainment by that potentate: "The emperor sent me divers bowls of wine and mead, and many dishes from his own hand, which were brought me by a duke, and my table served all in gold and silver. When dinner was ended, the emperor called me by name, and gave me drink with his own hand, and so I departed to my lodging. The emperor never putteth morsel of meat in his mouth but he first blesseth it himself, and in like manner as often as he drinketh, for after his manner he is very religious."

Some of his accounts of the old customs of the Russians are very amusing, and are corroborated by other travellers. Their curious religious customs have never greatly varied. At the present day nearly every Russian family has its Ikon, which is a picture, with something of an image interwoven with it. For instance, there is the picture of a saint in a household often enough at the present day, with a metallic aureole affixed to it. Our old traveller asserts that the common Russians took their images for gods. Even then their priests were married; but when the wife died the priest was not permitted to marry again. The account of their baptisms is very quaint. There is a table put into the middle of the church, "and on it an earthen pot, full of warm water, about the which the godfathers and godmothers settle themselves; then the clerk giveth unto every one of them a small wax candle burning; then cometh the priest, and beginneth to say certain words, which the godfathers and godmothers must answer word for word, among the which is that the child shall forsake the devil, and as that word is pronounced they must all spit at the word as often as it is repeated."

Their marriage customs are highly curious. "When there is love between the parties, the man sendeth unto the woman a small chest, wherein is a whip, needles, thread, silk, linen cloths; thereby giving her to understand that, if she does offend, she must be beaten by the whip; by the needles, thread, cloth, that she should apply herself diligently to sew," &c. After the wedding "they begin to drink, and first the woman drinketh to the man, and, when he hath drunk, he letteth the cup fall to the ground, hastening immediately to tread upon it, and so doth she; and whether of them tread first upon it must have the victory, and must be master at all times after." He reports

that the women sew well and embroider excellently. The husband is bound to find his wife in cosmetics, of which the wives make inordinate use "without any shame. I cannot so well liken them as to a miller's wife, for they look as though they were beaten about the face with a bag of meal, but their eyebrows they colour as black as jet." "The Russians do not have the credit of treating their wives in the best way. They consider that it is within their rights to administer personal castigation, and if the castigation is not administered, the wives consider that they have lost their hold upon the affections of the husband. For some days after the marriage the bride must not be heard to speak, save certain few words at the table, in a set form, with great manners and reverence to the bridegroom." If she behave herself otherwise, it is a great prejudice to her credit and life ever afterwards, and will be highly disliked of the bridegroom himself, who will probably administer personal correction.

Baron Heberstein gives a case where a Russianised German pushed the doctrine to its extreme logical consequences. "There is at Moscow a certain German, a blacksmith, named Jordar, who married a Russian woman. After she had lived some time with her husband, she one day thus lovingly addressed him: 'Why is it, my dearest husband, that you do not love me?' The husband replied: 'I do love you, passionately.' 'I have, as yet,' said she, 'received no proof of your love.' The husband enquired what proofs she desired. Her reply was: 'You have never beaten me!' 'Really,' said the husband, 'I did not think that blows were proofs of love; but, however, I will not fail even in this respect.' And so not long after he beat her most cruelly, and confessed to me that after that process his wife showed him much greater affection. So he repeated the exercise frequently; and finally, while I was still at Moscow, cut off her head and her legs."

Hakluyt gives an account of six expeditions which were sent from England to Russia. In the days of Ivan the Terrible, whose frightful atrocities suggest the charitable idea that he must have been mad, and of Queen Elizabeth, there was a great tendency to draw close bonds between England and Russia. England wanted the monopoly of the Russian trade, and Russia wanted the alliance of a great maritime power. The Hakluyt Society

takes up the narratives where Hakluyt leaves off, supplementing their information, and has disinterred various state papers and curious biographies. One Horsey was a clerk in the service of the Russian Company in Russia, and Ivan employed him as an agent to proceed to England. He wanted to marry an English lady; and he even aspired to the great Elizabeth herself. It was resolved that the Lady Mary Hastings, the queen's own niece, might probably prove a suitable match for the czar. It was quite true that the czar laboured under the trifling disadvantage of being married already; but he hastened to explain that his wife was not of royal birth, and he was entirely prepared to repudiate her. Lady Mary got the nickname among her friends of Empress of Muscovie. On the whole, however, she was not satisfied with "the tricks and manners" of her imperial admirer. She persuaded Queen Elizabeth to allow her to decline the dangerous honour. Ivan got into a terrible passion because Queen Elizabeth did not meet his wishes. He entirely lost any good manners which he might have been supposed to possess, and told the ambassador "that he did not reckon the Queen of England to be his fellow, for there are that are her betters." The ambassador manfully answered that "the queen, his mistress, was as great a prince as ever was in Christendom, equal to him that thought himself the greatest, well able to defend herself against his malice whosoever."

Besides the narrative of Horsey we have a narrative by one Giles Fletcher. He bears a name illustrious in English literature, being the father of Phineas Fletcher, the author of *The Purple Island*; and his brother, Bishop of London, was the father of John Fletcher, the illustrious dramatist. He acted as ambassador between the times of Horsey's employments and in several ways they are found together. He published a narrative, or book, about Russia, which the Russian Company caused to be suppressed on account of its plain-speaking. It is this book which the Hakluyt Society has resuscitated. Fletcher thought himself well out of a lion's den when he got back to London; "for the poets cannot fancy Ulysses more glad to be come out of the den of Polyphemus than he was to be rid out of the power of such a barbarous prince." Old Fuller perpetrates the curious bull of saying that, if the czar had cut Fletcher's head off, Fletcher

would in vain have sought for any redress. It is very difficult to see how he could have sought for any redress at all if his head had been taken off. Giles Fletcher loved Russia in the summer. "You shall see such a new hue and face of a country, the woods—for the most part which are all of fir and birch—so fresh and so sweet; the pastures and meadows so green and well-grown—and that upon the sudden; such variety of flowers, such noise of birds—specially of nightingales, that seem to be more loud and of a more variable note than in other countries, that a man shall not lightly travel in a more pleasant countrie."

But however pleased he may be with the country, he gives a frightful account of misgovernment and cruelty. The law of debtor and creditor was as bad as the old Roman law, which allowed the debtor to be cut up bodily by his creditors. If the alleged debt were only for a sixpence the debtor was chained leg, arms, and neck; if the case were given against the debtor, he was daily cudgelled about the shins and calves by an officer till the money was paid. "You shall see forty or fifty stand together all on a row, and their shins thus beudgelled and bebasted every morning with a piteous cry." If the debt is not paid after a year's cudgelling, he, his wife, and his children, and all that he has, are sold. Death, with shocking varieties of suffering, was inflicted for all sorts of criminal offences; by the knout, by torture, by roasting, hanging, beheading. "But, for the most part, the prisoners that are condemned in summer are kept for the winter, to be knockt on the head and put under the ice." This was the case only with the poor serf. If a lord killed his servant "little or nothing is said unto him, at the most only a small fine." With regard to other crimes, "if a murder or theft be committed, peradventure he shall be imprisoned at the emperor's pleasure." He gives a wretched report of the life of the people: "They make no account of the life of a man. You shall have a man robbed sometimes in the very streets of their towns, if he go late in the evening, and yet no man to come forth out of his doors to rescue him, though he hear him cry out."

Fletcher gives a curious account of the emperor's way of celebrating holy days. His favourite amusement was to watch a bear-hunt, that is, a fight between bears and bear-hunters. "But many times these

hunters come short, and are either slain or miserably torn with the teeth and talents [i.e. talons] of the fierce beast. If the party quit himself well in this fight with the bear, he is carried to drink at the emperor's cellar door, where he drinketh himself drunk for the honour of Hospodar. And this is his reward for adventuring his life for the emperor's pleasure. When it draweth towards bedtime his priest sayeth certain prayers; and then the emperor blesseth and crosseth himself as in the morning, and so goeth to his bed." Fletcher at first found himself treated cavalierly, but after the defeat of the Spanish Armada he experienced great politeness.

Sir Jerome Horsey appears to have possessed a great deal of versatility of character. Passing through Poland he appeared at court in the disguise of one of his own servants, and when he was detected everybody took it pleasantly. Horsey describes the last days of that terrible old tyrant the Emperor Ivan. He sent for sixty witches out of the north countries, where there was great store. The dying man pointed out his jewels to the courtiers, and told them of the hidden virtues of his jewels, diamond, jasper, and sapphire. Horsey speaks of his reign as the "smothering time of tyranny." He gives an account of the splendid cheer which was afforded him in one of his embassies. They sent him for his provision, "twenty live sheep, twenty live oxen and bullocks, six hundred hens, forty fitches of bacon, two milch kine, two goats, ten fresh salmon, forty gallons of aqua porter (beer), one hundred gallons of mead, two hundred gallons of beer, a thousand loaves of white, three score bushels of meal, two thousand eggs, and a store of garlic and onions." Horsey was glad, however, to get away from his embassy, and, moreover, he was "betrothed to an honest gentleman's daughter of Buckinghamshire."

We have a great kindness for Horsey. He was a thorough Englishman. He married the honest gentleman's daughter, who was aunt to the great John Hampden, and we trust lived happy ever afterwards. He declares that all the known nations and kingdoms of the world are not comparable for happiness to "this thrice blessed nation and angelical kingdom of Cansan"—our England. He was a Member of Parliament in the reign of James the First, and survived into the earlier years of Charles

the First. In the Grenville Library of the British Museum there is a rare Slavonic Bible, with an inscription in Horsey's own handwriting.

VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XLV. WEDDING BELLS.

VIXEN had been more than a year in the island of Jersey. She had lived her lonely and monotonous existence, and made no moan. It was a dreary exile; but it seemed to her that there was little else for her to do in life but dawdle through the long slow days, and bear the burden of living; at least until she came of age, and was independent, and could go where she pleased. Then there would be the wide world for her to wander over, instead of this sea-girdled garden of Jersey. She had reasons of her own for so quietly submitting to this joyless life. Mrs. Winstanley kept her informed of all that was doing in Hampshire, and even at the Queen Anne house at Kensington. She knew that Roderick Vawdrey's wedding-day was fixed for the first of August. Was it not better that she should be far away, hidden from her small world, while those marriage bells were ringing across the darkening beech-woods?

Her sacrifice had not been vain. Her lover had speedily forgotten that brief madness of last midsummer, and had returned to his allegiance. There had been no cloud upon the loves of the plighted consins. If there had been, Mrs. Winstanley would have known all about it. Her letters told only of harmonious feeling and perpetual sunshine.

"Lady Mabel is looking prettier than ever," she wrote, in the last week of July; "that ethereal loveliness which I so much admire. Her waist cannot be more than eighteen inches. I cannot find out who makes her dresses, but they are exquisitely becoming to her; though, for my own part, I do not think the style equal to Theodore's. But then I always supplemented Theodore's ideas with my own suggestions.

"I hear that the trousseau is something wonderful. The lingerie is in quite a new style; a special make of linen has been introduced at Bruges on purpose for the occasion, and I have heard that the loom is to be broken and no more made. But this is perhaps exaggeration. The lace

has all been made in Buckinghamshire, from patterns a hundred years old—very quaint and pretty. There is an elegant simplicity about everything, Mrs. Scobel tells me, which is very charming. The costumes for the Norwegian tour are heather-coloured waterproof cloth, with stitched borders, plain to the last degree, but with a chic that redeems their plainness.

"Conrad and I received an early invitation to the wedding. He will go; but I have refused, on the ground of ill-health. And, indeed, my dear Violet, this is no idle excuse. My health has been declining ever since you left us. I was always a fragile creature, as you know, even in your dear papa's time; but of late the least exertion has made me tremble like a leaf. I bear up, for Conrad's sake. He is so anxious and unhappy when he sees me suffer, and I am glad to spare him anxiety.

"Your old friend, Mr. Vawdrey, looks well and happy, but I do not see much of him. Believe me, dear, you acted well and wisely in leaving home when you did. It would have been a dreadful thing if Lady Mabel's engagement had been broken off on account of an idle flirtation between you and Rorie. It would have left a stain upon your name for life. Girls do not think of these things. I'm afraid I flirted a little myself when I was first out, and admiration was new to me; but I married so young that I escaped some of the dangers you have had to pass through.

"Roderick is making considerable improvements and alterations at Briarwood. He is trying to make the house pretty—I fear an impossible task. There is a commonplace tone about the building that defies improvement. The orchid-houses at Ashbourne are to be taken down and removed to Briarwood. The collection has been increasing ever since Lady Jane Vawdrey's death, and is now one of the finest in England. But to my mind the taste is a most foolish one. Dear Conrad thinks me extravagant for giving sixty guineas for a dress—what might he not think if I gave as much for a single plant? Lord Mallow is staying at Ashbourne for the wedding. His success in the House of Commons has made him quite a lion. He called and took tea with me the other day. He is very nice. Ah, my dearest Violet, what a pity you could not like him! It would have been such a splendid match for you, and would have made Conrad and me so proud and happy."

Vixen folded the letter with a sigh. She was sitting in her favourite spot in the neglected garden, the figs ripening above her among their broad ragged leaves, and the green slopes and valleys lying beneath her—orchards and meadows and pink homesteads—under a sultry summer haze.

The daughter was not particularly alarmed by her mother's complaint of declining health. It was that old cry of "wolf," which Violet had heard ever since she could remember.

"Poor mamma!" she said to herself, with a half-pitying tenderness; "it has always been her particular vanity to fancy herself an invalid; and yet no doctor has ever been able to find out anything amiss. She ought to be very happy now, poor dear; she has the husband of her choice, and no rebellious daughter to make the atmosphere stormy. I must write to Mrs. Scobel, and ask if mamma is really not quite so well as when I left home."

And then Vixen's thoughts wandered away to Rorie, and the alterations that were being made at Briarwood. He was preparing a bright home for his young wife, and they would be very happy together, and it would be as if Violet had never crossed his path.

"But he was fond of me, last midsummer twelvemonth," thought Vixen, half seated, half reclining against a grassy bank, with her hands clasped above her head, and her open book flung aside upon the long grass, where the daisies and dandelions grew in such wild abundance. "Yes, he loved me dearly then, and would have sacrificed interest, honour, all the world, for my sake. Can he forget those days, when they are thus ever present to my mind? He seemed more in love than I: yet, a little year, and he is going to be married. Have men no memories? I do not believe that he loves Lady Mabel any better than he did a year ago, when he asked me to be his wife. But he has learnt wisdom; and he is going to keep his word, and to be owner of Briarwood and Ashbourne, and a great man in the county. I suppose it is a glorious destiny."

In these last days of July a strange restlessness had taken possession of Violet Tempest. She could not read or occupy herself in any way. Those long rambles about the island; to wild precipices looking down on peaceful bays; to fuzzy hills where a few scattered sheep were her sole companions; to heathery steeps that were

craggy and precipitous and dangerous to climb, and so had a certain fascination for the lonely wanderer—those rambles, which had been her chief resource and solace until now, had suddenly lost their charm. She dawdled in the garden, or roamed restlessly from the garden to the orchard, from the orchard to the sloping meadow, where Miss Skipwith's solitary cow, last representative of a once well-stocked farm, browsed in a dignified seclusion. The days were slow, and oh, how lengthy! and yet there was a fever in Vixen's blood which made it seem to her as if time were hurrying on at a break-neck pace.

"The day after to-morrow he will be married," she said to herself, on the morning of the thirtieth. "By this time on the day after to-morrow the bride will be putting on her wreath of orange-blossoms, and the church will be decorated with flowers, and there will be a flutter of expectation in all the little villages from one end of the Forest to the other. A duke's daughter is not married every day in the year. Ah me! there will not be an earthquake, or anything to prevent the wedding, I daresay. No; I feel sure that all things are going smoothly. If there had been a hitch of any kind, mamma would have written to tell me about it."

Miss Skipwith was not a bad person to live with in a time of secret trouble such as this. She was so completely wrapped up in her grand scheme of reconciliation for all the creeds, that she was utterly blind to any small individual tragedy that might be enacted under her nose. Those worn cheeks and haggard eyes of Vixen's attracted no attention from her, as they sat opposite to each other at the sparsely-furnished breakfast-table, in the searching summer light.

She had allowed Violet perfect liberty, and had been too apathetic to be unkind. Having tried her hardest to interest the girl in Swedenborg, or Luther, or Calvin, or Mahomet, or Brahma, or Confucius, and having failed ignominiously in each attempt, she had dismissed all idea of companionship with Violet from her mind, and had given her over to her own devices.

"Poor child," she said to herself, "she is not unamiable, but she is utterly mindless. What advantages she might have derived from intercourse with me, if she had possessed a receptive nature! But my highest gifts are thrown away upon her. She will go through life in lamentable ignorance of all that is of deepest

import in man's past and future. She has no more intellect than Baba."

Baba was the Persian cat, the silent companion of Miss Skipwith's studious hours.

So Violet roamed in and out of the house in this languid weather, and took up a book only to throw it down again, and went out to the court-yard to pat Argus, and strolled into the orchard and leaned listlessly against an ancient apple-tree, with her loose hair glistening in the sunshine—just as if she were posing herself for a pre-Raphaelite picture—and no one took any heed of her goings and comings.

She was supremely lonely. Even looking forward to the future—when she would be of age and well off, and free to do what she liked with her life—she could see no star of hope. Nobody wanted her. She stood quite alone, amidst a strange unfriendly world.

"Except poor old McCroke, I don't think there is a creature who cares for me; and even her love is tepid," she said to herself.

She had kept up a regular correspondence with her old governess since she had been in Jersey, and had developed to Miss McCroke the scheme of her future travels. They were to see everything strange and rare and beautiful that was to be seen in the world.

"I wonder if you would much mind going to Africa?" she wrote, in one of her frank girlish letters. "There must be something new in Africa. One would get away from the beaten ways of Cockney tourists, and one would escape the dreary monotony of a table d'hôte. There is Egypt for us to do; and you, who are a walking encyclopædia, will be able to tell me all about the Pyramids, and Pompey's Pillar, and the Nile. If we got tired of Africa we might go to India. We shall be thoroughly independent. I know you are a good sailor; you are not like poor mamma, who used to suffer tortures in crossing the Channel."

There was a relief in writing such letters as these, foolish though they might be. That idea of distant wanderings with Miss McCroke was the one faint ray of hope offered by the future—not a star, assuredly, but at least a farthing candle. The governess answered in her friendly matter-of-fact way. She would like much to travel with her dearest Violet. The life would be like heaven after her present drudgery in finishing the Misses Pontifex,

who were stupid and supercilious. But Miss McCroke was doubtful about Africa. Such a journey would be a fearful undertaking for two unprotected females. To have a peep at Algiers and Tunis, and even to see Cairo and Alexandria, might be practicable; but anything beyond that Miss McCroke thought wild and adventurous. Had her dear Violet considered the climate, and the possibility of being taken prisoners by black people, or even devoured by lions? Miss McCroke begged her dear pupil to read Livingstone's travels, and the latest reports of the Royal Geographical Society, before she gave any further thought to Africa.

The slowest hours, days the most wearisome, long nights that know not sleep, must end at last. The first of August dawned, a long streak of red light in the clear grey east. Vixen saw the first glimmer as she lay wide awake in her big old bed, staring through the curtainless window to the far sea-line, above which the morning sky grew red.

"Hail, Rorie's wedding-day!" she cried, with a little hysterical laugh; and then she buried her face in the pillow and sobbed aloud—sobbed as she had not done till now, through all her weary exile.

There had been no earthquake; this planet we live on had not rolled backward in space; all things in life pursued their accustomed course, and time had ripened into Roderick Vawdrey's wedding-day.

"I did think something would happen," said Vixen piteously. "It was foolish, weak, mad to think so. But I could not believe he would marry anyone but me. I did my duty, and I tried to be brave and steadfast. But I thought something would happen."

A weak lament from the weak soul of an undisciplined girl. The red light grew and glowed redder in the east, and then the yellow sun shone through grey drifting clouds, and the new day was born. Slumber and Violet had parted company for the last week. Her mind had been too full of images; the curtain of sleep would not hide them. Frame and mind were both alike worn out, as she lay in the broadening light, lonely, forsaken, unpitied, bearing her great sorrow, just as she must have borne the toothache, or any other physical pain.

She rose at seven, feeling unspeakably tired, dressed herself slowly, thinking of Lady Mabel. What an event her rising and dressing would be this morning—

the flurried maids, the indulgent mother; the pure white garments, glistening in the tempered sunlight; the luxurious room, with its subdued colouring, its perfume of freshly-cut flowers; the dainty breakfast-tray, on a table by an open window; the shower of congratulatory letters, and the last delivery of wedding gifts. Vixen could imagine the scene, with its every detail.

And Roderick, what of him? She could not so easily picture the companion of her childhood on this fateful morning of his life. She could not imagine him happy; she dared not fancy him miserable. It was safer to make a great effort, and shut that familiar figure out of her mind altogether.

Oh, what a dismal ceremony the eight-o'clock breakfast, tête-à-tête with Miss Skipwith, seemed on this particular morning! Even that preoccupied lady was constrained to notice Violet's exceeding pallor.

"My dear, you are ill!" she exclaimed. "Your face is as white as a sheet of paper, and your eyes have dark rings round them."

"I am not ill, but I have been sleeping badly of late."

"My dear child, you need occupation; you want an aim. The purposeless life you are leading must result badly. Why can you not devise some pursuit to fill your idle hours? Far be it from me to interfere with your liberty; but I confess that it grieves me to see youth, and no doubt some measure of ability, so wasted. Why do you not strive to continue your education? Self-culture is the highest form of improvement. My books are at your disposal."

"Dear Miss Skipwith, your books are all theological," said Vixen wearily, "and I don't care for theology. As for my education, I am not utterly neglecting it. I read Schiller till my eyes ache."

"One shallow German poet is not the beginning and end of education," replied Miss Skipwith. "I should like you to take larger views of woman's work in the world."

"My work in the world is to live quietly, and not to trouble anyone," said Vixen, with a sigh.

She was glad to leave Miss Skipwith to her books, and to wander out into the sunny garden, where the figs were ripening or dropping half-ripened amongst the neglected grass, and the clustering bloom of the hydrangeas was as blue as the

summer sky. There had been an unbroken interval of sultry weather—no rain, no wind, no clouds, only endless sunshine.

"If it would hail, or blow, or thunder," sighed Vixen, with her hands clasped above her head, "the change might be some small relief to my feelings; but this everlasting brightness is too dreadful. What a lying world it is, and how Nature smiles at us when our hearts are aching. Well, I suppose I ought to wish the sunshine to last till after Rorie's wedding; but I don't, I don't, I don't! If the heavens were to darken, and forked lightnings to cleave the black vault, I should dance for joy. I should hail the storm, and cry, 'This is sympathy!'"

And then she flung herself face downwards on the grass and sobbed, as she had sobbed on her pillow that morning.

"It rends my heart to know we are parted for ever," she said. "Oh, why did I not say Yes that night in the fir-plantation? The chance of lifelong bliss was in my hand, and I let it go. It would have been less wicked to give way then, and accept my happy fate, than to suffer these evil feelings that are gnawing at my heart to-day—vain rage, cruel hatred of the innocent!"

The wedding bells must be ringing by this time. She fancied she could hear them. Yes, the summer air seemed alive with bells. North, south, east, west, all round the island, they were ringing madly, with tuneful marriage peal. They beat upon her brain. They would drive her mad. She tried to stop her ears, but then those wedding chimes seemed ringing inside her head. She could not shut them out. She remembered how the joy-bells had haunted her ears on Rorie's twenty-first birthday—that day which had ended so bitterly, in the announcement of the engagement between the cousins. Yes; that had been her first real trouble. How well she remembered her despair and desolation that night, the rage that possessed her young soul.

"And I was little more than a child, then," she said to herself. "Surely I must have been born wicked. My dear father was living then; and even the thought of his love did not comfort me. I felt myself abandoned and alone in the world. How idiotically fond I must have been of Rorie! Ever so many years have come and gone, and I have not cured myself of this folly. What is there in him that I should care for him?"

She got up from the grass, plucked herself out of that paroxysm of mental pain which came too near lunacy, and began to walk slowly round the garden-paths, reasoning with herself, calling womanly pride to the rescue.

"I hate myself for this weakness," she protested dumbly. "I did not think I was capable of it. When I was a child, and was taken to the dentist, did I ever whine and howl like vulgar-minded children? No! I braced myself for the ordeal, and bore the pain as my father's child ought."

She walked quickly to the house, burst into the parlour, where Miss Skipwith was sitting at her desk, the table covered with open volumes, over which flowers of literature the student roved, bee-like, collecting honey for her intellectual hive.

"Please, Miss Skipwith, will you give me some books about Buddha?" said Vixen, with an alarming suddenness. "I am quite of your opinion: I ought to study. I think I shall go in for theology."

"My dearest child!" cried the ancient damsel, enraptured. "Thank Heaven! the seed I have sown has germinated at last. If you are once inspired with the desire to enter that vast field of knowledge, the rest will follow. The flowers you will find by the wayside will lure you onward, even when the path is stony and difficult."

"I suppose I had better begin with Buddha," said Vixen, with a hard and resolute manner that scarcely seemed like the burning desire for knowledge newly kindled in the breast of a youthful student. "That is beginning at the beginning, is it not?"

"No, my dear. In comparison with the priesthood of Egypt, Buddha is contemptibly modern. If we want the beginning of things, we must revert to Egypt, that cradle of learning and civilisation."

"Then let me begin with Egypt!" cried Vixen impatiently. "I don't care a bit how I begin. I want occupation for my mind."

"Did I not say so?" exclaimed Miss Skipwith, full of ardent welcome for the neophyte whose steps had been so tardy in approaching the shrine. "That pallor, those haggard eyes, are indications of a troubled mind; and no mind can be free from trouble when it lacks an object. We create our own sorrows."

"Yes; we are wretched creatures!" cried Vixen passionately; "the poorest examples of machinery in all this varied

universe. Look at that cow in your orchard, her dull placid life, inoffensive, useful, asking nothing but a fertile meadow and a sunny day to fill her cup with happiness. Why did the great Creator make the lower animals exempt from sorrow, and give us such an infinite capacity for grief and pain? It seems hardly fair."

"My dear, our Creator gave us minds, and the power of working out our own salvation," replied Miss Skipwith. "Here are half-a-dozen volumes. In these you will find the history of Egyptian theology, from the golden age of the god Râ to the dark and troubled period of Persian invasion. Some of these works are purely philosophical. I should recommend you to read the historical volumes first. Make copious notes of what you read, and do not hesitate to refer to me when you are puzzled."

"I am afraid that will be very often," said Vixen, piling up the books in her arms with a somewhat hopeless air. "I am not at all clever, but I want to employ my mind."

She carried the books up to her bedroom, and arranged them on a stout oak table, which Mrs. Doddery had found for her. She opened her desk, and put a quire of paper ready for any notes she might be tempted to make; and then she began, steadily and laboriously, with a dry-as-dust history of ancient Egypt.

Oh, how her poor head ached as the summer noontide wore on, and the bees hummed in the garden below, and the distant waves danced gaily in the sunlight; and the knowledge that the bells were really ringing at Ashbourne could not be driven from her mind! How the Shepherd Kings, and the Pharaohs, and the comparatively modern days of Joseph and his brethren, and the ridiculously recent era of Moses, passed, like dim shifting shadows, before her mental vision! She retraced her steps in that dreary book again and again, patiently forcing her mind to the uncongenial task.

"I will not be such a slave as to think of him all this long summer day," she said to herself. "I will think of the god Râ, and the lotus-flowers, and the Red Nile, and the Green Nile, and all this wonderful land where I am going to take dear old McCroke by-and-by."

She read on till dinner-time, only pausing to scribble rapid notes of the dates and names and facts which would not stand steadily in her whirling brain; and then

she went down to the parlour, no longer pale, but with two hectic spots on her cheeks, and her eyes unnaturally bright.

"Ah," ejaculated Miss Skipwith delightedly; "you look better already. There is nothing like severe study for bracing the nerves."

Violet talked about Egypt all dinner-time, but she ate hardly anything, and that hectic flush upon her cheeks grew more vivid as she talked.

"To think that, after the seed lying dormant all this time, it should have germinated at last with such sudden vigour," mused Miss Skipwith. "The poor girl is talking a good deal of nonsense; but that is only the exuberance of a newly-awakened intellect."

Vixen went back to the Egyptians directly after dinner. She toiled along the arid road with an indomitable patience. Her ideas of Egypt had hitherto been of the vaguest. Vast plains of barren sand, a pyramid or two, Memnon's head breathing wild music in the morning sunshine, crocodiles, copper-coloured natives, and Antony and Cleopatra. These things were about as much as Miss McCroke's painstaking tuition had implanted in her pupil's mind. And here, without a shadow of vocation, this poor ignorant girl was poring over the driest details that ever interested the scholar. The mysteries of the triple language, the Rosetta Stone, Champollion—*tout le long de la rivière*. Was it any wonder that her head ached almost to agony, and that the ringing of imaginary wedding-bells sounded distractingly in her ears.

She worked on till tea-time, and was too engrossed to hear the bell, which clanged lustily for every meal in the orderly household: a bell whose clamour was somewhat too much for the repast it heralded.

This evening Vixen did not hear the bell, inviting her to weak tea and bread-and-butter. The ringing of those other bells obscured the sound. She was sitting with her book before her, but her eyes fixed on vacancy, when Miss Skipwith, newly interested in her charge, came to enquire the cause of her delay. The girl looked at her languidly, and seemed slow to understand what she said.

"I don't care for any tea," she replied at last. "I would rather go on with the history. It is tremendously interesting, especially the hieroglyphics. I have been trying to make them out. It is so nice to

know that a figure like a chopper means a god, and that a goose with a black ball above his back means Pharaoh, son of the sun. And then the tables of dynasties: can anything be more interesting than those? It makes one's head go round just a little at first, when one has to grope backwards through so many centuries, but that's nothing."

"My dear, you are working too hard. It is foolish to begin with such impetuosity. A fire that burns so fiercely will soon exhaust itself. *Festina lente*. We must hasten slowly, if we want to make solid progress. Why, my poor child, your forehead is burning. You will read yourself into a fever."

"I think I am in a fever already," said Vixen.

Miss Skipwith was unusually kind. She insisted upon helping her charge to undress, and would not leave her till she was lying quietly in bed. She was going to draw down the blinds, but against this Vixen protested vehemently.

"Pray leave me the sky," she cried; "it is something to look at through the long blank night. The stars come and go, and the clouds are always changing. I believe I should go mad if it were not for the sky."

Poor Miss Skipwith felt seriously uneasy. The first draught from the fountain of knowledge had evidently exercised an intoxicating effect upon Violet Tempest. It was as if she had been taking opium or hashish. The girl's brain was affected.

"You have studied too long," she said. "This must not occur again. I feel myself responsible to your parents for your health."

"To my parents," echoed Vixen, with a sudden sigh; "I have only one, and she is happier in my absence than when I was with her. You need not be uneasy about me if I fall ill. No one will care. If I were to die no one would be sorry. I have no place in the world. No one will miss me."

"My dear, it is absolutely wicked to talk in this strain—just as you are developing new powers, an intellect which may make you a pillar and a landmark in your age."

"I don't want to be a pillar or a landmark," said Vixen impatiently. "I don't want to have my name associated with 'movements,' or to write letters to the Times. I should like to have been happy my own way."

She turned her back upon Miss Skipwith,

and lay so still that the excellent lady supposed she was dropping off to sleep.

"A good night's rest will restore her, and she will awake with renewed appetite for knowledge," she murmured benevolently, as she went back to her Swedenborgian studies.

HARD TIMES IN COTTONOPOLIS.

"HARD times, hard times, come again no more," was the touching refrain which was rolled towards me by four thousand voices as I entered the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, one night last January. It was the annual meeting of the Liberal Association. I had spent the whole of that day in visiting—in the company of a competent and experienced official—some of the most destitute streets, lanes, and courts of Manchester, in order that I might see for myself the nature and extent of the distress which unhappily then existed to an almost unprecedented degree in our midst. I had been in many strange nooks and corners of the city, and had witnessed many sorrowful sights, and had listened again and again to the same pitiful story of baffled endeavours for work and exhausted resources. I had talked in one denuded house after another with a score of haggard and almost hopeless men, who had trugged the shoes off their feet in the fruitless quest of employment. I had listened to the quiet lamentations of a crowd of half-clad women, whose pinched and care-worn faces and gaunt forms spoke volumes in support of the truth of the tales of abject poverty which were narrated to me, with grim monotony, in almost every house. I had seen bare-footed little children, huddled together, sobbing, with empty hands, by empty grates, amid the early gloom of that bleak January day. Footsore with my travels, and heartsore at the sorrow and the suffering which they had revealed, I am not ashamed to confess that I was moved almost to tears when I heard the great gathering in the Free Trade Hall singing, to the accompaniment of the majestic organ, a song to which my own experiences that day had lent an added pathos.

"Hard times" and Manchester have, indeed, been only too well acquainted this winter; and it is not too much to say that whenever the story of the recent distress in this city comes to be fully told, it will

reveal much of the same patient endurance on the one hand, and open-hearted generosity on the other, which were such striking characteristics of that memorable time when the Cotton Famine cast its dark shadow over the fortunes of Lancashire seventeen years ago. "Manchester men," without exception, are proud of the confidence shown in them by the mayor (Mr. Alderman Grundy) in his reply to the suggestion of the Lord Mayor of London that a Mansion House Fund should be instituted. "I beg to assure you," wrote back at once the mayor, "that this community is both able and willing to sustain whatever pressure it may have to bear. Whilst expressing gratitude for the proffered help, I venture to reply that, though the times through which we are passing are severe, Manchester can and will bear the strain." The confidence of the chief magistrate in the liberality of his fellow-citizens was amply justified by the remarkable and sustained benevolence, which was manifested by all grades and classes of the people so long as occasion demanded. Without the aid of either town's meetings or sensational appeals, the inhabitants of Manchester and Salford contributed, in the brief space of eight weeks, more than twenty-two thousand five hundred pounds. Some account of the particular method adopted in this locality, to baffle that savage wolf, "Starvation," may not be without interest to those who may yet have to cope on other fields with the attacks of the same relentless foe. The writer is indebted for the following facts to his position as a member of the executive committee for the relief, and also to repeated conversations on the subject with the able and energetic chief agent of the Manchester and Salford Provident Society, Mr. James Smith, the value of whose services during the recent crisis it would be impossible to overrate.

The distress began with the Arctic weather which set in all over the country in the opening days of December. The immediate result of the intense frost was to throw a number of men, engaged in every department of work, out of employment. The busy picks and spades of an army of navvies were arrested in a single night, as by magic, through an iron frost which rendered all out-of-doors work impracticable. The severity of the winter remained unabated during the month which followed; and as the Christmas holidays approached, the suffering was intensified by the annual "off time," which on this

occasion proved to be most inopportune. The large number of joiners who had not obtained work, since the recent disastrous strike in the building trade, increased the number of those who experienced in its full force the pitiless rigour of the season. Without a doubt, however, the chief cause of the distress was the unparalleled depression of the Manchester trade in almost all its departments. It would be incorrect to say that the recent distress has come upon the community unnoticed or without warning. Since the winter of 1874-5 business has gone from bad to worse, and, as a consequence, poverty and privation have been spreading through the community in ever-widening circles. The prolonged and ever-deepening depression of the staple trade in nearly all its forms has forced many large firms to discharge a considerable proportion of their employés, and to reduce the wages of those still retained. Hundreds of clerks, travellers, and warehousemen have consequently been thrown adrift on the world, many of whom are totally unfit for any avocation outside the narrow groove in which they formerly worked and prospered. Many a reluctant conscript in the forlorn army of the unemployed has found his way into its troubled ranks through no fault whatever of his, but simply because of a conspiracy of events, which it was impossible for him to forecast, much less to control.

Heart-breaking stories are current of the hundreds of experienced clerks—many of them really accomplished men—who have flocked to answer a single advertisement for a clerk at twenty-five shillings a week, whilst similiar posts at even less remunerative wages have been eagerly and thankfully snapped up. Of course, not Manchester alone, but every manufacturing town and village in Lancashire has felt, and is still feeling, the prolonged pressure of bad times; but, at the same time, nowhere has the suffering been more universal and intense than amongst the crowded population of Cottonopolis itself. It is generally believed here that the prompt measures which were taken about the middle of December by the Manchester and Salford Provident Society, and the numerous gentlemen who came forward to assist in the administration of relief under its special fund, alone preserved the town from bread riots. When the question of relief was first mooted, it was considered desirable to employ the machinery of a society which had enjoyed the confidence of the district

for a period of forty-five years. The object of the Provident Society ever since its formation by a group of local philanthropists in March, 1833, has been threefold: to give temporary assistance to the deserving poor; to repress mendicinity; and to foster habits of economy and thrift amongst the operatives of Manchester and Salford. Its success in the last named department of its work is manifest from the fact that no less a sum than one hundred and fifty thousand pounds has been deposited and withdrawn, since the commencement of the society, in twenty penny banks which it has established in the most poverty-stricken parts of the city and adjacent borough. The office of the society, which though previously well-known, has risen this winter to much local celebrity, is situated in Queen Street, Deansgate, and that hitherto notorious quarter has largely benefited by its operations. Alarmed at the evidences of appalling poverty which their visitors reported, the committee of the Provident Society sent a deputation to the guardians of the poor; to consult with them as to the nature and extent of the distress, and the best means for its immediate relief. They were informed by one of the most experienced officials of the Salford Union, that never, during an intimate and every-day acquaintance with the poor of Manchester and Salford, which had extended over more than thirty years, had he witnessed such wide-spread and abject penury as during the opening days of December. Such men are not usually alarmists, and are perhaps the least likely of all to take an exaggerated view of the situation; it was therefore felt by the Provident Society that the work of relief must at once be undertaken without a moment's delay, and that on a scale unparalleled since the Cotton Famine. With most praiseworthy promptitude, on Wednesday, December 11th, a large warehouse in Windmill Street, adjoining the New Central Station, was obtained possession of; in three days it was roughly, though completely fitted up for the peculiar work of the society; and on Saturday, the 14th, six hundred applicants—out of a still larger number who passed its portals on this single day—obtained a much-needed relief. From that period till the end of February the depôt in Windmill Street continued to be besieged every day by a crowd of poor people, who carried their credentials in their faces, eager to make preliminary application, or

else to receive relief on the strength of the tickets granted to them by the society's inspectors. In all cases, it need scarcely be said, the most stringent precautions were taken to prevent imposition, as well as to remove all temptations to it; and, considering the number of persons relieved, exceedingly few cases of abuse have come to light. Of course, in all periods of such distress, a good many of the "disagreeable elements of human character"—to quote the words of the Bishop of Manchester—are brought out; but it is quite as true, and ought not to be forgotten, that such periods bring likewise the revelation of much patient "heroism in humble life." The committee, at the outset, determined to limit as far as possible all opportunity for the exercise of deception; and the previous experience of the Provident Society's officials in the suppression of mendicancy helped materially to give immediate practical effect to such a decision. The committee all along were desirous of assisting to the utmost of their power, not only the respectable and industrious amongst the artizans, but also the many sufferers in the class immediately above them. At the same time they sedulously endeavoured to check the importunity of a class of people (unfortunately wider than any particular social grade) who, having brought misfortune upon themselves by improvidence, are usually the first to cry out for help. With this object in view members of the committee sat on alternate days, and received applications for relief. The particulars of each case having been duly inserted in books kept for the purpose, two tickets were then given to the applicant, who was directed to come again at noon on the following day. One of the tickets thus granted was the applicant's future "pass" into the office, and contained his name, address, number, and the letter under which his district of the town was classified. The other ticket he was told to take to his last employer, and present it, when he came the next day, with the signature and address of the master, and his answer to the following printed questions: Firstly, How long has the applicant been in your employ? Secondly, Why did he or she cease to be employed by you? Thirdly, Will you employ this person again? Fourthly, What did this person earn per week when in your employ? Fifthly, If now working, what have been the total earnings for the last four weeks? Meanwhile, the applicant's house

was visited by an official of the Provident Society, whose business it was to verify the statement he had made as to number of his family, cause of distress, total earnings, rent, &c., and to make further enquiries in the neighbourhood. The visitor's report and the employer's replies being considered satisfactory, the applicant received in tickets, negotiable at the Provident Society's stores, a week's relief for himself and family in accordance with the following scale: One person, three shillings and ninepence; two, five shillings; three, six shillings; four, eight shillings; five, nine shillings; six, ten shillings and sixpence; seven, twelve shillings; eight, thirteen shillings; nine, fourteen shillings. In no case whatever was money given; but the fullest value in flour, bacon, meal, rice, cheese, &c., was given for the tickets at the extensive stores opened by the society for the exchange of their own tickets in Mount Street. Tickets for coal and coke were also freely given; and occasionally blankets, sheets, shirts, petticoats, coats, and clogs. The bedding and wearing apparel were all marked "Lent," in order to check the temptation which might be offered to unscrupulous pawnbrokers to receive them. A huge soup-kitchen was opened in Windmill Street in the basement of the society's premises, and six hundred gallons of good and wholesome soup were frequently distributed in the course of a single day. Besides the central depôt in Windmill Street, offices for relief were opened as follows: In the township of Halmes—which at the census of 1871 contained a population of seventy-four thousand seven hundred and thirty-one persons—four district committees distributed the relief; whilst other local committees superintended (in all cases under the control of the Windmill Street executive) the relief in Ancoats, Ardwick and Gorton, Salford (district), Pendleton, and Broughton. In no case whatever was an applicant relieved for more than four weeks without a fresh application on his part, and a renewed enquiry into his circumstances on the part of the committee; and in no case was an applicant relieved who either was, or had been, in receipt of help from the Guardians.

The whole work, from first to last, it may here be stated, was carried on with the hearty concurrence and co-operation both of the Manchester and the Salford Boards of Guardians. Every applicant was required to produce his rent-book, or other-

wise prove that he had lived in Manchester or Salford prior to the 1st of December. This latter regulation was found necessary in consequence of the large accession of tramps from all parts of the country, attracted to the spot in hope of relief from the special fund. Sewing-classes for women were opened in connection with the various local committees, and were freely attended by hundreds of destitute wives and mothers. In order to reach the many unemployed clerks and warehousemen who were known to be secretly in want, the following advertisement was placed at the head of the column "Situations Vacant," in the various Manchester papers: "Distress in Manchester and Salford. Families whose position makes them unwilling to make personal application for relief, are invited to state their cases by letter only, addressed to Box One hundred and sixty-two, G. P. O., Manchester. All applications must be accompanied by reference to last employer, and one or two respectable householders." In the Broughton and Pendleton districts special placards were also issued to the numerous clerks, &c., known to reside in those suburbs. The announcement thus made ran as follows: "The Relief Committee are anxious to be made confidentially acquainted with particulars of any needy and deserving cases in this district, having special reference to the more respectable class of persons who may have a disinclination, from sensitive feelings of honest pride, to make known their destitute condition. Every care will be taken to respect the scruples of the applicant; and, should the latter so desire, but not otherwise, an arrangement will willingly be made for affording the needful relief by way of loan, repayable to the Provident Society when circumstances improve. Applications are invited by letter, and applicants of this class are assured that every secrecy will be observed." By these means many cases of touching and most deserving poverty were brought to light, which would otherwise not have received the help which the public wished to place precisely in such hands. The work of the Provident Society, wide as it was, by no means covered the special efforts put forth to meet the distress. Many churches and chapels established soup-kitchens, or gave free dinners in their own school premises; whilst Mr. Alsop, the superintendent of the Wood Street Mission for Street Arabs, gave twelve hundred meals a week to poor

children, and distributed during the cold weather four thousand garments, and three thousand five hundred toys on Christmas Eve from Santa Claus. The toys came chiefly from the nurseries of the children of wealthy people in the suburbs; many of whom brought their little ones down through the darkness and the snow to see the poor gutter children rejoice over their unexpected treasures. During the height of the distress the relief cost upwards of three thousand pounds a week, but the people of Manchester were able to bear their own burden, and no outside appeal was ever made. The extent of the misery which prevailed, but which is happily immeasurably lessened now, may be perhaps judged from the fact that at the end of Christmas week no fewer than sixty-four thousand persons in Manchester and Salford were receiving relief either from the Provident Society's fund or from the Guardians. When it is remembered that at the very climax of the Cotton Famine sixty-nine thousand one hundred and forty persons was the largest number relieved in Manchester and Salford in one week, the reader will be able to judge for himself how nearly the recent distress in this great city approached to that awful time of suffering which seventeen years ago moved the common heart of two mighty nations to swift measures of relief.

MY LAND OF BEULAH.

A STORY IN FIFTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VIII.

I COULD not realise it.

Eulalie—my school-friend—the girl whom I had asked papa to help—his wife!

I have always counted jealousy the meanest of all passions, and I am glad to look back now and be able to say that not a shadow of its blighting influence once touched me in this sudden knowledge of a strange turn of fate.

But this very strangeness almost dazed me. The thought that papa could love me less, because he loved my beautiful Eulalie, never crossed my mind.

How perfect Eulalie would look as the mistress of Hazledene! How well her beauty would become the grand old rooms, and the terraces in the gardens, from whence you could catch a glimpse of a soft blue line of sea, and hear the faint far murmur of the waves upon the shore! How proud she would be of papa, and he of her, and I of both of them; but oh, how strange it all was! She was so

young—only three years and a half older than I, who had struck "fourteen o'clock," as Amy Ladbroke called it, since my school-friend and I parted, and, though feeling the weight of years upon my head in consequence, still realised that the world did not so reckon age, and would be ready to set me down as "rather young."

That Eulalie would be happy in the new life she had chosen I did not doubt; who, indeed, could be otherwise whose lot it was to be always with papa, the first object of his thought, and love, and care?

There would be no need now, I thought, sitting there in the library with my letter on my knee, to ask him about the serpent with the diamond eye; for would not it be his dear delight to give my friend all things she could wish for?

I knew how he had loved and mourned my mother; but that was long, long years ago. I was not jealous for her memory, for I knew his reverence and tenderness would ever surround the thought of her; and perhaps some day—you never know what odd things come to pass—I might—well—go away and leave papa—never loving him a bit the less, and yet loving someone else in a strange new way that was a dim and indistinct thing to me at present, but that in my mind took the shadowy semblance of Rebecca's love for Ivanhoe. Then I should be glad that he had found Eulalie, glad that his happiness was complete without my constant presence, though all the brighter for his ceaseless thought of me, and mine of him.

Then in a moment, like a snake from a basket of flowers, rose up one ugly thought.

Did I not know that of Eulalie—of my father's promised wife—that I could never tell? For if my lips were sealed before, they were doubly so now. What would he, with his high notions of a true gentlewoman's delicate sense of honour, say, if he knew that the woman he loved was capable of reading a letter that did not belong to her?

There are some people the spell of whose presence is so great, that while we are within reach of the sound of their voice, and the trick and manner of their smile and glance, we cannot judge them fairly—we cannot see clearly enough to set their wrong-doings in an open light, and weigh them in the balance.

Of these Eulalie was one.

I had, while she was near me, been more ready to condemn myself for harsh thoughts of her, than her for the base action that had called these thoughts into

being. But once free from the glamour of her marvellous beauty and potent charm, I had seen things in a truer light, and I knew that distrust must ever lurk underneath my love for her, deep and tender as it still was.

"Why he's old enough to be her father—almost her grandfather! Pahaw! don't talk to me, Sister Mary; I've no patience with such folly! The man's old enough to have better sense—and, besides, you know we can't be certain a bit——"

Thus far, in Miss Maria's clear, somewhat loud voice, I heard, and then my dear Miss Mary's softer tones answering:

"No, sister, we are certain of nothing; and therefore we have no right to take anything for granted. It is of that dear child I think."

The two ladies were crossing the hall; Miss Maria rattling her keys, a sure sign of irritation of spirit on her part. At that moment I almost hated her for the way she had spoken of papa; but there was a sore place in my heart that made Miss Mary's loving words touch me to the quick, and I had a sob in my throat as I sprang to the door to meet her.

"Child," she said; "Nell, my darling! this is strange news for you."

She sat down on a low couch by the fire, and I knelt beside her and threw my arms about her, holding her close as if I needed to cling to something just then.

"Here's a nice state of things," said Miss Maria, setting the straw boat down upon the table with a jerk that made the keys therein jump, as well it might. "I wish we'd never sent Eulalie to Mrs. Langley's. Such an idea! A girl that hadn't a respectable dress to her back when she came to us, and to think of her marrying Sir Charles Vansitart! Umph! set a beggar on horseback, and he'll—no—she'll——"

"Sister!" put in Miss Mary pleadingly, with an anxious look upon her face, as of one who didn't quite know what might come next.

Miss Maria only tossed her head, and was going to take up her parable again, when the other said softly:

"Remember how kind her mother was to poor dear Charley."

The words worked like a spell. Miss Maria's firm mouth softened, and she drew a deep breath.

"Yes," she said; "you are quite right to remind me, Sister Mary; "her mother was very kind to poor dear Charley."

Kneeling by my dearest friend, and

looking from her to Miss Maria, and from Miss Maria back again to her, I tried to gauge the words of each; not succeeding very admirably, but, for all that, coming to the resolution of speaking certain bold words that craved for utterance.

"It seems to me," I said, trembling a good deal, but very determined for all that, "that papa is the best judge; and that for any of us to find fault with him for choosing anyone so beautiful and gentle as Eulalie to be his wife—is—wrong." Here my courage began to ooze out at my tingling finger-ends, and I added, with a sudden squeeze of the hand that held mine: "I'm sure he loves her very, very dearly, Miss Maria—who could help doing that?"

As I looked up into Miss Mary's face close above me, I saw the big tears shining in her eyes; and then all my wild excitement, all my strange feelings of the unreality of all things, all my fears about the shameful story told by the old mirror, found vent in a passionate burst of weeping, that scared Miss Maria from the room, and redoubled Miss Mary's tenderness to the child of her love.

I do not think papa could have been made otherwise than happy by the letter that I wrote in reply to the one telling me of his engagement to my friend. I should think Eulalie must have been pleased with the one (enclosed within it) that I sent to her. All the loving wishes for both that my heart held I tried to put into words, and I tried to let no faintest shadow of the one misgiving fall athwart the pages.

That night I had a strange dream. I seemed to be standing somewhere where the air blew chill, and made me tremble with its dank and icy touch. All about me was a lurid gloom, and the sound of bitter weeping. Then I looked downwards, and lo! crouching at my feet, was a child clothed in rags, and as I looked it raised a little, pitiful, woe-begone face, streaming with tears, to mine.

It may seem a strange thing for me to chronicle—a childish dream full of vague fear and dread; but I have cause to chronicle it, for in the time to come that dream-child came to me many times and oft, and ever as the harbinger of misfortune.

Always weeping; always dressed in rags that clung about its withered, shrunken limbs; always looking up at me with its wee, white, weary face!

What was it? Whence did it come? I cannot tell; but this much I know, that I have met with others besides myself who

have been subject to the strange recurrence of one weird dream ever boding ill.

Mrs. Langley, the wife of the rector of Hazledene, wrote delightedly of her young governess's good fortune. She had seen how it would be from the first, she said. Sir Charles Vansitart had always been a frequent visitor at the Rectory; but after Miss Le Breton's arrival few days passed without a visit from him, and he took to joining "the dear children" when out for a ramble on the shore in her care. Miss Le Breton had a wonderful gift for telling fairy tales, and in the hour "between the lights" she used to tell her little pupils the most lovely legends. At first she was very shy when Mrs. Langley, the rector, and Sir Charles joined the audience; but a little gentle encouragement soon set her at her ease, and the grown-up listeners enjoyed the fairy-lore as much as the two tiny maids for whose original benefit it was intended.

"They all seem very happy together, Miss Mary, don't they?" I said, when the reading aloud of Mrs. Langley's letter was finished. "It reads like a story—doesn't it?"

The marriage was to take place in January, and I was to be promoted to the womanly glory of "long dresses" on the occasion: an idea that filled me with a new and overpowering dignity even in anticipation. It so chanced that I had not seen Mr. Girdstone since Eulalie's betrothal was a known fact until one day I met him in Bromley meadows. I thought his trowsers seemed to have shrunk away from his ankles more than ever, and assuredly his hat was more on the back of his head. But the kind old face was the same; the eyes guileless and tender as those of a child; the shrivelled hand as ready to close on mine and held it fast and close.

Miss 'Desia was, perhaps, more terrible in her winter than her summer gear; for a black beaver bonnet is a most forbidding kind of armour, and her fur tippet was of some uncomfortable kind of fur, that stood out on end in every direction, and could not be persuaded to lie down sleek and smooth. I used to think it must be the product of some peculiar kind of animal kept for her benefit alone; for I never saw any fur at all like it before, and I have never seen any of so rampant and unmanageable a nature since. Her dress was of what she called "a sensible walking length"—that is, it displayed her square ankles and large serviceable boots in all their native grace; indeed,

a general and prevailing idea of ankles was the impression always left upon the mind of the beholder after meeting this brother and sister in their out-door costume.

"Ah, Nell! Well, my dear, going to fetch butter and eggs, eh?" said the vicar, holding me by the hand and pointing to the basket on my arm. It was a way he had to make little feeble jokes when Miss Theodosia was in her grimacest moods; I think he did it in a sort of forlorn hope that the mind of the destined victim of these moods might be soothed and diverted thereby.

Then he began to fidget from one foot to the other, for a kind of rustling of his sister's rampant plumes told that she was in the throes of rising ideas, presently to find utterance.

"So your nose is put out of joint, Miss Nell?"

I stood silent, my eyes fixed with a kind of fascination upon her face, where something that was meant for a smile, but which was almost a sneer, played lamently.

The vicar's fidgeting seemed meanwhile ready to develop into a kind of Indian wardance, in the which his umbrella should do duty as a tomahawk. "Tut! Nonsense! 'Nose out of joint;' no such thing!" he ejaculated, getting poppy-red.

"You mean, Miss Theodosia," said I, speaking very deliberately in my efforts after the dignity becoming in a Vansittart; "you mean that papa will not care about me any more now that he is going to marry Eulalie? Well, you are mistaken—quite mistaken; and you're thinking so just shows how very little you know of him, or of—any of us." I included Eulalie boldly in this "any of us," and Miss Theodosia for once in her life seemed thoroughly taken aback—as, indeed, people generally are when their hints and innuendos are clothed in plain words, and set before them in the light of day.

"We shall get our deaths of cold standing here with the wind cutting us in two," said the vicar eagerly, stamping his boots as if to restore the circulation in the feet they covered.

"Yes," I answered; "it is cold. Good-bye." And then, after touching the wooden joints of Miss Theodosia's fingers, and getting a warm grasp from her brother, I sped on my way, my head bent as though to stem the roughness of the keen east wind, but in reality to hide from any passer-by the angry tears that rose to my eyes and blurred my sight.

"So that is how people talk—that is

how people think of all these things!" I thought in bitter protest against those constructions that the world is pleased to put upon our actions for us, and against which it is so useless to rebel.

"They think I'm jealous, do they; they pity me because papa will not care for me any more—as if—as if"—I reiterated in my passionate resentment for the wrong done to me and to him—"anything or anybody in this world could make us love each other one bit less dearly than we do. Oh, it is shameful!"

Down dropped the hot tears. I was blind—deaf, too, surely, for I never heard the sound of footsteps behind me, and started so that I nearly let fall the basket which held some jelly for a sick child in the village, when someone spoke quite close to me:

"Nell! see, dear, you dropped your handkerchief."

It was the vicar, a little breathless with hurrying after me, and looking as if he were full of a kind of radiant sunshine of his own, so rejoiced was he in having outwitted his sister. I looked up at him with drowned eyes and trembling lips; and, as he stuffed the handkerchief into my hand, he whispered to me, forgetting the distance at which the grim figure in the fur-tippet stood waiting for him:

"Don't mind what she said, child; it's all stuff and nonsense, every bit of it. Dear, dear, don't cry; tut-tut! never cry about it."

"It's not true, Mr. Girdstone," I gasped out. "I hate anyone to say such things—to speak so of papa and me."

"No, no; it's not true, not a word of it," he whispered, with a stealthy backward glance; "don't you mind it—don't think about it, there's a dear child."

I felt so much for his distress for me that, meeting his kind eyes, I managed to call up a feeble sort of smile; at which he nodded till I thought his hat must come off its perilous resting-place upon the back of his head, and then trotted off to where, looking like a scarecrow set up to frighten birds from corn, stood Miss Theodosia, gaunt and grim.

"I wish I had told her that my dress for the wedding is to be made quite long. How vexed she'd have been! and she couldn't have done anything—not a thing—to shorten it one inch!" was my next not very amiable reflection.

Then I reached the village, and saw a little worn white face lifted from its pillow to smile at the pretty yellow jelly, that quivered on the willow-patterned plate I set it on.

"I have brought it with Miss Mary Sylvester's love," I said to the sick child's mother, proud and glad to see how she smiled at hearing the dear donor's name.

"She knows how to comfort a poor creature that's full of sorrow, does Miss Mary, God bless her gentle ways!" said the woman. "There is them as means well, I make no doubt, but as do harass a body dreadful with their pryin' ways."

"Ah," thought I to myself, "the scarecrow has been here, hurting other people as she has been hurting me."

As I went towards home again a sudden squall of wind and rain came on, driving in my face and wetting me through to the skin. I had no umbrella with me, as it chanced; but even if I had, it would have been but little use. The wind seemed to have gone wild, and was tearing like a mad thing at everything within its reach. Not only did it sway the poor trees earthwards, but gave them a wrench round when it got them down; and as to my hat, which came untied in the melee, I saw it disappear aloft, with its strings streaming out behind like the legs of a bird. It was rain that bit and stung that now beat upon my uncovered head; rain that drove straight along the ground; rain that made little pools in the pathway, and then churned them into miniature maelstroms. All this was unpleasant enough with three wide fields still to traverse, and my hat gone.

Suddenly a ponderous figure appeared looming in my pathway—a sort of stout mummy, swathed in curious garments. It was Sarah, the Summerfield cook, that cunning deviser of cakes and tarts, wrapped in a huge waterproof, head and all. In another moment I was as shapeless as herself, for she came well provided with wraps, and the two of us, holding on to each other, made the best way we could homewards. As we reached the little gate in the garden hedge, there was Miss Mary wildly gesticulating at the kitchen door, and I, breaking from cook, fled to that warm and welcome shelter.

Miss Mary blamed herself for letting me have my own way in the matter of carrying the jelly to the sick child. "It was against my better judgment," she said, making me drink a glass of steaming cowslip-wine and water.

I am afraid I rather enjoyed the whole thing: the fuss, and the cowslip-wine, and the general upset; as one is apt to enjoy such things when one is very young indeed, both in years and feeling.

But with the next morning came other and more grave reflections.

There was something odd the matter with my throat, and the stinging rain-drops seemed still making my eyes dim and heavy. As the day passed on these things grew worse instead of better, and a sharp pain now and again caught me as I drew my breath.

Old Doctor Glumford, our Bromley Esculapius, came to see me that night, and twice the day after; and that stabbing pain, instead of catching my breath now and then, was so constant that I dared not draw an honest breath at all, but tried to get along with short quick gasps.

What came after this is misty; but always through the haze of my troubled consciousness shone the loving anxious faces of Miss Mary and Miss Jane, while Miss Maria, keys and all, came at fitful intervals. Indeed, the basket that held them, taking hold of my mind as trifles are apt to do when the brain is unstrung and the body suffering, played no small part in my delirious fancies. I was sailing on a troubled sea in that frail vessel of straw; the keys got entangled about my feet; the water oozed in through the sides of my craft, and was cold—cold—cold—rising round me.

I strove madly to bale it out with my hands, but it slid through my fingers; and still, higher and higher, the straw boat filled.

Then all at once I found myself sitting up in my little white bed crying out for help, and someone—could it be papa?—caught me in his arms, held me close, and quieted my delirious fears.

"Am I very ill? Am I going to die and leave you?" I sobbed, clinging about his neck; and he, kissing me between the words, said: "No, my darling; God will spare you to me now, Nell."

After that night things grew clearer to me, and soon I found that Christmas had come quite near without my knowing.

"What about the wedding, and my beautiful long dress?" I said to papa one day when I was able to sit up and look through my window at a white world, snow-clad even to the tiniest twig upon the bare boughs of the hawthorn bushes.

"The wedding must wait till you are better, Nell," he said; and then he added: "Eulalie has been in dreadful trouble about you, dear; she has written nearly every day."

"Thank her for me," I said; and then I put my face up to his, and kissed him. "Give her that for me," I whispered shyly.

I did not like that idea of the wedding being put off.

I took Miss Mary into my confidence on the matter, and she, calling to mind that Eulalie had no home of her own, but was obliged to remain in a kind of false position at Mrs. Langley's until papa took her away, came round to my view of things, and between us we persuaded him to let things take their course. "I can wear the long dress another time," I said, smiling, when this was settled. Yet I only spoke thus lightly to hide from him the pain it was to have to give it all up. As to spending my Christmas at Summerfield, there was no hardship in that. The old place was like a cage from which five-and-twenty chattering magpies had flown, and its perfect quiet was very grateful to me in my weakness.

The wedding-day was the fifth day of the new year; and the world was still as white and glistening as if it were a huge wedding-cake.

"See," I said to Miss Mary, as the hour appointed for the marriage drew on, "the sun is shining his best for them, though he is only a winter sun. I shall shut my eyes and fancy I hear the bells of Hazledene; they sound so sweet, ringing out over the water, and the hills giving back an echo."

"You may shut your eyes and fancy what you like, if you drink this beef-tea that Sarah has just brought upstairs first of all," she said, smiling.

I think papa and Eulalie must have taken some of the sunshine with them on their wedding journey, for their letters seemed full of it; a fact that the spirit of mischief ever lurking in my heart caused me to animadvert upon with much confusion to Miss 'Dosa on the occasion of our first meeting after my illness. Then I added, looking innocently into the yawning cavern of the big beaver bonnet: "Don't I look as if I had been dreadfully spoilt while I have been ill, Miss Theodosia?"

"Has it been really only a cold, or were you fretting?" she answered spitefully.

But the buoyancy of convalescence was over me, and I resisted gallantly.

"Both," I said, laughing; "it was pleurisy, and I fretted myself the more because I was to have worn a dress with a real long train at the wedding, and couldn't, you see."

Spring came early that year, and how lovely looked my "Land of Beulah" as her sweet breath touched it! When you looked upwards through the trees, a rose-green mist told you of a million tiny buds swelling into life. In my wood the birds sang like mad; and

The green grass climbing through the brown, the sheen of a butter-cup here and there, and the priceless treasure of the first violet found nestling in one sheltered nook, told that the winter was past.

Time flew quickly by, and soon, or it seemed soon, the lilac-trees were weighed down with perfumed pyramids of bloom, the laburnum shook out its golden tresses to the wind, and the guelder-roses—nature's snow-balls—tempted little Amy's fingers to forbidden thefts.

So day followed day in that eternal procession that is so pitilessly changeless, no matter if it be joy or sorrow to which it drifts us on, and the last day before our Easter going-home-day came round.

Now Easter was to take me to Hazledene, and I was as ready to sing as the thrushes in the wood at the prospect of so much happiness:

Te souviens-tu, Marie,
De notre enfance aux champs—

But here I stopped short, for the old song did not adequately express my pleasures to come. It would be in the old home by the sea-shore—in the dear old home that faithful Roland guarded—that Eulalie and I should renew our dear companionship. My heart was as light as a feather; I even condescended to forget my budding "young-lady dignity," and played hare-and-hounds with the younger fry when all the packing was done.

I was merry all day, but at night the dream-child came to me—still clothed in rags that clung about its shrunken limbs; still weeping; still lifting its wee, white, weary face, streaming with tears, to mine.

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SEBASTIAN STROME.

CHAPTER IV. LOVERS AND FRIENDS.

FOR a man who enjoyed open-air walking so much, the minister seemed, now as always, singularly heedless of nature's aspects. To look at him, hurrying with downward brow through lovely landscapes, you would have said that he knew them not. And yet when, on meeting you, he threw up his kind and trenchant countenance, you could not but perceive that the beauty of the world was lost upon him less than upon the trained eye of many a painter. He knew the charms and changes of the months; and unobtrusive treasures of detail escaped him as little as did the broader-smiling graces. Perhaps he was planning his sermon the while; but he could consult the sweet wisdom of the woods and fields to make his argument sounder, or brighten his illustrations with the light of the seasons. Nevertheless, he uniformly walked with his eyes cast down. Whence, then, this minute and comprehensive vision? Was the whole man ocular, absorbent, at all points, of beauty, as the earth of rain and sunshine? At least, he confirmed the paradox that nature never discovers her choicest secrets to him who stares her rudely in the face.

When he had approached within two or three rods of the house, Mary saw him look up and turn off to the right, with the intention of passing round the corner to the eastern side. At another time she might have preferred to accord him the full compliment of a ceremonious reception by way of the main entrance and front drawing-room; but to-day she wanted to

have him quite to herself, at least for the first half-hour; so she quickly opened the glass-door of the conservatory and called to him.

"Mr. Strome! Mr. Strome! Please, I am here!"

He faced about at once, and beheld her standing half in, half out of the doorway, like a full-blossomed, sumptuous vine; smiling and rosy with a noble shyness; one hand twisting at the door-handle, her head inclined with a child-like pose over the other shoulder, so that it rested against the door frame; and her auburn hair, with its bright, crinkled roughness, relieved against the warm gloom of the conservatory behind her.

"Good morning, Mary," said the minister, coming up and taking her hand. He had the faculty of putting a quite extraordinary amount of cordiality into the most ordinary phrases and actions. "How well your hair looks! I once saw, in an excavation near Rome, a fresco of a Roman patrician maiden, which was like you. Or perhaps you were the artist's model? You look immortal."

"I don't want to be immortal," said Mary, her smile of welcome dying away. "Come inside and sit under the plantains. What made you think of coming? Did you feel that I was wanting to see you, and would have set out for Cedarhurst myself in another minute? I'm so glad."

"This is good!" said the minister, seating himself with a long breath of content. "Sebastian would envy me, if he saw me now."

He held Mary's hand as he spoke, and now raised it with ingenuous homage to his lips. Mary was secretly a little jealous of the sweet and simple way in which her

lover's father made love to her. It contrasted too favourably with Sebastian's own behaviour: moreover, the father inspired confidence, whereas the son excited, too often, a somewhat feverish suspense and questioning. "By-the-way," continued the minister, "we had a note from him this morning. We shall all meet here Friday evening, then."

"I hope so," said Mary, in a low tone.

"My dear Mary—dear daughter!" exclaimed the minister, with one of his sudden, energetic outbursts; "you can't think how pleased it makes me to think how happy you and Sebastian are in each other! When I was a young fellow, I used to think that no two people ever had been or could be so happy as my wife and I were: but now I admit you two to be our peers; for my boy is a better man than I ever was, and—No!" he broke off with a laugh, "I can't say you are better than my wife—that couldn't be; but you are his chosen woman out of the world, and I would have chosen you out of the world for him!"

Mary turned her face and full hazel eyes slowly round upon the speaker. "How long ago were you married?" she asked after a moment.

"I don't know. It doesn't seem long—that is, time doesn't seem to have anything to do with it. Come to think of it, though, I suppose it must be—it can't be!—yes, it is really more than thirty years!" And the minister gave a "Humph!" of musing admiration at his own discovery. "I must tell Sue that!" he added half-aloud.

"But do you remember anything—how you felt, and what you did, and all that—do you remember after so long?" pursued Mary curiously.

Arthur Strome laughed his boyish laugh again. It was not quite a boy's laugh, however; it was as spontaneous as that, but more thoughtful, if thoughtfulness be predicable of laughter.

"I fancy we don't remember such things," he said, resting his chin on his breast and speaking meditatively. "There's no need to remember them; they are always there, fresh every morning and evening. We can't be said to remember violets and roses, though winter parts us from them every year, for we have never forgotten them; and still less are we likely to forget the immortal flowers of paradise, over which no earthly winter has power. The fact is, you see, Mary," continued the minister, looking pleasantly upon her, "the fact is, that my wife and I are still

at the beginning only of our love affair, and have had no time as yet to bring our memories into play. Memories were made for old people."

"Then I must be old," said Mary, letting her hands fall in her lap. "And Sebastian, too," she added, after a pause; "he has memories—I shall never know of what."

"You have hardly begun yet, I suppose," rejoined the minister, reaching forward to pluck a sprig of heliotrope, and smelling it while he spoke. "You are barely out of the chrysalid. Once get into the tide of life, and you'll find yourselves as young as my wife and I are. When I first met her I was a mooning hobbledohoy of an overgrown young wisacre, who fancied I had yearnings after the infinite, and moral and political panaceas, and a wasted past and an ambiguous future—altogether very badly off. But when I saw her, it was like a new birth to me. I was filled with a life of my own: no longer a life at second-hand, made up from the poets and metaphysicians that I had read. I had been very idle before, though always fancying I was much occupied. It was just the other way now—no one was ever so busy, and yet my soul ached to be busier. But really I did a good deal. When I woke up in the morning (after dreaming feverishly of her all night) I had to plead on both sides of a hundred arguments as to whether or not I might venture, without injuring my cause, to call upon her on that day. When it was decided over every appeal that I should go, then the question would arise, what mood or what temper would it be proper for me to assume on entering her presence? By the time that was settled I was dressed and at breakfast. But I couldn't eat much breakfast in those days, the suspense spoilt my appetite. On the way from my house to hers I would fight with a dozen Apollyons and Giant Despairs, who tried to destroy me with the idea that I was dull and bored her, or that I had a rival. But all that was nothing to the way I was inwardly hurried to and fro when at last I was face to face with her. I had to watch every movement she made, and every chance expression that passed through her eyes, and devise a thousand conflicting interpretations of them in a minute; and then I was obliged to forecast what she would say or do next, and, when it turned out something different, to explain to myself the reason why. It was necessary that I should be perfectly in,

sympathy with her; not only with her words and actions, but also with what lay at the bottom of her heart, which was generally quite the contrary. And though in the bottom of my own heart I knew intuitively what was in the bottom of hers, I must needs make her and myself wretched by pretending that I did not, and that I understood her to mean what she appeared to mean. Oh, how miserable we were, and how divinely happy! But all this was before we had formally confessed our love for each other."

"After that, I suppose, things went on more quietly?" said Mary, interlacing the ends of her fingers in her lap, and turning her face a little away from her companion.

"Oh, it was much worse than ever after that! It's wonderful what tremendous spiritual vicissitudes a lover—a pair of lovers, that is—can endure once or twice an hour, for days together, and yet survive. They love each other so, I suppose they would die of tenderness if they didn't constantly vary the strain by pretending to be offended or indifferent. But, ah me! the terrible part of it is, that no amount of experience can convince you that this last quarrel won't be the real and final one; and then you have such an exquisite access of agony at the thought, not of your desolation, but of hers—that is, I mean, supposing you were the man, which luckily you are not."

"Why should you say 'luckily'?"

"Because, Mary, after all, you are surer of your lover than he can be of you. You are an angel in his eyes, whom he can never be quite worthy to win; if he were to lose you, he would feel that he had no right to complain. He knows himself unworthy to kiss the hem of your garment; and when, instead, you let him touch your cheek or your lips, he is afraid of his bliss, and thinks it can't be real, and can't last. Sometimes, when he is alone, he throws himself down and weeps like a child to think how gracious and glorious you are."

The minister paused suddenly. He had been talking rapidly and ardently, looking straight before him, and perhaps forgetting, for the moment, that he had a listener. Mary was sitting turned partly away from him, her averted cheek resting on one hand. The other hand she had suddenly put out and laid on the minister's arm in the midst of his speech. Unawares, he had been doing over again, with severer effect, Aunt Sophia's work of an hour previous; and Mary had felt that she could

endure to hear no more. The minister at once knew, less by the testimony of his senses than by the instinct of sympathy that was in him, that she was fighting with some poignant emotion; he was startled and perplexed, and fearing to make matters worse by groping efforts to put right an unknown wrong, he could only remain silent, his heart meanwhile overflowing with so much compassion and kindness, that it was a wonder if Mary were not directly conscious thereof.

"Forgive me!" she said at last, facing him with flushed cheeks. "I have been out of sorts all the morning. It was partly for that I was coming to see you."

"There, there, let us forgive each other then!" interposed the minister, with all the cheeriness of tone that he could muster. "I said more than I ought to have said——"

"Is it all true?" burst out the young woman, with all the depth of her voice. "It need not be always true—people are so different!" She was breaking through her self-control, drawing in deep breaths that shook her bosom. "I mean that if—any two people never had any of those lovers' quarrels, as they are called—it wouldn't show that they—did not truly love each other? No, of course; I understand what you meant, you—you needn't tell me—I am happy—perfectly happy—oh, oh, don't look at me! let me be!"

She pressed her forehead against the back of the rustic bench, and gave way to passionate sobs and tears. Mr. Strome softly arose, and moved away down the little path to the other end of the conservatory. "What is troubling her? what can there be to make her unhappy?" were the questions he asked himself again and again. The fragrant blossoms of the flowers seemed to smile upon his perplexity. He pressed his forehead against the glass, and gazed out over the keen-aired landscape. How wholesome and peaceful the earth looked, even in frost! How briskly that distant figure stepped along beneath the leafless trees, on his way towards the house! There was, by-the-way, something vaguely familiar in his gait and aspect, but the minister's thoughts were too much preoccupied to admit of his immediately recognising him. Presently the figure was lost to sight behind a clump of shrubbery. "It was Fawley!" suddenly said the minister to himself. Then, by an association of ideas, such as often makes that seem plausible which is in reality unlikely, he made Fawley accountable in some way

for Mary's distress. "She had allowed him to have hopes, perhaps; now she blames herself, and fancies, probably, that Sebastian may end by doing so too. Yes, that must be it; I'm glad it's nothing serious. But Fawley must be coming here; and I have not said a word yet about Fanny!"

He turned, and walked slowly back through the leaves and flowers to the embowered seat. Mary had stopped crying, and was sitting with downcast looks and listless hands, but apparently quite calm. The traces of her emotion had no power to mar her beauty. Whether sleeping, laughing, weeping, glad, or angry, Mary Dene's countenance always retained its superb balance of lines and proportions. A sculptor, with an eye thoroughly trained to the height of the old classic standard, would have valued Mary's head even more than the painter who saw the ideal of Titian in her complexion and hair. Perfect form is far rarer, and also far more powerful, than perfect colour.

"I am very much ashamed of myself," said Mary, lifting her eyelashes for a moment as her friend approached. "I have felt one of my wicked fits coming on for some time past. I am only sorry it should have happened while you were here. I shall be very good now for days and days. You haven't told me whether there was anything particular—I mean, whether you couldn't suggest something about our Christmas-tree, or the arrangements for the parish children. Is there nothing I can do?"

"There will be nothing wanting to the complete happiness of everybody," returned Mr. Strome, seating himself beside her again. "You have not lived long in the world, Mary, but you have increased the joy of many people. For one thing, you have helped to make my life a happier one than most men's, by promising to make its happiness hereditary."

"I don't know—I hope I may," she said, looking away abstractedly.

"It's delightful to think how much good you and Sebastian will be able to do," the minister resumed. "I have had many schemes, but I could not carry them out. I hadn't the means; nor, probably, the capacity—only the will. You and Sebastian will have all three."

"I may be able to do something with the Home—I hope so," said Mary. She spoke almost apathetically. The fire of her spirit had sunk back after its out-

burst, and would no longer respond to ordinary stimulants. The intellectual side of her nature might be interested, but there was to be no more emotion at present.

"You have no inmates for the Home as yet?"

"No; none as yet."

"I have one to propose to you," said the minister, bending forwards and looking on the ground, his hands on his knees.

The slight but perceptible alteration in his voice, indicating that he had entered a new region of feeling, caused Mary to rouse herself somewhat, and turn towards him. Her expression was as if emerging from a cloud. She was gathering up the echoes of what had been lately spoken, and trying to order them by a single swift effort of the mind.

"An inmate of the Home?" she said, after a moment; and then, reading shrewdly in the other's face, and hazarding the guess from a trust in coincidence, she added, before he could reply: "You mean Fanny!"

"She has written to you also, then?"

"No. Is her address Number Ninety-seven, Falkirk Road?"

The minister pulled his letter out of his pocket and consulted it. "Yes; you are right," he said. "Have you known it long?"

Miss Dene smiled a little at the surprise in his face. She shook her head. "Not very long. Does she mention having seen anyone?"

"I happen to know that her mother heard of her last night from that young fellow Prout, who used to be in service at Lady Featherstone's. He caught sight of her at the corner of a street, as he was passing in an omnibus."

"Prout? Where is he now?"

"He has a situation in London, I believe; but comes up here once in a while to see his friends. He used to be very fond of poor Fanny—before she left us."

"He followed her home, I suppose, or at least found out where she lived?"

"She disappeared before he could alight. That is his story. It's of no consequence, since we have her address from herself. Will you read her letter?"

Mary took it in one hand, and perused it critically and not very sympathetically.

"This ends the doubt," she remarked.

"The uncharitable people were, after all, in the right."

"They are always in the wrong, nevertheless," replied the minister, with a sigh.

Miss Dene rested her elbows on her knees and her face between her hands, and

in this position appeared to cogitate gravely for several moments. By-and-by she sat erect, and taking from her pocket a folded paper, she held it out to Mr. Strome, with the words: "I got that this morning."

The minister's brows drew together as he glanced through the writing. "This is anonymous!" he exclaimed. "Have you any clue?"

"No; but since you have the news independently of this, it's no matter; I can ignore it now, and act independently. It couldn't have been Prout—he wouldn't both have written anonymously to me, and spoken personally to Mrs. Jackson. But I don't care now. It's no matter."

Mr. Strome read the communication again. "It would seem by this as if your enquiry into Fanny's situation were to result in the discovery of some fact which the writer knows, but fears to put his name to—something libellous, consequently. But libellous against whom, unless against the scoundrel who led the poor child astray! But how could knowing about him concern you? That's curious!"

"We shall soon find out probably," Miss Dene said with indifference.

"That brings me to my business," rejoined the minister, returning the letter, which the young lady thrust carelessly back into her pocket. "Fanny, you see, is evidently shy about coming back here—as well she may be, poor girl—and only wants to provide a resource in the worst contingency: her own death and the survival of the little one. Now there is no special likelihood of her dying; but, on the other hand, it would be tempting Providence for us to let her pass through her trial among strangers. She must be brought here; someone whom she respects and will obey must go and fetch her."

"You mean me, I suppose," said Miss Dene composedly. "Yes; I can do it. Fanny will obey me."

"This is a man's work, my dear daughter," the minister answered, grasping his knees nervously. "I wanted to go myself, only I thought of someone else. I thought of Sebastian."

Miss Dene emerged from her lassitude at once. She looked at her companion with knit brows and parted lips.

"Sebastian—Sebastian Strome?" She paused a little, and then began to laugh, not constrainedly, but as if really amused. "Do you really mean to make Sebastian do a thing like that? I'm afraid he won't thank you—he won't like it."

The minister warmed a little at this. "His business is to do such things as a servant of God, not for his own pleasure. I don't want him to like it."

"But different people are fitted for different duties. Sebastian, somehow, seems intended to help only rich and cultivated people to be good. I don't mean exactly that," added Miss Dene, still smiling; "indeed, I don't know that I ever thought about the matter before; but I am sure he would be quite out of his element with Fanny. He wouldn't really know what to do or say, and vulgarity and ignorance displease him intensely. It's constitutional, I suppose; he isn't to blame for it, is he?"

"He would be to blame only if he gave way to it; and that I should be sorry to believe him capable of," said the minister, lifting his hands a little from his knees. "No; you hardly do him justice there, Mary. I admit his fastidiousness, but he has the virtue to overcome it. Elegance of life, cultivation, light—those things are his snare; but if he is to lead souls to heaven, or even bring his own there, he must work amidst those very classes of the people whom he would naturally most avoid. I've spoken to him of this more than once, and I think he feels I'm right. And the reason he's glad of your wealth and position, Mary, is not because it will bring him into closer relations with the society he most enjoys, but because it will give him the means of succouring those whose material condition might most repel him. Sebastian is too true a man to think of money."

"Oh, Mr. Strome," interposed Mary, in half-playful remonstrance, touching his restless hands lightly with one of her own, "surely you aren't going to deny that Sebastian means to marry me for the sake of dissipating my income in selfish extravagance?"

At this sally they both laughed, and the little cloud that had threatened to rise between them dissolved away. "I will leave Sebastian himself to convince you of that," he said; "meanwhile, what do you decide? Shall he go for Fanny? After all, he will probably enter into the matter with more heartiness than you suppose. He was always interested in Fanny, you remember; and I believe has done her several little kindnesses at various times."

"Oh, has he? I don't recollect his ever having mentioned it to me."

At this juncture an interruption occurred which the minister might have foreseen,

but which, at all events, took Miss Dene by surprise. The voice of Aunt Sophia was audible, approaching through the adjoining breakfast-room, calling in persuasive intonations: "Mary! Mary, darling! Where is my Mary hidden away?" And finally the intonations entered the conservatory, with a man's step sounding behind them. "Ah, there she is!" cried Aunt Sophia joyously; "and if there isn't dear Mr. Strome with her! Selim, love, you are fortunate. See, Mary, the old friend I have brought you."

Selim Fawley came forward, looking handsome, gentlemanly, and deferential, and not obtrusively Judaic. This young man possessed a remarkable faculty for expressing by gestures, glances, and a general carriage of the body his profound respect and admiration for ladies. When he spoke the effect of the dumb play was, perhaps, a little marred; for though his society voice was hushed and gently modulated, and his phrases those of a man of education and refinement, still there was something in the play of his red lips while talking, and a Semitic humidity in his narrow brown eyes when smiling, and yet more when laughing, which tended to counterbalance his many solid attractions in the judgment of certain ultra-fastidious Christian critics. But he was generally admitted to be an honest, straightforward, well-meaning, and good-hearted fellow; and his friends maintained that underneath his modest and unassuming exterior he concealed a mind and talents of a high order; and it was beyond cavil that he had taken high honours at the university, and might, but for an unfortunate illness, have taken the very highest.

Such as he was, therefore, Mr. Selim Fawley came forward, and prostrated himself, figuratively, at the feet of the heiress of Dene. He said he found himself passing through the neighbourhood, and that almost without his conscious volition his steps had led him to the Hall. It was to him a delightful impromptu; but he was regretfully aware that the earliness of the hour rendered his intrusion even more unwarrantable than — However, he must proceed on his way immediately, and he would trust that the brevity of his stay would in some measure be accepted as compensation for his unceremonious appearance.

Miss Dene, who had given less heed to the purport of this speech than to the physical processes and embroideries

whereby it was accompanied, smilingly said that she was very glad to see him again, and that he must remain to lunch, which he promptly and earnestly protested with many thanks was unfortunately impossible; well, then, she supposed she must make the most of him while he did stay. How had he been, where had he been, and what had he been doing since — for the last few months? Enjoying himself in London, or on the Continent? No? She would have done so in his place; men have so many more opportunities than women in this civilised world.

With such lofty converse did these two persons regale each other, sauntering side by side up and down the conservatory paths, following a yard or two behind the Reverend Mr. Strome and Aunt Sophia. It was a curious phenomenon, but Mary Dene, when in Selim's company, was always impelled, as now, by who knows what perverse and mischievous spirit, to chatter to him in the above-indicated vein of reckless and almost coquetish banter, and to treat him with a certain sort of freedom which she never dreamt of adopting towards any other person of her acquaintance. It was the result, perhaps, of the species of good-humoured and confiding contempt which she could not help feeling for the young man, combined with a certain half-resentful amusement at the notion of his undertaking to be seriously in love with her. Finding it difficult or impracticable to get entertainment out of him in any other way, she had, we may suppose, instinctively resorted to the device of playing her wit upon him, and experimenting on the extent of her power. It was not creditable to Miss Dene, this behaviour, but it seemed to be inevitable; it had beguiled poor Selim into the rashness of a declaration, but it had never pretended to be anything more serious than it was. On this their first meeting since his last autumn's discomfiture, Miss Dene found it most natural or most convenient to fall at once into the old vein; and Selim acquiesced pliantly if not delightedly. He also attempted once or twice to draw the heiress a little out of earshot of the other couple; but these efforts were quietly but effectively opposed by the young lady. In process of time it became necessary for him to say that now he must be going. The four were at this juncture standing together in the breakfast-room.

"Ah! and, by-the-way, Mr. Strome," continued Selim, casting a respectful look in

the minister's direction, "I heard a piece of news yesterday which will interest you, though it is very sad news, I grieve to say. It is about that unfortunate young creature—I mean Fanny Jackson—she has been seen in London. Oh, I see you know—you have heard it already. I beg pardon."

"It certainly seems to be no secret," observed Mary smiling. "Where did you hear it, Mr. Fawley?"

"I have a servant, a sort of valet or factotum, Prout——"

"Oh, Prout is your man, is he?" broke in the minister. "He brought the first intelligence to Cedarhurst. Mary and I have just been discussing the matter."

"Ah, yes. Can I be of any use? I am on my way to London; and if I could do anything in the way of looking the poor creature up, you know, or taking her any message, I should be most happy."

"Thank you. That's very kind of you, Fawley——" began the minister, hesitating and looking at Miss Dene.

"We've already arranged about that. Sebastian—Mr. Strome is to go to her, and fetch her down here," she said at once, answering the glance.

"Sebastian? Oh, indeed," said Fawley, and stopped suddenly with a side-look towards Aunt Sophia.

As for the latter, she gave quite a start, and exclaimed: "My darling Mary! You're not in earnest, surely?"

"Miss Dene knows best what is proper," Fawley now said, with a low obeisance. "What she desires must be right."

"I'm very glad, Mary, that you agree with me," said the minister, his visage lighting up with interior pleasure.

"Yes, I daresay it will turn out all well," came dubiously from Aunt Sophia.

"It seems to me a very simple matter," Miss Dene rejoined rather haughtily. "I hardly expected to create such a sensation!"

A short, but slightly embarrassed pause ensued, to be broken by Fawley's making a fresh and this time effective motion towards departure. Miss Dene gave him her hand very frankly, and bade him not fail to be present on the coming Friday.

"I shall not live till then," he answered effusively; and saluting Mr. Strome, and dutifully kissing his affectionate aunt's cheek, he bowed himself out of the room.

"The heedless fellow!" cried Aunt Sophia, as soon as the door had closed; "he's gone, and left his cane behind him." And the good-natured creature caught it up and tripped after him.

She overtook him in the passage. Their eyes met and exchanged a sort of smile.

"Pas si mal!" said the lady.

"It certainly has turned out well, considering how near that idiot Prout came to spoiling everything," rejoined the gentleman. "The thing will almost work itself now."

"There, off with you—and we'll keep each other informed," added the lady; and off he went.

Meanwhile, in the breakfast-room, the minister was also taking his leave, and saying: "Shall I write to him about it, then?"

"Ye-es," replied Mary musingly; "or, no," she went on, lifting her head with the air of taking a decision; "if you don't mind, I'll write to him myself."

"Good! that will do," he answered heartily. He took her hand, and stood for a moment holding it and looking at her. "Good-bye, dear daughter," he said. "I shall see you again on Friday, or before, God willing; but any parting in this world may be the last. God bless you! you've made me very happy." Mary leaned forward, and he kissed her forehead; then she saw him pass out through the conservatory, and so vanish from her sight.

PISTOL-PRACTICE IN AMERICA.

AN English dissenting minister, telling his experiences in the United States, relates how, journeying by rail there, as he was turning into his sleeping berth, immediately above that occupied by a newspaper editor, he saw the latter carelessly toss a revolver on to his pillow, and ventured to express the hope that his new acquaintance would not practise at the pattern of his bed, as it might prove worse than mosquitoes. "No, I won't," was the comforting rejoinder, "but you'll find a shooting-iron convenient as you travel; there ain't always an identity of opinions, and it's well to have a means of settlement handy."

Perhaps it was as well a German, new to California, was not so provided. While riding quietly along the road, near Sacramento, he heard a pistol-shot, a bullet whizzed by, and his hat shook. Taking it off he found a hole in it, and turning round saw a man revolver in hand, to whom he put the question: "Did you shoot at me?" "Yes," replied the other party; "I did. That's my horse you're riding; it was stolen

from me not long ago." "You must be mistaken," said the German; "I have owned him these three years." Looking the animal thoroughly over, the Californian quietly remarked: "Well, now I come to look at him, I believe I am mistaken. Excuse me, sir; won't you take a drink?"

A New York police-captain, interrupted in the execution of his duty by a bystander who asked what was the matter, curtly threatened to blow the inquisitive man's brains out if he didn't mind his own business. The man was an ex-member of the legislature, and complained at the police-court of the officer's conduct. Said the latter: "I told him to stand back, your honour, and if he hadn't I'd have put a bullet through him, as I promised him;" and the court did not think his over-zealousness deserving of rebuke.

When the guardians of the peace are so ready with the pistol, it is not surprising if its disturbers avail themselves of Colonel Colt's invention. In its issue of the 12th of August, 1878, a New York weekly paper chronicles the following pistol performances as occurring within the space of eight days:

At Clyde, Kansas, Hermann Tillspaw was shot by Michael Priest; Tillspaw's intimacy with Priest's wife led to the shooting. Priest was lodged in gaol, the entire community sympathising with him. At Savannah, Georgia, David Lebey barricaded his house, and threatened to kill his wife if anyone approached the place. Constable Morgan attempted his arrest, and was shot dead. A great crowd thereupon collected, but Lebey kept them at bay for five hours, until a sheriff's posse, forcing an entrance, secured him, without any further mischief being done. At a picnic near Bunker Hill, Mobile, Riley Cornstock got into an altercation with L. R. Wiloughby, which resulted in the latter shooting and killing him. One Bill Simmons, while going into church at Seymour, Indiana, trod on the toes of a coloured man named Heenan Newby. The negro remonstrating, the pair stepped outside, and Simmons struck the negro, who avenged the blow by laying him low with a shot from his revolver. An Illinois farmer, attempting to re-enter a house out of which he had been turned, was shot in the side by a boy of ten. William McNutt and three friends, all hailing from the neighbourhood of Pittsburg, returning homeward in a buggy, pulled up by a peach-orchard, and jumped the fence. Before they could pull any fruit a shot was fired at them,

striking McNutt in the left breast. He clambered over the fence, took his seat in the buggy, and then fell back dead. The shooter was supposed to be the old and much respected citizen upon whose property he had intruded.

Mrs. Chapin, living at Luddington, Michigan, heard someone trying to enter her house at two o'clock in the morning. Not staying to rouse her invalid husband, she went downstairs to the children's bedroom. Presently, a man appeared at the window, and raised his hand to lift the sash. The ready woman shot him through the head. The verdict was justifiable homicide. A farmer of Lagrange, Chicago, hearing a noise among his horses, went to see what was disturbing them, and was shot dead by a horse-thief, who escaped. The Rev. Wade Hill, the much-beloved Baptist minister at Charlotte, North Carolina, meeting his son-in-law, Andy Scroggins, expostulated with him for beating his wife; from words they got to blows, but were parted before much damage was done on either side. A few days afterwards the two again met, Scroggins drawing at sight, and firing twice without effect ere the minister could reply in kind; then, at the first attempt, he gave his son-in-law his quietus, and made his own daughter a widow. At Philadelphia, James Lamont, a well-known negro minister, after killing a retired negro comedian in a trouble over the payment for drinks, tried to do the same by the bar-keeper, but failing, was marched to durance vile.

Messrs. J. D. Hall and Co., of Hope, Arkansas, received a very insulting communication from the legal firm of Erb, Summerfield, and Erb, of Little Rock. Being in that town upon business, Captain Hall, happening to meet Jacob Erb in the street, gave him a sound caning, and then went to Judge Morison's court, and gave himself up to answer for the assault. While waiting there, Erb came in with his three sons. The old man suddenly dealt Mr. Hall a murderous blow on the head with a loaded cane, and one of his sons fired a shot that took effect in the right leg; the wounded man being unable to get a return shot, before the brave four took to their heels and scattered. At Ansten, Tennessee, Edward Fretwell and Budd Evans made for one another with their revolvers, and opened fire almost at the same moment, Fretwell putting four bullets into Evans, not three inches apart, falling himself to his opponent's second shot; both dying where they

fell. During the encounter, a brother of Evans rode up and emptied his revolver into Fretwell's body, and the coroner's jury could not decide whether he was killed by the dead or the living Evans. A temperance meeting, held in the peaceful village of New Brighton, Staten Island, was startled from its propriety by a man rushing in, shouting: "Men, don't sit here while an assassin is shooting people in the street!" The assemblage broke up instantaneously. The men, arming themselves with anything that came handy, hurried in pursuit of the culprit, and succeeded, not only in capturing him, but, what was a more difficult matter, in lodging him in prison, beyond the reach of Judge Lynch. He proved to be a shiftless ne'er-do-well, named Dempsey, who had been amusing himself by shooting at passers-by, and had dangerously wounded a woman as she sat in the basement of her own house.

On the evening of the 12th of August, some two thousand citizens assembled at Edgefield, South Carolina, to assist at the opening of the Democratic campaign, among them being James Booth, Brooker Toney, and his brother Mark. There was a feud of many years' standing between the Booths and the Toneyes. By-and-by a man began abusing a negro, in whose behalf Brooker Toney interfered; whereupon James Booth interfered too, of course espousing the other side. Pistols were drawn, but the quarrellers were parted. A little later on Toney left the meeting and rode to the village, followed by the Booths, and a terrible fight, in which the friends of both parties freely participated, came off in the public square. Brooker Toney killed James and Thomas Booth, and was himself hit in the back and killed. Benjamin Booth was mortally wounded, Mark Toney and W. Coleman seriously wounded, and five others were more or less hurt, before the disturbance was quelled by the State troops. At another "public speaking" down Memphis way a melee ensued, resulting in the death of a negro, and the reporter of the affair pleasantly remarks: "The river counties of Arkansas promise lively shooting sport between now and election."

Even the Footlight Gossip of a New York paper begins with the relation of a little difficulty between an actress and a gentleman described as a Teutonic dialect writer, in which the dialect writer, aggravated by some jealous reproaches, retorted by firing, ineffectively, at the lady; who,

wrenching the revolver from his grasp, took truer aim, and laid him low with a ball between the eleventh and twelfth ribs, and, wonderful to say, was taken into custody, at the instigation of the doctor called to the wounded man's assistance. A little farther down the column of theatrical items we read: "Fanny Gatewood, who lately lectured at Indianapolis on Mad-dened by Love, attempted to let daylight into one Harry Morse, of that city, whom she accused as the cause of her griefs. The pistol snapped, and was taken from her."

General Cassius Clay, sometime the United States minister at St. Petersburg, detecting the coloured cook of his establishment in Richmond, Kentucky, making too free with his silver spoons, discharged the dishonest dame. Riding out one day in search of a successor, he saw the cook's son, Perry White, standing by the side of a loose horse in a field. Jumping rather hastily to the conclusion that the young negro meant mischief, the general leaped from his horse, and confronting White, ordered him to throw up his hands. That command being obeyed, it was followed by another to leave the place, but not to dare to move until the general was in the saddle again. No sooner was Clay's back turned than the negro did move, and the general, facing round, fired at him twice, hitting him in the neck and breast, and bringing him to the ground a dead man. Then the gallant general rode into Richmond, and gave himself up to the authorities to answer for his deed. He knew he was safe enough. An inquest was duly held, and the jury found that Perry White came to his death by a pistol-shot wound inflicted by C. M. Clay, their verdict ending: "Testimony being given us under oath by C. M. Clay, he being the only witness, we are constrained to justify the said Clay, and believe that he did it in self-defence."

That noble art was really displayed in an affray in Wayne County, Mississippi, in January last. The trouble arose out of a dispute as to the ownership of some land, between three negroes on the one part, and three brothers, named Gamblins, on the other part. Thinking to decide matters by force of arms, the negroes "ambuscaded" the Gamblins near a place called Red Bluff, killing one, and wounding another badly; but they had no cause for exultation, two of them being killed then and there by the return fire of the whites, and the third taking care not

to wait the arrival of the sheriff, who came on the scene a few hours afterwards.

How easily an impromptu duel may be brought about is shown in the story of an affair that came off at Eastville, Virginia, in the spring of 1878. A well-connected young fellow, named Sidney Pitts, refusing to pay twenty dollars he owed one Bullingham, of whose estate Alfred P. Thorn was administrator, the latter obtained a warrant for his arrest, and went with the deputy-sheriff to turn it to use. They caught their man as he was making his way to a steamer bound for Baltimore, and seeing he was inclined to be troublesome the sheriff drew his pistol, and called upon a farmer standing near to assist him. That worthy, with the best intentions, seized Thorn by the throat, and nearly choked him before he could be persuaded that he had got hold of the wrong man; and taking advantage of the blunder, Pitts boarded the steamer, and upon the sheriff following suit, pitched him overboard. This happened on a Friday. On Sunday he returned home, and the following Thursday was sitting on the "stoop" of a house adjoining the court-house, when Lawyer Thorn passed by. Jumping up, Pitts cried: "Hold on, Thorn, I want to see you." Thorn stopped. Pitts demanded an explanation of his attempted arrest, which the other declined to give; whereupon Pitts called him a liar and a scoundrel. Flushing up angrily, Thorn drew back a pace, put his hand to his pocket, and drew out his revolver. Said Pitts: "If that is your game, I can shoot as quick as you can," and he drew also. They were standing scarcely three feet apart, and fired simultaneously; the ball from Pitts's pistol striking Thorn in the hand, while his ball made a furrow in Pitts's right arm. Stepping back, and slightly stooping over their weapons, they turned the cylinders, and in the act of straightening up fired again together; Pitts falling to the ground, shot through the right lung, to be carried into a house, and die without speaking a word. As the smoke from the pistols cleared away Thorn was seen staggering backwards, vainly endeavouring to grasp the fence, ere he sank down insensible, with his jaw-bone crushed, and a bullet lodged at the back of his head, which had entered his face just above the corner of his mouth—a warning to fire-eating young lawyers to stick to the proper weapons of their craft.

Many an equally tragic tale has been recorded in American newspapers, but we

shall only try our reader's patience with one more, coming to us from California. High up in the Tehachipi mountains is a little hamlet of the same name. There, one November day in 1878, Guadalupe Astorga and Jerry Glenn met, and no sooner met than they fell to abusing each other their heartiest. Astorga had incurred Glenn's hatred by protecting his wife from his drunken violence, and finally helping her to get beyond his reach, for which good deed the Californian had sworn to be revenged. With that intent he had tracked Astorga to Tehachipi, but on encountering him, contented himself with a wordy quarrel, ending in Astorga's riding away, soon to be followed by his enemy, who, however, did not succeed in overtaking him. Towards evening Glenn went to a place occupied by a Mr. Paine, and enquired if they had seen a man on a grey horse, and being asked who he was looking for, replied that he was seeking Astorga, and would kill him that night if it was the last thing he did. With that pleasant information he rode away. To the no little dismay of the Paine household—consisting then only of women and children—Astorga himself rode up a short time afterwards, and while he halted in front of the house up galloped Glenn, pistol in hand. The two men met in the highway. No words were spoken, no ammunition wasted. "Each made a rush for the other, and coming to close quarters they clinched, each still sitting on his horse. The Paine family, anticipating trouble, fled from the scene, leaving no witnesses of the final encounter. The women heard six shots fired. When the noise of battle ceased they returned, and found the two men lying in the road, still closely embraced, each grasping his pistol, and both dead. Their horses, uninjured, stood a little distance away, as if awaiting their riders. When assistance came it was found that each man had shot three times, that number of chambers in their respective pistols being empty, and each had received three wounds." A drawn battle that, if ever there was one.

SONNET.

HIGH on a gnarled and mossy forest bough,
 Dreaming I hang between the earth and sky,
 The golden moon through leafy mystery
 Gazing aërial at me with glowing brow.
 And since all living creatures slumber now,
 Oh, nightingale, save only thou and I,
 Tell me the secret of thine ecstacy,
 That none may know save only I and thou.

Alas, all vainly doth my heart entreat;
Thy magic pipe unfolds but to the moon
What wonders thee in faery worlds befel.
To her is sung thy midnight-music sweet,
And e'er she wearies of thy mallow tune
She hath thy secret, and will guard it well!

VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XLVI. THE NEAREST WAY TO NORWAY.

No such blessing as a good night's rest was in store for Violet Tempest on that night of the first of August. She lay in a state of half-consciousness that was near akin to delirium. When she closed her eyes for a little while the demon of evil dreams took hold of her. She was in the old familiar home-scenes with her dear dead father. She acted over again that awful tragedy of sudden death. She was upbraiding her mother about Captain Winstanley. Bitter words were on her lips; words more bitter than even she had ever spoken in all her intensity of adverse feeling. She was in the woody hollow by Rufus's Stone, blindfold, with arms stretched helplessly out, seeking for Rorie among the smooth beech-boles, with a dreadful sense of loneliness, and a fear that he was far away, and that she would perish, lost and alone, in that dismal wood.

So the slow night wore on to morning. Sometimes she lay staring idly at the stars, shining so serenely in that calm summer sky. She wondered what life was like yonder, in those remote worlds. Was humanity's portion as sad, fate as adverse, there as here? Then she thought of Egypt, and Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra—that story of a wild, undisciplined love, grand in its lawless passion, its awful doom. To have loved thus, and died thus, seemed a higher destiny than to do right, and patiently conquer sorrow, and live on somehow to the dismal end of the dull blameless chapter.

At last—with what laggard steps, with what oppressive tardiness!—came the dawn, in long streaks of lurid light above the edge of the distant waters.

"Red sky at morning is the shepherd's warning!" cried Vixen, with dry lips. "Thank God, there will be rain to-day! Welcome change after the hot arid skies, and the cruel brazen sun, mocking all the miseries of this troubled earth."

She felt almost as wildly glad as the Ancient Mariner at the idea of that blessed

relief: and then, by-and-by, with the changeful light shining on her face, she fell into a deep sleep.

Perhaps that morning sleep saved Vixen from an impending fever. It was the first refreshing slumber she had had for a week—a sweet, dreamless sleep. The breakfast-bell rang unheeded. The rain, forecast by that red sky, fell in soft showers upon the verdant isle, and the grateful earth gave back its sweetest perfumes to the cool, moist air.

Miss Skipwith came softly in to look at her charge, saw her sleeping peacefully, and as softly retired.

"Poor child! the initiation has been too much for her unformed mind," she murmured complacently, pleased with herself for having secured a disciple. "The path is narrow and rugged at the beginning, but it will broaden out before her as she goes on."

Violet awoke, and found that it was mid-day. Oh, what a blessed relief that long morning sleep had been! She woke like a creature cured of mortal pain. She fell on her knees beside the bed, and prayed as she had not often prayed in her brief careless life.

Her mood and temper were wondrously softened after a long interval of thought and prayer. She was ashamed of her waywardness of yesterday—her foolish, unreasonable passion.

"Poor Rorie, I told him to keep his promise, and he has obeyed me," she said to herself. "Can I be angry with him for that? I ought to feel proud and glad that we were both strong enough to do our duty."

She dressed slowly, languid after the excitement of yesterday, and then went slowly down the broad bare staircase to Miss Skipwith's parlour.

The lady of the manor received her with affectionate greeting, had a special pot of tea brewed for her, and insisted upon her eating some dry toast, a form of nourishment which this temperate lady deemed a panacea in illness.

"I was positively alarmed about you last night, my dear," she said; "you were so feverish and excited. You read too much, for the first day."

"I'm afraid I did," assented Vixen, with a faint smile; "and the worst of it is, I believe I have forgotten every word I read."

"Surely not!" cried Miss Skipwith, horrified at this admission. "You seemed

so impressed—so interested. You were so full of your subject."

"I have a faint recollection of the little men in the hieroglyphics," said Vixen, "but all the rest is gone. The images of Antony and Cleopatra, in Shakespeare's play, bring Egypt more vividly before me than all the history I read yesterday."

Miss Skipwith looked shocked, just as if some improper character in real life had been brought before her.

"Cleopatra was very disreputable, and she was not Egyptian," she remarked severely. "I am sorry you should waste your thoughts upon such a person."

"I think she is the most interesting woman in ancient history," said Vixen wilfully, "as Mary Queen of Scots is in modern history. It is not the good people whose images take hold of one's fancy. What a faint idea one has of Lady Jane Grey! And, in Schiller's Don Carlos, I confess the Marquis of Posa never interested me half so keenly as Philip of Spain."

"My dear, you are made up of fancies and caprices. Your mind wants balance," said Miss Skipwith, affronted at this frivolity. "Had you not better go for a walk with your dog? Doddery tells me that poor Argus has not had a good run since last week."

"How wicked of me!" cried Vixen. "Poor old fellow! I had almost forgotten his existence. Yes; I should like a long walk, if you will not think me idle."

"You studied too many hours yesterday, my dear. It will do you good to relax the bow to-day. 'Non semper arcum tendit Apollo.'"

"I'll go for my favourite walk to Mount Orgueil. I don't think there'll be any more rain. Please excuse me if I am not home in time for dinner. I can have a little cold meat, or an egg, for my tea."

"You had better take a sandwich with you," said Miss Skipwith, with unusual thoughtfulness. "You have been eating hardly anything lately."

Vixen did not care about the sandwich, but submitted, to please her hostess; and a neat little paper parcel, containing about three ounces of nutriment, was made up for her by Mrs. Doddery. Never had the island looked fairer in its summer beauty than it looked to-day, after the morning's rain. These showers had been to Jersey what sleep had been to Vixen. The air was soft and cool; sparkling rain-drops fell like diamonds from the leaves of ash

and elm. The hedge-row ferns had taken a new green, as if the spirit of spring had revisited the island. The blue bright sea was dimpled with wavelets.

What a bright glad world it was, and how great must be the sin of a rebellious spirit, cavilling at the dealings of its Creator! The happy dog bounced and bounded round his mistress; the birds twittered in the hedges; the passing farm-labourer, with his cart-load of seaweed, smacked his whip cheerily as he urged his patient horse along the narrow lane. A huge van-load of Cockney tourists, singing a boisterous chorus to the last music-hall song, passed Vixen at a turn of the road, and made a blot on the serene beauty of the scene. They were going to eat lobsters and drink bottled beer and play skittles at Le Tac. Vixen rejoiced when their raucous voices died away on the summer breeze.

There was a meadow-path which lessened the distance between Les Tourelles and Mount Orgueil. Vixen had just left the road and entered the meadow when Argus set up a joyous bark, and ran back to salute a passing vehicle. It was a St. Helier's fly, driving at a tremendous pace in the direction from which she had come. A young man lay back in the carriage, smoking a cigar, with his hat slouched over his eyes. Vixen could just see the strong sunburnt hand flung up above his head. It was a foolish fancy, doubtless, but that broad brown hand reminded her of Rorie's. Argus leaped the stile, rushed after the vehicle, and saluted it clamorously. The poor brute had been mewed up for a week in a dull court-yard, and was rejoiced at having something to bark at.

Vixen walked on to the seashore, and the smiling little harbour, and the brave old castle. There was the usual party of tourists following the guide through narrow passages and echoing chambers, and peering into the rooms where Charles Stuart endured his exile, and making those lively remarks and speculations whereby the average tourist is prone to reveal his hazy notions of history. Happily Vixen knew of quiet corners upon the upward walls whither tourists rarely penetrated; nooks in which she had sat through many an hour of sun and shade, reading, musing, or sketching, with free, untutored pencil, for the mere idle delight of the moment. Here in this loneliness, between land and sea, she had nursed her sorrow and made

much of her grief. She liked the place. No obtrusive sympathy had ever made it odious to her. Here she was mistress of herself and of her own thoughts. To-day she went to her favourite corner, a seat in an angle of the battlemented wall, and sat there with her arms folded on the stone parapet, looking dreamily seaward, across the blue Channel to the still bluer coast of Normandy, where the towers of Coutance showed dimly in the distance.

Resignation. Yes; that was to be her portion henceforward. She must live out her life, in isolation almost as complete as Miss Skipwith's, without the innocent delusions which gave substance and colour to that lonely lady's existence.

"If I could only have a craze," she thought hopelessly, "some harmless monomania which would fill my mind! The maniacs in Bedlam, who fancy themselves popes or queens, are happy in their foolish way. If I could only imagine myself something which I am not—anything except poor useless Violet Tempest, who has no place in the world!"

The sun was gaining power, the air was drowsy, the soft ripple of the tide upon the golden sand was like a lullaby. Even that long sleep of the morning had not cured Vixen's weariness. There were long arrears of slumber yet to be made up. Her eyelids drooped, then closed altogether, the ocean lullaby took a still softer sound, the distant voices of the tourists grew infinitely soothing, and Vixen sank quietly to sleep, her head leaning on her folded arms, the gentle west wind faintly stirring her loose hair.

"Oh, happy kiss that woke thy sleep!" cried a familiar voice close in the slumberer's ear, and then a warm breath, which was not the summer wind, fanned the cheek that lay upmost upon her arm, two warm lips were pressed against that glowing cheek in ardent greeting. The girl started to her feet, every vein tingling with the thrilling recognition of her assailant. There was no one else—none other than he—in this wide world who would do such a thing! She sprang up, and faced him, her eyes flashing, her cheeks crimson.

"How dare you?" she cried. "Then it was you I saw in the fly? Pray, is this the nearest way to Norway?"

Yes, it was Rorie; looking exactly like the familiar Rorie of old; not one whit altered by marriage with a duke's only daughter; a stalwart young fellow in a

rough grey suit, a dark face sunburnt to deepest bronze, eyes with a happy smile in them, firmly-cut lips half hidden by the thick brown beard, a face that would have looked well under a lifted helmet—such a face as the scared Saxons must have seen among the bold followers of William the Norman, when those hardy Norse warriors ran amuck in Dover town.

"Not to my knowledge," answered this audacious villain, in his lightest tone. "I am not very geographical; but I should think it was rather out of the way."

"Then you and Lady Mabel have changed your plans?" said Vixen, trembling very much, but trying desperately to be as calmly commonplace as a young lady talking to an ineligible partner at a ball. "You are not going to the north of Europe?"

"Lady Mabel and I have changed our plans. We are not going to the north of Europe."

"Oh!"

"In point of fact, we are not going anywhere."

"But you have come to Jersey. That is part of your tour, I suppose?"

"Do not be too hasty in your suppositions, Miss Tempest. I have come to Jersey—I am quite willing to admit as much as that."

"And Lady Mabel? She is with you, of course?"

"Not the least bit in the world. To the best of my knowledge Lady Mabel—I beg her pardon—Lady Mallow—is now on her way to the fishing-grounds of Connemara with her husband."

"Rorie!"

What a glad happy cry that was! It was like a gush of sudden music from a young blackbird's throat on a sunny spring morning. The crimson dye had faded from Violet's cheeks a minute ago and left her deadly pale. Now the bright colour rushed back again, the happy brown eyes, the sweet blush-rose lips, broke into the gladdest smile that ever Rorie had seen upon her face. He held out his arms, he clasped her to his breast, where she rested unresistingly, infinitely happy. Great Heaven! how the whole world and herself had become transformed in this moment of unspeakable bliss! Rorie, the lost, the surrendered, was her own true lover after all!

"Yes, dear; I obeyed you. You were hard and cruel to me that night in the plantation; but I knew in my heart of

hearts that you were wise, and honest, and true; and I made up my mind that I would keep the engagement entered upon beside my mother's death-bed. Loving or unloving I would marry Mabel Ashbourne, and do my duty to her, and go down to my grave with the character of a good and faithful husband, as many a man has done who never loved his wife. So I held on, Vixen—yes, I will call you by the old pet name now: henceforward you are mine, and I shall call you what I like—I held on, and was altogether an exemplary lover; went wherever I was ordered to go, and always came when they whistled for me; rode at my lady's jog-trot pace in the Row, stood behind her chair at the opera, endured more classical music than ever man heard before and lived, listened to my sweet-heart's manuscript verses, and, in a word, did my duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call me; and my reward has been to be jilted with every circumstance of ignominy on my wedding-morning."

"Jilted!" cried Vixen, her big brown eyes shining in pleasantest mockery. "Why I thought Lady Mabel adored you?"

"So did I," answered Roderick naively, "and I pitied the poor dear thing for her infatuation. Had I not thought that I should have broken my bonds long ago. It was not the love of the duke's acres that held me. I still believe that Mabel was fond of me once, but Lord Mallow bowled me out. His eloquence, his parliamentary success, and above all his flattery, proved irresistible. The scoundrel brought a marriage certificate in his pocket when he came to stay at Ashbourne, and had the art to engage rooms at Southampton, and sleep there a night en passant. He left a portmanteau and a hat-box there, and that constituted legal occupancy; so, when he won Lady Mabel's consent to an elopement—which I believe he did not succeed in doing till the night before our intended wedding-day—he had only to ride over to Southampton and give notice to the parson and clerk. The whole thing was done splendidly. Lady Mabel went out at eight o'clock, under pretence of going to early church. Mallow was waiting for her with a fly, half a mile from Ashbourne. They drove to Southampton together, and were married at ten o'clock in the old church of St. Michael. While the distracted duchess and her women were hunting everywhere for the bride, and all the

visitors at Ashbourne were arraying themselves in their wedding finery, and the village children were filling their baskets with flowers to strew upon the pathway of the happy pair, emblematical of the flowers which do not blossom in the highway of life, the lady was over the border with Jock o' Hazeldean! Wasn't it fun, Vixen?"

And the jilted one flung back his handsome head and laughed long and loud. It was too good a joke, the welcome release coming at the last moment.

"At half-past ten there came a telegram from my runaway bride:

"Ask Roderick to forgive me, dear mamma. I found at the last that my heart was not mine to give, and I am married to Lord Mallow. I do not think my cousin will grieve very much."

"That last clause was sensible, anyhow, was it not, Vixen?"

"I think the whole business was very sensible," said Vixen, with a sweet grave smile. "Lord Mallow wanted a clever wife, and you did not. It was very wise of Lady Mabel to find that out before it was too late."

"She will be very happy as Lady Mallow," said Roderick. "Mallow will legislate for Ireland, and she will rule him. He will have quite enough of Home Rule, poor beggar. Hibernia will be Mabelised. She is a dear good little thing. I quite love her, now she has jilted me."

"But how did you come here?" asked Vixen, looking up at her lover in simple wonder. "All this happened only yesterday morning."

"Is there not a steamer that leaves Southampton nightly? Had there not been one I would have chartered a boat for myself. I would have come in a cockle-shell—I would have come with a swimming-belt—I would have done anything wild and adventurous to hasten to my love. I started for Southampton the minute I had seen that too blessed telegram; went to St. Michael's, saw the register, with its entry of Lord Mallow's marriage hardly dry; and then went down to the docks and booked my berth. Oh, what a long day yesterday was—the longest day of my life!"

"And of mine," sighed Vixen, between tears and laughter, "in spite of the Shepherd Kings."

"Are those Jersey people you have picked up?" Rorie asked innocently.

This turned the scale, and Vixen burst into a joyous peal of laughter.

"How did you find me here?" she asked.

"Very easily. Your custodian—what a grim-looking personage she is, by-the-way—told me where you were gone, and directed me how to follow you. I told her I had a most important message to deliver to you from your mother. You don't mind that artless device, I hope?"

"Not much. How is dear mamma? She complains in her letters of not feeling very well."

"I have not seen her lately. When I did, I thought her looking ill and worn. She will get well when you go back to her, Vixen. Your presence will be like sunshine."

"I shall never go back to the Abbey House."

"Yes, you will—for one fortnight, at least. After that your home will be at Briarwood. You must be married from your father's house."

"Who said I was going to be married, sir?" asked Vixen, with delicious coquetry.

"I said it—I say it. Do you think I am too bold, darling? Ought I to go on my knees, and make you a formal offer? Why, I have loved you all my life; and I think you have loved me as long."

"So I have, Rorie," she answered softly, shyly, sweetly. "I forswore myself that night in the fir-wood. I always loved you; there was no stage of my life when you were not dearer to me than anyone on earth, except my father."

"Dear love, I am ashamed of my happiness," said Roderick tenderly. "I have been so weak and unworthy. I gave away my hopes of bliss in one foolishly soft moment, to gratify my mother's dying wish—a wish that had been dinned into my ears for the last years of her life—and I have done nothing but repent my folly ever since. Can you forgive me, Violet? I shall never forgive myself."

"Let the past be like a dream that we have dreamt. It will make the future seem so much the brighter."

"Yes."

And then under the blue August sky, fearless and unabashed, these happy lovers gave each other the kiss of betrothal.

"What am I to do with you?" Vixen asked laughingly. "I ought to go home to Les Tourelles."

"Don't you think you might take me with you? I am your young man now, you know. I hope it is not a case of 'no followers allowed.'"

"I'm afraid Miss Skipwith will feel disappointed in me. She thought I was going to have a mission."

"A mission!"

"Yes; that I was going in for theology. And for it all to end in my being engaged to be married! It seems such a commonplace ending, does it not?"

"Decidedly. As commonplace as the destiny of Adam and Eve. Take me back to Les Tourelles, Vixen. I think I shall be able to manage Miss Skipwith."

SEA CUSTOMS.

In a late number of ALL THE YEAR ROUND* an account was given of some old sea customs which have altogether died out, and of which the memory only lingers amongst the older generation of seafaring folk. In some cases, indeed, they have been resuscitated and, as it were, galvanised into a spurious vitality for the delectation of passengers oppressed by the ennui of a long voyage. For example, the ancient ceremonies observed on crossing the line, which became practically extinct twenty years ago, have been revived very recently on board the transports conveying reinforcements of soldiers to our troubled South African colony. It must have frequently happened, on these occasions, that the performances were as new and strange to many of the sailors taking part in them as they were to their military passengers. The fact is, the general tendency of our modern civilisation to induce similarity of habits and sentiments amongst all classes of men has begun to bear fruit afloat, and is fast rendering seamen much like other folk, and is robbing them of the characteristics which so long caused them to be regarded as an almost distinct species of our race. Still, some customs and peculiarities even now retain a certain share of their former vigour, and cling with persistent tenacity to that phase of life which is to be observed on board ship.

The rapid spread of education amongst the section of the nation from which our sailors are most largely drawn has done much towards obliterating the special peculiarities of diction by which they were once distinguished, but much of their ancient phraseology still remains. In the matter of personalities, for example, a

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 22, p. 148, February 1st, 1879, "Seafaring Usages."

considerable number of epithets still retain their currency in nautical circles. Thus, a man whose face has been deeply pitted by the small-pox always receives the appellation of "rough"; and when a sailor speaks of "Rough Smith," or "Rough Jones," it is to be understood that the results of small-pox, rather than any peculiarity of manner or behaviour, is signified. So, too, a curly-headed shipmate is always addressed and alluded to as "Curly," a red-headed one as "Ginger," and a negro or coloured one of whatever shade as "Darkey." Nothing in the slightest degree opprobrious is intended to be conveyed by these appellations, and no one with whose name they are connected would think of resenting them. Owing possibly to the vast increase of the use of iron in ship-building, the ship's carpenter is now seldom or never spoken of as "Chips," but the boatswain is still talked of as "Pipes." The assistant to the ship's steward in men-of-war—the man who has special charge of the provisions for the crew—is always known as "Jack in the Dust," frequently abbreviated into "Dusty"; an epithet of which the origin is to be found in the small cloud of dust raised by him in his daily duty of issuing to the different messes the ration biscuit, or "bread," as sailors always call it. The chief of police, or master-at-arms, is familiarly alluded to as "Johndy," an evident shortening and corruption of the French term *gens d'armes*. A cook's mate is "Slushy"; a mizen-top man, chosen from amongst the youngest hands on board, in allusion to his tender age is a "Lamb," or a "Lammy"; whilst a lower-deck sweeper is entitled "Shakings," a name more exactly given to the shreds of rope and yarn which it is his duty to pick up and rescue from the dust-bin or tub.

Nautical etiquette requires that in friendly conversation allusions to the administration of justice afloat should be made with a certain circumlocution, or should be veiled by expressions not immediately intelligible to the uninitiated in the mysteries of a sea-life. An offender brought up for summary trial is said to be "taken where the boot shines," or to be "planked," or to be at "Shadwell." Minor punishments are still supposed to be included in the generic term "black-list," though the expression is dying out. The cell in which hardened offenders are occasionally confined is always the "chokey;" and the now rarely used cat-o'-nine-tails, and each dozen lashes inflicted by it, are

never called by any other name than "bag," without either definite or indefinite article. Sailors still give to the different substances of which their food is composed a variety of names, not perhaps known elsewhere than on board ship. An early meal of cocoa and biscuit is, for some reason which it is not easy to discover, always spoken of as "optional." Leavened bread, much more commonly eaten by seamen than formerly, is "soft bread," or "soft tack." A dish of odds-and-ends of fresh beef is "skewer o'," and pease-pudding is "dog's body." Pudding of any other kind still retains its ancient nautical name of "duff." A man's allowance of grog is his "navy," and the measure in which his share is given to him in his mess is a "tot." Names of other table utensils, such as "kids," "pannikins," and "monkeys," are fast becoming obsolete. If soup be somewhat deficient in strength, it is said to have "a good deal of the fore-hold about it"; the fore-hold being the place in which the water for drinking is stored. The "blacks," which will occasionally defy the efforts of the cook, and get into the dishes he is preparing, are called "galley-pepper." When some article of food is running short there is "a southerly wind" in the receptacle in which it is kept.

Most of the special trades—such as those of the rope-maker, sail-maker, blacksmith, &c.—which send representatives on board ship have peculiar customary appellations, but few of them are characteristically nautical, and are perhaps frequently used on land. Epithets indicative of nationality are numerous. A Maltese is a "Smyche"; a shipmate from the Mauritius a "Payah Frenchman"; a north-countryman, "Geordie"; a man from the western counties, "Jagger"; and a rustic lout, "Joskin." The appellation "landsman" was, till within the last thirty years, official, but it has now been given up; it never was comprised in the phraseology of the 'fore-mast hands, who to this day speak of a landsman as a "shore-going" man. In fact, the latter term has amongst the sailors of the navy a value about equivalent to that of the word "civilian" amongst soldiers. Many other remnants of a quaint vocabulary are still to be met with on board ship. The period of time devoted to certain duties is a "trick;" a sailor "goes" to the fore part of the ship, but he "lies aft" when approaching the stern; and never "changes," but always "shifts" his cl' thing.

Among old sea customs which continue

extant ceremonial observances occupy no unimportant place. The departure and return on board of the captain is heralded by the sound of prolonged whistling from the pipe, nauticé the "call" of a boat-swain's-mate. When that portion of the Naval Discipline Act known as The Articles of War is read in public, on the quarter-deck, reader and audience remain bare-headed. Every person reaching the quarter-deck from below, from forward, or from outside the ship, is expected to salute the place by touching or raising his cap. The "weather," or windward side, is still considered sacred to the captain, the officer of the watch, and others of superior rank, though the almost universal use of steam is naturally more and more interfering with the observance of the practice. When a ship is ordered to be equipped the initial ceremony is the hoisting of a pendant, the symbol of command, and, as it were, of the mobilisation, or placing on a war-footing, of the crew. When the vessel is paid-off, the last act is the striking of the same pendant. Passing ships at sea "exchange colours," as it is called; that is, each hoists her national ensign. A merchant-ship will usually "dip"—that is, lower—her colours and re-hoist them, and the war-vessel is expected to return the compliment. It is, however, an ancient and still existing regulation of the British navy that no ship of Her Majesty shall ever be the first to "dip" the ensign, but shall only do so as an acknowledgment of such a compliment being first paid to her by a stranger. The ceremony of hoisting the colours at eight or nine o'clock in the morning, according to the season, has lost in our own fleet much of its old brilliancy, though the case is different in foreign navies, which undoubtedly borrowed it from us. However, as the ensign goes up the National Anthem is played, and as it is lowered the muskets—nowadays rifles—of the sentries are discharged. Officers arriving on board are received at the ladder by two "side-boys"; whilst admirals, in addition to other attendants, are received by four. After dark, when a boat approaching the ship is hailed, if a commissioned officer is carried the proper answer is "Aye, aye;" if a captain, the name of his ship; if an admiral, the word "Flag." Persons below the rank of officer, even if coming on board, are expected to answer, "No, no."

In ships stationed abroad the men receive pay monthly, and the sum paid them they for some reason call "compo." As each man leaves the pay-table he has to

pass near the ship's barber, who usually holds a basin in his hand, into which those who have availed themselves of his services since the last payment are expected to deposit the odd coppers of their wages. The same personage takes up a similar position when soap has been issued to the crew; but this time he has a knife in his hand instead of the basin; and his ship-mates hold out to him, as they pass, the bar of soap which they have just received, so that he may cut off a small piece from the end. The importance of these customs to the barber himself may be estimated when it is stated that the permission to grow beards, granted to the navy about ten years ago, caused such discontent amongst the seafaring shavers, that the government increased their pay. The messes into which the seamen and marines are divided in every ship are numbered consecutively from Number One upwards; and each is called, in order of numbers, to receive the rations due to its members for the day, or for particular meals. The one standing first in turn is changed every day; and "first call" belongs of right to that mess which has to pump the daily supply of water for drinking and cooking purposes.

Sailors' amusements do not in these days differ much from those of other classes of the community. They have been especially smitten with the passion for amateur theatricals which is to be observed in so many different societies on shore, and will go to an infinity of trouble to "rig up" a theatre, prepare dresses, and study parts. The old sea-songs are now rarely heard, and the lays of the Christy Minstrels, or even the Cockney vulgarities of the music-halls, have nearly driven the songs of Dibdin and the old "Fore Bitters" (from the seat usually occupied by the singer) altogether from the fore-castle. One game, with an old nautical history, is still occasionally played afloat. It is a maritime adaptation of Baste the Bear, and is played by the bear, or "monkey," being suspended in a loop of rope which just allows his feet to touch the planks of the deck, he and the other players being armed with a "colt," or knotted handkerchief, or even a piece of rope. The outside players rush past and try to strike him, and if struck by him have to take his place. His frantic efforts to reach an assailant usually result in his being carried off his feet, and flying out to the extremity of his suspending rope, first in one direction and then in another, like an ill-regulated pendulum, thus offering excellent opportunities of

castigation to his opponents. Its name is Sling the Monkey.

On the whole, it may be said that, though seamen are fast becoming assimilated to their fellows on land, there still exists a certain amount of local colour in life on board ship, to remind us forcibly of the days when they really lived as a class apart, and were apt to be as surprised and puzzled by the manners and customs of landsmen, as the latter were at those peculiar to the sea.

MY LAND OF BEULAH.

A STORY IN FIFTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IX.

I HAD been at Hazledene ten days—or was it ten years?

Could I be the same Nell who played at hare-and-hounds with little Amy and her companions that last day at Summerfield, and sang for very gladness of heart to the sound of the old yellow-faced piano in the music-room afterwards?

It is a terrible thing to stand still in thought at some epoch in our lives, and look back at a self that once was and can never be again.

But another identity puzzled me even more than my own; another change was still more startling than that in my own thoughts and feelings. How was I to reconcile the Eulalie of the past with the Lady Vansitart of to-day?

I knew enough of my whilom school-friend to be aware that her home experiences had been of a stormy nature, and that biting poverty had been one of them. How was it then that she now filled the rôle of fine lady and châtelaine of Hazledene Hall, as though "to the manner born"? Every movement, every graceful word of greeting or of parting to every guest was perfect, and the luxury with which her husband loved to surround her seemed to be part of herself.

Hazledene generally—i.e. the village, including the rector and his wife, and the old doctor, their great friend—were all mad about Lady Vansitart. The people in the county round followed suit, and I was congratulated upon my own good fortune in having such a delightful step-mother, until I longed to flee back to the old home among the Cheshire hills, and felt as if I would have given all my little world to have found myself sitting in the garden at Summerfield.

For all the other people only saw—I knew—and what I knew was this: I found myself in the position of guest in the home.

that was mine by right of birth, and by the love that papa had ever given me and gave me still.

There was no change in papa, that never could have been; only we were never alone together, he and I; and something quite intangible, but yet something that would not be got over or set aside, made me shy and ashamed of the old loving ways and the old half-laughing tender words.

The night I came home I stepped into a new life; I became a different person altogether, and never, never again was the old thoughtless, impulsive Nell. Terence came down the steps to open the fly door, and welcomed me with a restrained gladness that was strange to me. I put my hand out for his, as I had always done, and the old man took it, but not without a deprecatory glance at a dazzling figure that stood just within the hall.

Papa was out when I arrived, and every sound I fancied might be his step. I had taken off my hat, smoothed my hair, come down into the drawing-room, been amazed into utter silence by Eulalie "hoping that I found everything comfortable in my room," and taken my place at the window, and still there was no sign of him.

The conversation that had for awhile, thanks to my state of bewilderment, shown an inclination to dwindle down to unpleasantly small proportions, took fresh lease of life, and my old school-friend and I were chatting over various changes at Summerfield, when the door opened slowly—I had almost written stealthily—and someone came in: a girl little older than myself, but with the oldest face on the youngest shoulders I ever saw. Her head was sleek and golden, her eyes weak and apt to blink, and she had a broad black velvet band round her throat. Altogether I was struck with the fitness of things when Eulalie said: "Nell, this is my cousin, Miss Dove—or Lettie, to be less formal." Perhaps I had got to the end of my tether in the way of astonishment already; at all events, the young lady who looked so very like a depressed and timid ring-dove hardly struck upon me as an unexpected vision. "I'm very glad to see you," she said, putting a limp and fish-like hand into mine the while. "Why Miss 'Dosis's bony knuckles are better than this!" was my own ungracious thought.

"I hope you found hot water ready in your room?" continued the girl; adding, with an apologetic air to Lady Vansitart, "I was late in coming in, Eulalie, or I should have seen to it myself."

"Lettie is good enough to look after the household matters for me occasionally," said my step-mother, with a slight heightening of the colour in her cheek.

"There can be no need for anyone to worry about me," I began; and then I heard a firm quick step and a hearty voice.

"Nell! Nell! where is she?"

"Oh, it is papa!" I cried with a great gasp, and fled along the corridor and into his arms at the end of it. He was just the same, let who might be changed; just as glad to see his little girl as ever; and a little—just a little—surprised I think to see the tears shining in her glad eyes.

Clinging to his arm, I came along the passage; and there at the drawing-room door stood Eulalie, with both her hands stretched out. I had never seen those two as husband and wife together; and now the tender light that shone in his clear eyes as they met hers, the thrill in his voice as he greeted her, told me how he had given his life ungrudgingly into her keeping.

Miss Dove stood behind her cousin, smiling a series of sympathetic smiles that melted the one into the other like dissolving views, and yet I felt—what is the subtle instinct that teaches us such things?—that she thought me a hoyden, and would have enjoyed greater repose of spirit had I remained at Summerfield indefinitely.

When I went to my room to change my dress Miss Dove went with me, apologising profusely for so doing, but doing it all the same; and seating herself in my favourite chair, pulled a little bag from her pocket, and extracted therefrom a sort of tangle that she called "her work."

"I never like to be a moment really idle," she observed virtuously, blinking at me appealingly.

"Don't you?" said I, dropping my locks upon my shoulders, and beginning to let off my rising irritation in energetic brushing. "I love idleness; I like to sit with my hands before me in a room where there is nothing but firelight."

"But time is a talent to be accounted for," said the young oracle in the arm-chair solemnly.

"And do you think tatting with pink and white silks——" I began, with my usual indiscretion.

"This is for a Dorcas-basket," put in Miss Dove reproachfully. Then she changed the subject promptly, feeling, I suppose, that I hadn't a leg left to stand upon. "You and I must try and be good friends; the other two are so absorbed in each other

—as it is only natural and right they should be—that I was really glad to hear you were coming. Sir Charles was quite kind about it, and said you would be a nice companion for me."

"Did papa say that?" My hair had fallen over my eyes, and I had to shake it back before I could look at her, as, in sore amaze, I asked the question.

"Why not?" she said, raising her weak and watery glance from the pink silks destined for the Dorcas-basket.

As I could not say why not, I said nothing.

"I like this place thoroughly," was the next remark my companion made, and the old impulsiveness caused me to blurt out:

"That's a comfort!" after which inhospitable rejoinder I saw myself blush furiously. But my arrow missed its mark.

"Yes, certainly it is," sighed the gentle ring-dove. "And I quite like the rector of the dear old parish church; he is perfectly sound, I find."

"Sound!" I repeated, puzzled at the waters into which we had drifted. "Why I never heard of there being anything the matter with Mr. Langley; he was always as strong as that stumpy Shetland of his that he rides all over the country. What has been the matter with him—heart or lungs?" My hair-brush was held poised in one hand as I waited her reply.

"I was speaking of his doctrine," said Miss Lettie demurely.

I don't know what possessed me, but a feeling as if I were stifling came over me all at once; I flung down the hair-brush, threw up the window, and leaning my arms upon the sill, looked out towards the blue line in the distance longingly.

"Oh, dear!" cried Miss Lettie, hastily tying her handkerchief over her ears; "you'll get your death of cold, and bring on my neuralgia again."

But I saw fit to be deaf to all sounds save that of dear old Roland's bark.

"Why I was nearly forgetting Roland!" I said as I drew my head in. "I must run and see him."

"It rained this morning, and the yard is dreadfully damp," objected my companion.

"And my boots are dreadfully thick," I answered, taking my rebellious locks in both hands, and twisting them up as promptly as possible. It would be very rude to leave Miss Dove in solitude, but I was past being polite to anyone just then.

"You don't mean to say you are going out without your hat?"

"Yes, I am. I shall have plenty of time to beautify before the dinner-gong goes."

In consideration for possible neuralgia I shut the window, and then, without a word of apology for the fact that all my belongings were strewn about, half in, half out of my boxes, I set off down the corridor. When half way downstairs I found that I had left my handkerchief on the dressing-table, and turned back, reaching my room door to discover Miss Dove bending absorbedly over the Bible that had been papa's last birthday gift to his "dear Nell." Alas! what she perused so earnestly was not the contents of the sacred book itself, but of a letter that I had laid with loving care between the leaves—that letter in which my father had told me of his engagement to my school-friend. As she turned, and saw me staring at her with indignant eyes, Miss Lettie had the grace to blush, and in hurriedly trying to replace the letter let it flutter to the floor.

"I was just going to put your things to rights a bit," she stammered.

"Thanks," I said, picking up the fallen letter, replacing it in the Bible, and closing the clasp with a snap; "you are very kind, but the maid can do all that quite well."

A moment we stood looking at each other in silence, my opponent now by far the cooler of the two. Then I said my say, and declared war to the knife.

"Miss Dove, I have not been in the habit of having my letters read. Will you bear in mind for the future that I object to having them meddled with?"

She gathered up the tangle of silk that was one day to adorn the Dorcas-basket, and, with as much dignity as she could manage to summon up, departed.

"It is in the family evidently," I thought to myself as I went down two stairs at a time.

How glad old Roland was to see me! Terence, catching sight of me through the pantry-window, came out and told me how all the pretty speckled guinea-hens had died that winter; and how Frizzle, the black-and-tan terrier, had got caught in a hare-trap, and was "as lame as lame could be, the cratur!"

But Terence was not at his ease; every now and then he cast a furtive glance at the upper windows. However, all his restless glances merged into a smile as papa came through the gate leading from the grounds, Frizzle careering along on three legs at his heels. Roland lay down like a lion couchant, raised his golden-brown eyes to his master's face, and whined suggestively.

"Let Terence loosen his chain, papa," I said gleefully, "and you and I give him a run round the paddock?"

Terence had stooped to lift the hook from the staple, Roland had given a loud yelp of delight, and I was patting poor injured Frizzle, who evidently thought the best welcome he could give me was to stand on his hind legs as continuously as possible, when there was the sound of the soft rustle of silk, and Lady Vansitart was in our midst.

"Don't let the dog loose!" said papa quickly. "Lady Vansitart is afraid of him." Afraid of Roland!

Were the wonders prepared for me never to come to an end? and yet, as my father and his bride went slowly towards the garden, I was almost ready to allow that such fear was not wholly groundless. For Roland's upper lip was drawn to one side, showing his long white glistening teeth in a manner anything but pleasant, and he gave a low growl that changed into a whine as I laid my hand upon his great smooth head, and called him by his name.

"Does Roland often behave in this way Terence?" I asked, amazed.

The old man bent down and fumbled with the chain as he answered:

"Whiles and again, Miss Ellen, whiles and again. He's a terrible rogue is Roland, a terrible rogue entirely."

So it seemed that Roland, as well as his betters, had taken to developing new and strange phases of character.

The story of my first day at Hazledene was in all essential points the story of the days that followed it. Slowly but surely I felt myself drifting—or, rather, being drifted—from papa, and from my rightful position as the daughter of the house. My steps were dogged, my out-goings and my in-comings were watched by Miss Lettie, until the spirit of rebellion within me prompted me to oppose cunning to cunning, and to convey myself surreptitiously away into old and well-known haunts along the shore, or in the woods behind the Hall. Every visitor who came to Hazledene congratulated me on my good fortune, in having such a delightful companion as my father's beautiful young wife.

"More like an elder sister than a step-mother," said Mrs. Langley ecstatically; "and then that sweet girl, Lettie Dove; such a nice, judicious, prudent young creature!"

I knew that this last remark was meant

to have a sting in it; a sting aimed at my hoyden ways, more especially those before-named solitary rambles by flood and field. But I loved the fresh bracing air and the sound of the sea—not only for the sense of freedom I found in both, but because that prudent young creature, the gentle Dove, seldom cared to climb up the rough steep cliffs, or penetrate into the lonely caves along the shore. Did papa see and note how the heart of his little girl was being pressed to death between the iron wills of two designing women, who each played into the hand of the other? I hardly think so. He was absorbed in his love for Eulalie. He hardly seemed to live out of her presence; and she on her part was equally devoted to him.

"Well, well," I used to think to myself; "what matters it after all? He is happy—he looks younger by years in the light that shines for him on each day of his life. If I am put 'out in the cold,' perhaps it is only natural. Yes; I suppose this is what Miss 'Desia meant when she said my 'nose would be put out.' It's not a pleasant process, and I suppose that pain at my heart that comes now and again is jealousy—just the thing in all the world I hate most cordially! And yet, oh! what would I not give for one of the old rambles with papa—" But the remembrance was too vivid; and all at once the sobs rose in my throat, and the hot tears blinded me.

Besides these bitter moments of regret other trials beset me. Miss Dove tried my temper as only a perfectly placid, perfectly impudent person can try the temper of those whom they single out as victims.

One day she saw fit to make her moan over the brogue of our faithful retainer, Terence Mahaffy. She was tattling—when was she not engaged in some charitable work?—for the benefit of that Dorcas-basket that I detested so unutterably, and looked so calmly unconscious of the impertinence of her remarks, that I was pretty nearly dumb-founded in spite of the indignation that half choked me.

"I do not speak of this for myself," she went on, searching for a thread that had wandered from the way in which it should go; "I look upon these petty trials as things sent to us as wholesome daily discipline. But Eulalie is differently constituted; she is abnormally sensitive to such things; they grate upon her nerves in a most remarkable manner. I have seen her shiver—actually shiver—when Terence hands her a dish."

"I should think it must have grated on her nerves a good deal more when she had no one to wait upon her at all, and very likely no dishes, or nothing but empty ones."

I was standing with my back to the breakfast-room window, open to the ground, as I uttered this impulsive and most injudicious rejoinder to the fair Lettie's words. Now a swift look of spiteful triumph came across her face, as she raised her eyes to the window behind me, and brought me to a sudden halt. The glass doors opened on the lawn; the soft turf had made no sound beneath the pressure of a foot-fall; and I saw as I turned that papa stood looking in upon us both. My flashing eyes, the burning colour in my cheeks, might well surprise him.

"Nell, Nell!" he said, coming to my side, and laying his hand upon my shoulder; "what is all this?"

I knew his hatred of quarrelling, his contempt of all petty bickering; I knew that I had spoken unadvisedly with my tongue; but, besides all this, I knew what I could never tell to him—the bitter provocation I had received.

"Your daughter was speaking of the poverty from which you have rescued your wife, my cousin Eulalie. I fancy that Nell thinks both she and I should be more sensible of our indebtedness to you than we are. I think she looks upon me as an intruder here. Dear Sir Charles, I cannot stay where I am not wanted. I know that Eulalie will miss me, but——"

If he had raged at me, if he had reproached me, I could have borne it better; but he only stood there looking at me in silent, loving amaze. He only said:

"Can it be Nell that treats her father's guests in this way?"

She knew she was sure of me. She sat there looking like a statue for a martyr's tomb, and knew that I should not say a word to implicate her and Lady Vansitart.

Without a word I fled from the presence of them both, but in my flight I heard the false voice say:

"Do not be hard on Nell, dear Sir Charles; you must make allowances——"

"Allowances for what?"

I knew—I knew the tale she was about to tell: the story of his "little girl's" jealousy of the woman he had married; of the change in his life that had made her no longer all in all to him; of his divided love, that once had been her sole and dear possession.

If Eulalie and her cousin had schemed to prevent me ever being alone with papa

before, they redoubled their efforts after this. I caught his eyes often resting on me with a wounded questioning expression that I could scarcely endure to meet. He redoubled his courteous kindnesses to Lettie; and, if that were possible, encompassed Eulalie with a still greater tenderness. And the holidays drew to a close.

"Oh, Land of Beulah! Oh, land of rest! where the air is very sweet and pleasant, and the flowers appear continually upon the earth." Thus ran my thoughts, shrinking more and more from the strain of my present life as relief from it drew near.

They were all very happy at Hazledene, unless it were poor old Terence, who had grown to have a worn and aged look of late, and, meeting me in the corridors, would stop as if he had something to say, shake his head, and pass on in silence. They were all very happy, and I could not flatter myself that I should be much missed—not even by papa. The romance that comes to a man late in life has all the brightness and intensity of the Indian summer—that sweet aftermath of the year's garnered harvest of days. All the pent-up tenderness of the long solitary years of his wanderings was cast at Eulalie's feet, and the sweetness of being loved—or deeming himself so—even as he loved, blinded him to all else, as the eyes that have gazed at the sun are blind to the things of earth around them.

He did not love me less; he never loved me less. Nay, I think the time came when he loved me more even than he had done in early years.

When the last evening at home came round, and the shadow of the coming parting was over me, my mind was in a strange whirl of conflicting feelings. On the one hand, glad even to thankfulness to think of Miss Mary's greeting and the peace and freedom that would be mine once more when I should reach my Land of Beulah, I was on the other smarting with the pain of that near good-bye that I had never said to my father without a pang, and that now seemed doubly bitter.

A miserable sense of distrust, too—a distrust not only of Lettie, that was nothing, but of Eulalie—had been growing in my heart. The mirror in the music-room had been the first to tell me that my once loved friend was no true gentlewoman; a hundred trifles light as air had told me the same story since. Her way of speaking to the servants when papa was not by jarred upon me, and

made me ready to fling myself into the fray, and take up arms in their behalf. I found, too, that she had turned the three dear ladies of Summerfield into ridicule to Miss Dove: a discovery that sent me promptly to the quiet of my own room, there to fight with a rising passion of indignation that bade fair to urge me on to untold imprudences of speech. "How could she—how could she, when they did so much for her!" I sobbed, as I paced up and down my room; and my heart added: "The old mirror told the truth; she is false—false—false!"

Well, the last evening at home came, and I got a sort of desperate feeling over me—a determination to be happy my own way for just that once, and, "after that, the Deluge."

When papa left the dining-room, and joined us in the drawing-room, I went straight up to him, slipped my hand within his arm, and put up my face for a kiss.

"You know I am going away to-morrow," I said, just as if there had been no one else in the room save he and I, "so I want to be spoiled and petted a bit to-night."

Miss Dove might blink like an owl, Eulalie might look calmly amazed—I cared not; I was going away to-morrow; I would have my fling to-night.

But, alas! the strongest of us cannot always count upon our physical endurance; and no sooner did papa fold his arm about me, and draw my head down to his shoulder, than the "climbing sorrow" took my breath, and set me sobbing. I set my teeth hard, but it was no use to struggle—give an inch to expression of feeling and it takes an ell—and in another moment I was clinging about papa's neck weeping bitterly.

"Dear me, the child is quite hysterical," said Lady Vansitart, hurrying to my side. The Dove made queer little noises with her lips expressive of surprise and sympathy, and fluttered to the assistance of her cousin.

Now, to be told that you are "quite hysterical," by the very individuals who have gradually goaded you into an utter abandonment of grief, is at all times a maddening experience, and one that places you apparently in the wrong; showing you up as a nervous, fanciful, silly person, upon whom your oppressors, superior from their self-possession and common-sense, look down, even while they pity.

Eulalie suggested a glass of sherry;

the Dove cooed out something about a "few drops of red lavender;" both urged my immediate adjournment to my own room. This last suggestion was carried out, though perhaps hardly as they had meant it should be; for papa went with me, and telling them to leave me to him, closed the door upon them both.

"Nell," he said, "is anything making you unhappy? Is there anything you would like to say to me? My darling, I could not bear to think of there being any want of confidence between us. I have fancied you changed of late; I said so to Eulalie."

"Yes," I said, twirling the ring upon his finger slowly round and round; "and what did she say?"

"She spoke very lovingly of you, Nell—as she always does—no one has your good so much at heart; but she hinted at some possible school trouble."

The hot blood surging to my face dried my tears; I grew quite strong again all in a moment.

"She is mistaken then," I said; "quite mistaken. I never had a school trouble in my life."

He drew a long breath as if some weight were taken off his mind, and then he stroked my hair tenderly and kissed me. I was his "own little girl" once more for that one short while—that one short while. Yet he seemed but half satisfied, for, after a long silence, he repeated his first question, looking wistfully in my face.

"Is there nothing you would like to say to me, Nell, before we part?"

I turned away.

"Nothing, nothing, dear papa," I said. For how could I complain to him of his wife? A woman must fall very low before she can teach her tongue to speak against another woman to that woman's husband, even in self-defence; gain what she may by such a course, the gain must turn to dust and ashes in her mouth.

As papa opened my door I heard the whiik of a dress at the end of the passage.

"What have they to gain by all this watching and plotting?" I wondered to myself as I lay awake that night.

The next morning I left Hazledene, and papa and Eulalie drove with me to the station. We left Miss Lettie behind, blinking and kissing her hand at the hall-door, while Terence smiled at me from the back-ground.

I had been round to the yard and patted Roland's head—nay, more, I had bent down and dropped a kiss upon his sleek, soft,

wrinkled forehead; and then he had lain down full length, and whined after me as I went away.

When I reached Summerfield Miss Mary was the first to greet me, and I had some ado to prevent repeating the quite hysterical proceedings of the night before, for I was glad and sorry all in a breath.

"Have you been happy, child, at home?" said my good friend, as she and I walked over to Bromley church to the Wednesday evening service some hours later.

"No; but I think I ought not to speak about it," I answered, steadying my voice as best I could, and feeling by no means sorry that we were in the dusky gloaming.

"Child," she said, "dear child."

"Yes," I put in quickly; "yes, that is what I am, and Summerfield—my Land of Beulah—is my home."

Summer was soon upon us in all its fullest beauty, and never had I seen the roses in our garden more plentiful than they were that year. I was very young still, and the young have a power of casting aside sorrow that belongs to them alone. The vividness of my trials at Hazledene faded, and before long I heard that, in consequence of Lady Vansitart being in delicate health, she and my father were going a yachting expedition in the Ladybird, and that the length of their cruise would be indefinite. I had a dear kind letter from papa telling me of all this. I had many other letters of like nature in the days that followed, now from this place, now from that, and always the same loving happy histories of the doings of himself and his wife, always full of the same tender thought for me.

So the summer passed away, and the leaves began to fall. Those from the chestnut tree in the coppice were striped orange and brown, while those of the Virginian creeper were more beautiful in their funereal garb of rich and glowing crimson than they had been in life. The rooks were blown about sadly by the wind; the hips and haws began to redden in the hedges.

By this time I had become quite a grown-up young lady; my dresses were always long now; I climbed no more trees, played no more at hare-and-hounds with Amy and her comrades. Books that had been unknown before, began to open their meaning to me as a new life; I read Evangeline instead of Ivanhoe; the Psalm of Life instead of the Swiss Family Robinson. Hitherto it had been enough to read of

the doings of men and women good and great; now I began to long to fashion my own life after the pattern of theirs—in a word, my girlhood felt the stirrings of the womanhood within me, as the pool of old was troubled by the angel's touch.

By the end of September my father and his wife had returned to Hazledene, where they found all things "swept and garnished" under the careful administration of Miss Dove, who appeared to have become a domestic fixture.

"Eulalie is much stronger now, and has lost her cough," papa wrote; "as for me, I am flourishing."

This was satisfactory, but nothing to what followed, for he told me he was coming to Summerfield for a long day. He added that he "knew me for an impatient little mortal as ever breathed," and so fixed upon a date only ten days off for this promised visit. Ten days is not a long time in itself, yet my longing made it seem so. The night before *the* day I could not sleep. I had heard nothing further from Hazledene, but I did not doubt that all was well—it was joy that kept me waking; they were strangely vivid thronging thoughts of happy past times that made me lie and count the hours chimed from Bromley church-tower—those memories of little things and little words that come to us in such quiet, silent hours, like angel visitants. Just as a faint streak of grey light fell upon my bedroom floor I sank into a heavy sleep, and then all the sweet memories fled like elves at dawn, for the dream-child came to me and wept and wailed, lifting its wee, white, weary face to mine.

"Nell, how heavy your eyes look," said Miss Mary, as I kissed her next morning; "you must go for a turn round the garden to brighten you up before Sir Charles comes; never mind your books, love—to-day must be a holiday."

Papa could not be at Summerfield before mid-day, so I had plenty of time "to brighten myself up," as Miss Mary said, and soon felt all the better for a stroll round the coppice, and a scramble in the wood.

As I came towards the house again,

Amy—now grown to be what she called "a great durl"—met me.

"Here's a funny, funny letter for 'oo, Nellie dear," she said, holding a small blue envelope high above her curly head.

It certainly was a funny letter. The address, beginning at the top of the left-hand corner, ran down-hill all the way nearly to the lower corner on the right; and the writer had evidently been mindful to practise economy in the matter of capitals, for he or she had bestowed one on *Vansitar*, but none on the "miss" that preceded it.

Laughing, I opened my letter, saying: "I really think, Amy, it must be from Mr. Twinkler."

Then I read it, but the words conveyed no meaning to my mind.

Amy, poor frightened child, clung to me, and I saw her lips move, but I heard nothing. I was deaf, and—yes, it must be so—mad! I looked wildly round as if for aid against some arm that was raised to strike me down where I stood.

Again my eyes grew to the words traced in strange uncertain characters upon the paper in my hand.

"DEAR MISS ELLEN,—Which it is my sorrowful dooty to tell you as my master died very suddint early this day. They said they would rite: but I know it was no such thing, or you would have cum. I have lost a good master, but he is gone to a Better world.—From your umble servant,
TERENCE MAHAFFY."

This time I grasped the meaning of what I read. I tried to take a step forward—to get to Miss Mary, I think—but the dank, leaf-strewn grass rose up to meet me, and, as I thrust out my hand to keep it off, all things—even my awful sorrow—faded into nothingness.

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SATURDAY, MAY 31, 1879.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

SEBASTIAN STROME.

CHAPTER V. A STUDENT OF DIVINITY.

THE sunshine of that same twenty-second of December (the forenoon of which has been already passed by the reader in the vicinity of Cedarhurst and Dene Hall) made but a poor show in London. If it was pallid in the country, in the city it acquired a dull brownish tint; insomuch that its broadest illumination was scarcely as dusky as a deep shadow would be in lands less solicitously veiled from the unceremonious stare of Phœbus. It persevered, however, with praiseworthy self-sacrifice, in forcing its ineffective way into the gloomy heart of many an unholy court and alley, rendering the squalor and uncleanness a little more conspicuous, and thereby reminding the inhabitants, not in the most complimentary manner, that there was a heaven above even them. It also laid itself against the swarthy faces of buildings in the more aristocratic quarters of the town; and brooded grimly over the blighted expanses of dingy turf in the parks. Its sombre traces were visible along Regent Street and the Strand, and even on the upper storeys of those narrow little streets which extend thence towards the river. From the windows of a lodging situated at the bottom of one of these lanes, it might be seen casting a dusky gleam upon the buttresses of a great shapeless bridge, across which smoky trains rumbled to and fro, and glinting dully athwart the muddy waves of the Thames, enlivened by the ponderous carage of slow barges and the fussy palpitation of steamboats. From these windows, also, the transcendent orb

of day himself might sometimes be detected, by a keen pair of eyes, travelling through space incognito, in the likeness of the crown of an ancient straw hat. The disguise was perfect.

Although the lodging we speak of was within half a minute's walk of the populous Strand, the noise of the traffic hardly penetrated to it. The quiet, however, was altogether a different thing from the quiet of the country: a sort of shadow of the everlasting hubbub still reached the ear, so that, had you been conveyed hither blindfold, you would have known (without being able to explain how) that you were in the midst of some great centre of human turmoil. The rooms themselves, on the second floor, were comfortably and even handsomely furnished. The sitting-room, which opened into the bedroom, had pale reddish-brown walls, and curtains and upholstery of olive-green stamped velvet; the long low bookcase and the study table were of oak; and above the mantelpiece was an oblong panelled looking-glass, with bevelled edges, mounted in a flat velvet-covered frame. It was evidently a room inhabited by a man; but it would not have been easy, from the testimony of its still life, to infer the man's age, character, or pursuits. There were to be seen few or none of the fanciful and bizarre knickknacks which commonly ornament the shelves and tables of young gentlemen of fashion. Here were no cartes of pretty actresses; nor were the walls enriched by studies of hunting-scenes in burnt-sienna, sap-green, and vermilion. There were no French mannikins in terracotta, no grotesque Japanese monsters, no boxing-gloves, and no tobacco-pipes. But upon the bookcase stood an excellent

model in bronze of the Venus of Milo; and round the room were hung, in plain frames, a proof engraving by Bettelini of Carracci's Jupiter and Juno; an original pen-drawing, by Correggio, of an angel writing; an etching of Michael Angelo's Temptation and Fall; and a tiny landscape study in water-colours by Turner. On the mantel-piece, at either side of the looking-glass, stood two tall tankards of ivory, carved with figures in high relief; and between them, in the centre, ticked an entirely modern and able-bodied clock, all gold and plate-glass, and with a countenance expressive of the time in four different quarters of the world. This clock, somehow, produced a refined and not offensive impression of cynicism. Against the corner of the book-case leaned three or four walking-sticks, whose most obvious peculiarity was their extraordinary thickness and heaviness. The book-case contained a large number of eighteenth century memoirs, French, German, and English; Heine's *Reise Bilder*; the novels of Fielding and of Jane Austen; the sonnets of Michael Angelo and Dante's *Vita Nuova*, bound together in one volume; the Bible, and Webster's Dictionary, in similar bindings; the works of Horace, Ovid, and Catullus; and on the lower shelf a great many volumes, chiefly by Jesuit writers, the titles of which would be unfamiliar to most English ears. Next the book-case stood a small rosewood harmonium; and, to make an end of this catalogue, in front of one of the windows was placed a sort of stand, holding a block of seasoned sandal-wood, in process of being translated into a richly carved casket. A collection of tools lay together on a lower shelf of the stand, and round about were scattered aromatic chips and sawdust.

A heavy green velvet portière hung in the doorway between this room and the bed-chamber, which contained nothing whatever beyond the ordinary appurtenances of cleanliness, repose, and comfort. The owner of the apartment stood before the dressing-table, gravely and vigorously brushing his light-brown curly hair with a couple of ivory-backed brushes. A majolica flower-pot, containing a single yellow narcissus, occupied the window-sill on his right.

The face reflected in the toilet-glass was young in years—under thirty—but mature in expression. The remarkable unevenness of its modelling gave the features, even when at rest, a singularly vivid stamp

of life: in what was really stable there appeared to be (by a familiar optical illusion) a continual flux and change. It might almost be said that, from the two sides of this visage, two distinct and yet interwoven characters looked simultaneously forth, producing upon the beholder an impression at once single and complex.

The eyebrows, several degrees darker than the hair, nearly met across the face, and the left eye looked almost black in comparison with the right one. The latter, moreover, had a slight cast in it, thereby enhancing in no small measure that peculiar duality of aspect already alluded to. The whole lower part of the face on the right side was less full and rounded than on the left; even the lips had a shorter curve on that side, imparting a flavour of quiet irony to the mouth. The nose was nearly straight; the short chin curved outward boldly, and had all the sharpness of contour of a cutting on an antique gem. The head was hollowed at the temples, and expanded nobly above; the hair growing thin on the region of the crown, but curling close and thick at the sides. Upon the left cheek-bone, just beneath the hollow of the eye, was a conspicuous black mole.

Such a face, dispassionately considered, would hardly be deemed beautiful; and if it had belonged to a woman, there would probably have been found no one to dispute its ugliness. As it was, many people maintained it to be superbly handsome. Many women, after being repelled by it at first, discovered in it on further acquaintance an indescribable fascination. Men were variously affected towards it, according as they liked or disliked what is intelligent, witty, bold, sarcastic, and inscrutable. Upon the whole, it made more enemies than friends, and more unavowed enemies than open ones. It was a face which sooner or later compelled you to take sides, so to speak; the only impossible attitude with regard to it being that of indifference.

There was something in the way this gentleman plied his hair-brushes, in the pose of his well-knit figure before the dressing-table, and in the air with which, having brushed his hair to his satisfaction, he struck the brushes together and put them down, that indicated self-possession and power. He now took from its peg, and slowly put on, a voluminous wadded dressing-gown, which had seen its best days so far as appearance went, but which was

none the less comfortable on that account. Wrapping this round him, and securing it at the waist by the tasselled cords, he pushed aside the portière and entered the sitting-room. The table was set for breakfast; but the covered dish of eggs and bacon, the pot of coffee, and the rack of toast, were disposed about the hearth, subject to the beneficent glow of the coals in the grate. Three or four letters lay beside the plate on the table. The gentleman took them up, glanced at the superscription, and laid them down again.

"Mrs. Blister means well, but she lacks discrimination," he said to himself, as he transferred the eatables from the hearth to the table, and took his seat in the chair. "A more capacious soul would have put the letters in the fire, and left the breakfast to take care of itself. These eggs have lost their succulence. Quarter to twelve, though!—serve me right. Is the world in general, I wonder, served right as seldom as I am? Well, at all events, last night puts me five hundred to the good. These be not fruits meet for repentance. Evidently I am a child of wrath, abandoned to my fate, else I shouldn't be so deliberately lucky. St. Augustine says that Providence made the taste of his worldly pleasures bitter in his mouth, to the end that he might seek pleasures without alloy. But where is the bitterness of five hundred pounds? Ha! I will ask Culver this evening. There are hopes for Culver. Tum, tum-tum, tum tilly-tum-tum ti! Mrs. Blister, that coffee was not up to your usual high coffee-mark. I shall console myself with a cigarette. The corner-stone of true dissipation is temperance. What does a man who smokes every day know of the joys of tobacco! How can a creature who pays his bills every week appreciate the luxury. Come, let us see what they are! Bill for the clock, 'as before rendered.' Well, the clock shall be paid for; it has stood by me well; I should often have been floundering in mere eternity but for the clock. Oh, livery-stable has heavy payments to make, has he! He shall wait; acute cases of distress always harden my heart. Why, here's something that actually is not a bill! Oh, oh! an anonymous letter, as sure as I'm a student in divinity!

"Mr. S. Strome is informed that the young lady who has been living for the last four months at Number Ninety-seven, Falkirk Road, needs looking after. She has not been behaving in a becoming or

prudent manner. There is an old admirer in the case. If you wish to save her from worse folly than she has committed already, you had better see her within the next twenty-four hours.'

"Now, what is at the bottom of this? Crafty men contemn anonymous letters; simple men admire them; wise men use them. This philanthropist seems to be adequately informed as to names and dates: is the rest a lie? 'An old admirer;' it can't be the sergeant? Pshaw!—Women are said to be unaccountable though. Suppose it were true; suppose she and her old admirer had made it up and eloped; would I be glad or sorry? Speak out, Sebastian! no one hears you. Humph! it's not to be decided in a moment. I'll see her first—I'll go at once! And run my head into the trap my nameless philanthropist has prepared for me? No. Jealousy is his bait, but he mistakes his fish. 'Worse folly,' is it? Why not the most sensible course in the circumstances? Why interfere? Tell the truth, Sebastian: you'd be glad to be rid of it all! Well. But it can't be true, she wouldn't do it! Still, how do I know? October—it's two months since I saw her. But the thing's impossible—it's absurd! Then the less reason why I should go there. Humph! it needs thinking about. I'll have a bout with the tools, and wait for an inspiration. So Providence hadn't quite given me up after all. 'And the taste of worldly pleasure was made bitter.' Confess, St. Augustine, among your many confessions, that you were the least taste in life of a humbug!"

Thus soliloquising the student in divinity left the breakfast-table, and betook himself to the stand in the window. He examined the half-finished sandal-wood box, holding it in various positions nearer or farther from his eyes, and frowning and whistling over it after the manner of a sagacious handicraftsman; then selected a file and a small chisel from the tools on the lower shelf, and settled himself quietly to work. To look at him, you would have said he was wholly absorbed in his occupation.

In the mid-career of his operative energy a knock came at the door. He worked on until it was repeated; then laid down his chisel, clenched his teeth together (a common trick of his, and in no way indicative of a specially savage mood), and said sharply, "Come in!"

The door opened, and a short, pale, plump young gentleman, with a heavy

mouth, sandy upright hair, and an eyeglass, made his appearance in a tentative manner on the threshold. Being invited to come forward, he did so in a still dubious but always amiable manner, keeping the eyeglass-furnished side of his person constantly in advance, and making short steps, as a person might do who walked in darkness, and feared invisible barriers or pitfalls.

"I'm afraid I'm interrupting you when you're busy," said this personage, in a slow-moving falsetto voice—a kind of voice more suggestive of chronic amiability than perhaps any other in the world. "I thought I'd look you up, you know, after last night."

"Sit down, Smillet, and try to be sympathetic for once in your life!" said the other, rising to meet and shake hands with him, and put him in a chair. "You are the only man in London in whom my soul yearns spontaneously to confide. Were you a Jesuit priest, and I a Roman Catholic, I'd make a permanent contract with you to confess me."

"Strome, how you do go on! Why would you do that, pray?"

"Never mind; asking questions is not your forte. We are spiritual complements of each other—positive and negative poles—plus and minus signs. Take your coat off."

Mr. Smillet observed his friend for a moment, his head tipped back, and his short thick nose appearing to snuff up the information which the eyes of a less near-sighted person would have afforded him. He then unbuttoned and disembarrassed himself of his top-coat, emitting little disjointed murmurs the while—inarticulate chirpings of conventional civility. He finally reseated himself, passed his plump taper-fingered hands up through his hair, settled his eyeglass, and smiled.

An odd sort of comradeship existed between these two dissimilar men. Smillet, some nine months previous to this date, had unexpectedly come into possession of a large property. Like Strome, he was the only son of a clergyman, and had always looked forward to following the clerical calling, and for some time he and Strome had pursued their studies together. Smillet, however, had had periods of great anxiety and spiritual distress as to his personal fitness for the cure of souls; and his naïve fears lest he might become the means of consigning multitudes, himself included, to everlasting torments, used greatly to

amuse his even-tempered but somewhat saturnine colleague; nor did the latter refrain, in a spirit half-curious, half-mischievous, from occasionally exasperating this sore place in poor Smillet's consciousness, and studying his shrinkings. But in the midst of these exercises came the grand transformation scene of the legacy. Smillet with three thousand a year might cut the Gordian knot of doubts which had harassed Smillet with two hundred and fifty. He gave up the ministry on the spot, and entered upon the life of a man about town. His inner man developed an unsuspected serenity and self-possession—his money actually seemed to do him spiritual good. He formally abjured all pretension to ascetic virtues and strict principles; but the effect of this abjuration was not to make him immoral, but to remove the temptations to be so which had previously beset him. He wore conspicuous cravats and knowing hats; he was to be seen at the fashionable clubs and theatres; he shunned not the society of the harum-scarum and the dissolute; but he failed to be dissolute or harum-scarum himself. He would sit for hours amidst his gay companions, piping out his little remarks or repartees as occasion demanded, lifting up his funny thick nose with its wide enquiring nostrils, smiling with inveterate good-humour, and readjusting his ever-unstable eyeglass, which he had adopted in lieu of spectacles at the outset of his fashionable career; but to active evil he seemed to have no inclinations. He enjoyed a quite illogical popularity among his associates, and even exercised—without himself being aware of it—a certain kind of influence over them. He appeared to like almost everybody; but to one person he was devoted, and that person was Sebastian Strome. He held and promulgated the belief that Strome was destined to be one of the grand figures of history. He discerned in him the elements of a Napoleon, a Luther, a Newton. And Strome, who recognised, or fancied he recognised, in some of Smillet's qualities and tendencies a quaint caricature of his own, behaved to him with a unique combination of mild toleration—or even deference—and of ironic brusqueness that might have puzzled a less simple person. He often spoke to his amiable little acquaintance with an openness and lack of reserve which he certainly would not have shown towards anyone of deeper intellectual perceptions; but Smillet accepted it all so

much as a matter-of-course, and of small importance at that, as quite to disarm mis-giving. He, moreover, delivered himself on all points with an unstudied bluntness that must occasionally have made Strome wince. But a really strong man enjoys receiving a fair home-thrust almost as much as giving one: it begets mutual confidence and respect.

"What is that you are working at so hard?" Smillet enquired, as Strome resumed his file and chisel, and applied himself again to the box.

"I'm working at my trade."

"No, you're not; preaching is your trade."

"Preaching is to be my profession: learn to discriminate your terms, Thomas Smillet. What a man does is not necessarily one with what he professes."

"Well, I always heard that to practise a trade is to do something you get paid for. Now you'll get paid for preaching, and you won't get paid for that thing—what is it? it smells nicely!—so I maintain that preaching is your trade."

"Good! Pity you didn't stick to preaching, Thomas; yours is the artless but pithy logic which belongs to the babe and suckling. Yes; I shall get paid for preaching, and paid well, too! Like twenty thousand other more or less needy gentlemen in England I shall, when asked whether I think in my heart that I am divinely called to the order and ministry of the priesthood, lay my hand over my pocket and reply, 'I think it.' Still, it's well to have two strings to one's bow, my Thomas."

"I say, Strome, a fellow like you—a really great man, you know—ought to get out of the habit of talking the way you do. It don't so much matter what you say to me, because I know you don't mean it, and when I thought of ordination, I knew it would be a lie that I should have to tell, and the thought of it bothered me so that I do believe I should have funk'd it when it came to the point, even if I hadn't inherited the—well, of course you've a right to grin, but I do believe so, really. But in your case, now, of course anybody can see that you are divinely called, if ever any man was, and so you've no business to pretend to make light of it in the way you do. What's the use of a great man except to be an example?—what I mean is, that's one of his uses. Besides, as for money, you'll be well enough off when you're—by-and-by, won't you?"

"By-and-by, perhaps," said Strome, blowing some sawdust out of a crevice. Presently he added: "What is your candid opinion, Smillet, of a man who marries a fortune?"

"I suppose you mean, what do I think of your marrying a fortune?"

"Well, then, what do you think of it?"

"Well, as to your case, of course I don't know any of the circumstances—any of the particulars; but, who ever the lady is, I think she's to be congratulated. She's got what no money can buy—that's a man of genius; and since you know you're a genius, and that money can't buy you, why I don't believe that any thought about her money ever entered your head, and I believe you engaged to marry her because you—because you loved each other, and that sort of thing!"

Strome eyed his plump little visitor out of his black eye, while his blue one seemed to be abstractedly weighing the value of his judgment. After a pause he said, clenching his teeth and smiling: "You have a genius for faith, Thomas; did you ever happen to move a mountain? But we were talking about carving. You see, a man must allow for vicissitudes. Suppose something were to happen to annul my marriage prospects and to compromise my ecclesiastical expectations. I should then have nothing but these tools to fall back on. The day may come when I shall have to carve children's toys for a living!"

"Oh, I daresay! I pity the children that go without toys until you make them some. Tell me something else!" squeaked Thomas gleefully. "By the look of things at the Mulberry last night, I shouldn't think money was what you'd ever need. I'm sure poor Culver doesn't think so. He says you won four hundred—"

"Hold your tongue, Thomas! Remember Mrs. Blister."

"My idea is, you know, you ought to give all that up—gambling and so on. Suppose it was to get out, where would you be?"

"At work on this box, of course."

"Oh, is that the something you were afraid might happen?"

"No."

Smillet crossed his legs and rubbed his hands up through his hair. "If you really don't feel inclined to go into the Church, Strome, why do you go?" he enquired. "There's enough else you could do; a fellow like you could do anything. You might be prime minister, or viceroy of

India, if you gave your mind to it; and then your gambling and that sort of thing would make less difference. There was Fox, for instance; he was a tremendous gambler, but he was a tremendous fellow in Parliament all the same."

"Why, did it never occur to you, Smillet, that the cause of Fox being such a tremendous gambler may have been that Parliament didn't give him excitement enough? We are not all of us so happily constituted as you, my trusty Tom; the demon in our brains demands employment or he will devour us. Now the one sole inexhaustible field for man or demon is the Church! One gets tired of other things. I can conceive that politics, or the army, or domestic bliss, or even the London season and the Mulberry Club, might pall upon a man in the course of ages. But the Church—never!"

All this was said by Strome with a certain picturesqueness of tone and facial expression which, more than anything else, had made people believe him handsome. There was also a greater than usual earnestness in his manner, though underlying all was the ineradicable affectation or self-consciousness which in a greater or less degree showed in his every word and act. It might be the affectation of a powerful mind; but there, at all events, it was. Tom Smillet threw up his nose, and, having snuffed a moment or two in silence, said:

"I can't make out whether you're joking or in earnest. If you're not in earnest, I think it is a poor joke; and if it's not a joke, I don't think it's to your credit. A fellow oughtn't to go into the Church just to keep himself amused. You'd better do like me!" concluded Thomas in his most imperturbable falsetto.

"Perhaps you're right, Tom; and the thing is not impossible. A wise man can become a fool, though the reverse is not true. But between being a Smillet and being a priest I see no other alternative for me. I should like to be a Jesuit."

"Come, I say! that's a Roman Catholic!"

"To show you the very bottom of my soul, Smillet—the Roman Catholic is the only genuine Church in existence! If I didn't know that the progress of Ritualism would save me the trouble, I'd go over at once. Ignatius Loyola! there was a man!"

"I won't sit still and hear such stuff!" declared Smillet, fixing his eyeglass with

immense decision. "I tell you what it is, Strome: your conversation is apt to be confoundedly stupid and objectionable, and I sometimes think it's odd how I and other fellows put up with it in the way we do. But it's the way you have of saying things that gets us; it doesn't seem to matter what you say. If I'd only heard another fellow tell me what you say, and hadn't seen you saying it myself, I should never have suspected there was anything great in you. I shouldn't, really."

"Upon my word, Tom, you are heroic this morning," said Strome, laughing; his laugh somewhat recalled his father's, and was his most agreeable manifestation. He relinquished his carving, and going to the cupboard beneath the writing-table, he brought out a bottle of wine and two glasses, which he filled. "Your visit has had such a good effect on me that I positively feel hospitable," he said. "Here's to the way you and I have of saying things; long may it continue to 'get them.' Have a cigarette?"

"Do you talk that way—about Jesuits and so on—to your governor?" demanded Smillet, after sipping his wine, and before lighting his cigarette.

"Let my governor alone, if you please," responded the other with sudden grimness. "Are you going to be at the club to-night?"

"I don't know; but that fellow Fawley is coming, they say."

"Humph! I've been expecting him to turn up for some time past. I wonder whether he plays as good a hand at cards as when we were at Oxford?"

"You were great cronies at Oxford, weren't you?"

"Bosom friends, Thomas; we lived but for each other. Then came misunderstandings—coldness; and I became prematurely a sceptic and a sneering, cynical worldling; while he, being already a Jew, could do no more than remain what he was—unless he improved, that is to say. However, I mean to make it all up with him to-night."

"Oh, by-the-bye, what are you going to do between now and dinner? Because, if you like, I'll drive you round to my place to lunch, and then I've got tickets to hear Jenny Lind at three. Will you come?"

Strome did not immediately answer. He leant back in his chair, with his arms folded, and his black eye fixed upon his visitor. The peculiarity of Strome's double-barrelled gaze, which left its object in doubt whether he were being pointed at

or not, and which therefore took him in a comparatively defenceless state, was never able to disconcert Smillet, for the simple reason that he was too near-sighted to be aware of it. Strome, however, had no present idea of disconcerting him.

"Are you superstitious, Smillet?" he demanded.

"Superstitious!" cried Smillet, with genial scorn; "do I look like it?"

"Everybody is either superstitious or religious, you know," returned the other with a smile. "I confess I am inclined to be superstitious this morning. I am going to settle a question which may affect my whole future existence by an appeal to chance; and you, Thomas Smillet—tremble not—are to be the instrument of fate. Do you see this piece of paper?" he continued, holding up the anonymous letter.

"Well, what of it?"

"It is inscribed with certain mystic words, which render it as different from any other paper in the world as I, O Thomas, am different from you. I now, as you see, tear this magic scroll into two pieces of unequal length; I fold them up into small compass, and taking one in each hand, and holding my hands behind my back, I bid you declare whether the longer piece be in my right hand or in my left?"

Smillet, highly entertained with this fantastic preliminary, put himself in a judicial attitude, and prepared to choose.

"Oh, wait a moment, though," he piped; "you haven't told me what's to happen in case I guess right?"

"In that case I accept your invitation to luncheon and Jenny Lind."

"Is that all? You said it would affect your whole future."

"You forget, Thomas, that by going with you I shall be prevented from going somewhere else. No more words—choose."

"Well, now," said Smillet, prodding himself with his eye-glass, and manifestly exhilarated by the importance of the crisis, "suppose, now—I mean, I choose—the right—no, I'll choose the left hand."

"Jenny Lind it is," said Strome, examining the two fragments of paper with a smile. "All right; that agrees with my own judgment, not that I really believe it makes a particle of odds, one way or the other."

He put the torn letter on the fire, and having exchanged his dressing-gown for out-door garments, he took his hat and one of his massive walking-sticks, and followed Smillet out of the room.

THE TENTH HUSSARS AND THE CABUL RIVER.

THE *noyade* of the Tenth Hussars in the *Câbul* River, on the night of March 31st, 1879, will not have been offered up in vain to the Nemesis that always overtakes human errors and backslidings, if we could only be certain that the military authorities would profit by the melancholy experience, and turn some of that attention, which they now devote so assiduously to book-tests and *Kriegspiele*, to practical instruction in the various situations that constantly arise in war. The disaster by which Lieutenant Harford and forty-six troopers of a "crack" hussar regiment have been overwhelmed in an Afghan torrent, is not the first of the kind, as will be seen, that has happened to British cavalry during the course of a campaign, and it would be very pleasant to think that it will remain the last. But it is much to be feared that it will not be so, unless an unhopèd-for access of wisdom should occur in high places. This particular accident, in all probability, could not have been altogether avoided by any human foresight, short of not crossing the river at all at night-time, and may be pretty safely said to belong to that class of risks which must always be encountered in war. *Chi non risica, non rosica*, as the Italians put it. It is, however, very possible to reduce the chances of such accidents occurring, and, at all events, to economise the loss to human life which attends all hazardous operations, by the exercise of a little common sense before and not after the event. It is unfortunate that the public interest cannot be sustained for more than nine days, and sometimes not even so long, on any one subject, however grave; and unless that interest can be kept sufficiently alert, so as to bring pressure to bear on the magnates of Whitehall and Pall Mall, there is little hope of ever seeing any thorough or intelligent reform in anything connected with the army. Unless the *vox populi* will it, any reform which does not commend itself to those who inherit and carry out the musty traditions of the Horse Guards, is well-nigh impossible. It is very obvious that the only way to reduce the chances of a recurrence of such disasters as that of the *Câbul* River to a reasonable minimum, is to insist that the men of all branches of the service should be rigorously instructed in the art of swimming, as part of their ordinary drill, and that the mounted

branches, and a certain proportion of each dismounted corps, should be taught how to cross rivers with horses. As has been recently remarked by the military critic of the leading journal, there are few officers in the service, and still fewer men, who have ever swum with a horse across a stream fifty yards in breadth. It is a feat that at any moment, on service, an orderly or even a whole regiment may be called on to perform; and yet this obviously necessary branch of a soldier's, and especially of a cavalry soldier's, education is in our army entirely neglected. In most of the Continental armies, swimming, mounted and dismounted, enters into the ordinary summer drills as an important part of the soldier's instruction. In the United Kingdom troops are now, as a rule, moved rapidly and luxuriously from one set of quarters to another by steamers or railways. There are few rivers of any magnitude in these islands, and all our streams, great and small, are spanned by numerous bridges. Even when a regiment marches to new quarters, the routes are everywhere so laid down as to utilise the bridges, as a matter of course, and thus obviate the necessity of our warriors wetting themselves or tarnishing their uniforms and accoutrements. Under these circumstances, the idea of teaching British soldiers how to cross rivers when neither a permanent bridge, nor the materials and skill for constructing a military one are available, has never entered into the heads of our authorities. They seem to have altogether left out of their calculations the fact that Great Britain is almost constantly at war in some quarter or other of the globe, and mostly—as befits “the pioneer of civilisation”—in those very quarters of it where bridges are unknown, and where the transport of pontoons, and other materials for making temporary bridges, is almost impossible, as in Zululand. This important branch of a soldier's training was not, however, always thus neglected in our army. During the course of the great Continental wars of the last century and the beginning of the present, when British troops were campaigning in Germany, the Low Countries, and the Peninsula, our horsemen were frequently exercised in crossing their native streams, in order to prepare them for the sterner realities of war abroad; and it has been lately recalled to mind that the light troop of the Scots Greys, a hundred years ago, were constantly employed in cross-

ing and recrossing the Thames above Maidenhead.

History presents us with innumerable instances of large bodies of horsemen crossing rivers of greater or lesser depth. No river from the Amoor to the Volga, or from the Indus to the Danube, ever checked the career of the hordes of warriors, for the most part mounted, who followed Attila, Chingiz, Hologou, Batu, or Timoor-i-Lung; and the mail-clad Crusaders crossed many a stream of Asia Minor and Syria, on the march to Palestine, with trifling loss, though Kaiser Friedrich Barbarossa met his fate in one of them. But, as a rule, both Scythian nomad and Christian knight divested himself of the heavier portions of his chain or plate-mail, before trusting himself to the mercies of any deep or obstructive torrent. It may, too, be reasonably assumed that Sir Walter Scott indulged in considerable poetic license when he made “Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,” even although mounted on “the wightest steed” in Branksome stables, during his midnight ride to Melrose, perform that wonderful feat in natation,

Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.

The stark moss-trooper's exploit, albeit savouring more of romance and poetry than reality, is so spiritedly described by the poet-laureate of his clan, that it will bear quotation, even if it only serves to show the almost impossible nature of it:

At the first plunge the horse sank low,
And the water broke o'er the saddle-bow;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;
For he was barded from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggled by the dashing spray;
Yet, through good heart, and Our Lady's grace,
At length he gain'd the landing-place.

To anyone who has ever had to swim a river on horseback in the ordinary attire of a white man of the present day, the foregoing account sounds very much like one of those tales that are only to be told to the marines. A modern troop-horse, encumbered with his rider, his rider's and his own paraphernalia, would find it a difficult matter enough to keep only his nostrils out of water; and how the “dapple-grey steed” of Deloraine, “barded” or enveloped as he was in defensive armour “from counter to tail,” and bestridden by

a stalwart mail-clad riever, ever managed to rise again after that "first plunge," is one of those things that only a poet can evolve out of his inner consciousness, or pretend to understand.

When rivers have to be crossed, it is, of course, the duty of the Intelligence Department to seek out a practicable ford or fords, and to obtain all the information possible concerning them. Where fords do not exist, boats, rafts, &c., may be employed, but these can rarely be found or made in sufficient numbers to ferry over a considerable body of troops where celerity and secrecy are required. Time and circumstances, moreover, may not permit of a pontoon or flying-bridge being thrown over. In such cases there is nothing for it, so far as cavalry are concerned, except swimming. But even where fords are pronounced practicable, the passage of a cavalry regiment, where the stream is broad or turbulent, is attended with risk. Macaulay, in his work on Military Reconnaissance, &c., says: "Fords should not be deeper than three feet for infantry, four feet for cavalry, and two and a half feet for artillery and ammunition waggons. If a ford be situated where the current is rapid, its depth should be diminished in proportion, from half to one foot for cavalry, and from nine inches to one and a half feet for infantry. Having reconnoitred a ford, it will be prudent to plant upright pickets in the stream, notched to show the variation of the depth at different times. In mountainous countries these variations will be considerable in winter; large stones are also frequently found in fords among hills, rendering the passage difficult for cavalry, insurmountable for carriages. In sandy countries, and where alluvial deposits are frequent, fords may be found for infantry in small numbers, but impracticable for cavalry, more so for carriages; sometimes appearing to have a firm and solid bed, but proving, on critical examination, soft and shifting. The best have a gravelly bottom. Great care must be taken in the examination of fords across streams or rivers threading a morass or boggy district. A brown, rushy bottom may generally be trusted; but bright green spots are more delusive. A row of pickets planted on either side of the ford, and retained by cordage, will be found useful, as well in the crossing as for the indication of its direction. When a river offers a ford of sufficient width, and the stream

is rapid, it is sometimes expedient to use the cavalry to cut the current of the water obliquely, and make the infantry cross lower down." It is one thing to lay down a regulation depth of water for the various arms of the service, and another to find all fords sufficiently accommodating in this respect, for a four-foot ford for horsemen would obviously be too much for the passage of guns, which would have to seek another ford, or be transported across in boats, or on rafts or bridges. In the rivers of India and Afghanistan, which take their rise amid the snows and glaciers of the Himalaya and Hindoo Koosh, an additional danger lurks in the sudden freshets or "spates" to which they are liable at certain times of the year; and to these freshets must, in a great measure, be ascribed the catastrophes which overtook the Tenth Hussars the other day, as well as the Sixteenth Hussars nearly forty years ago.

When fords are impracticable or non-existent, recourse must be had to swimming. The well-known and accomplished Nolan, who had served in the Austrian cavalry before entering that of his own country, says in his Cavalry Tactics: "Rivers should not stop cavalry. There are plenty of examples of cavalry swimming rivers without loss. For instance, the night before the battle of Hastembach, three hundred horsemen, with as many foot soldiers, were detached from the camp of the Duc de Broglie, and swam the Weser, the foot soldiers holding on to the horses' manes. Again, twenty-four squadrons of Austrian cuirassiers swam the river Main on the 3rd of September, 1796, leaving the bridge for the use of the infantry." But the Main, at the point of crossing, had not a particularly rapid current; the force of it, such as it was, being broken by the bridge aforesaid, above the place where the cuirassiers crossed. The cuirasses, back-pieces, and jack-boots, moreover, were laid aside before the passage commenced.

Officers and colonists who may be fairly admitted to be experts in the matter, have stated their theories as to the best mode of swimming with horses. There appears to be some little divergence in the opinions as to which is the best mode, but like most other things in this world, it probably depends on circumstances, and experience gained from frequent practice. In crossing a ford, a trooper, at present, keeps his saddle till the last moment, because his

weight, with that of his accoutrements, helps to steady the horse on its legs; but when crossing a deep river, he first ties the bit and bridoon reins in a loose knot, and then, knowing that a horse turns on its right side to swim, he glides off on the off side, seizes the mane with his right hand, and throwing himself backwards flat on the water, is thus towed to shore. The horse rarely requires guidance, but should it do so, the slightest touch on the rein on either side suffices. Some writers advocate the rider's holding on by the mane, others by the tail, while it is generally admitted that keeping the seat in the saddle, though better in some respects than other methods, is very distressing to both man and beast, which is a grave objection in a long swim. As Colonel Manderson of the Royal Artillery, however, justly points out: it is all very well to talk about holding on by the mane or the tail; but what is to be done when, as in the case of the Tenth Hussars in the Cábul river, the horses have got neither manes nor tails to speak of which can be clutched? As often happens in a long and trying campaign, very few troop-horses at the present moment in Afghanistan have any manes left, except near the ears; the remainder, with the best portion of their tails, having been rubbed off by the friction of their blankets, which cover them from ears to tail.

The hazardous nature of crossing a mountain-fed stream, and more especially at night, may be more vividly present to the reader after a description of the river of Cábul, or Jui Shir, which is the only great tributary of the Indus from the west, draining the district of Logurh, the valley of Cábul, the Sufaid Koh (White Mountains), and the southern slope of the Hindoo Koosh. It is generally supposed to rise at Sir-i-Chusmuh (Spring Head), at an altitude of eight thousand four hundred feet above the sea. Here a very copious spring bursts out of the ground, forming the chief source of the principal stream; but the extreme head is about twelve miles farther west on the eastern slope of the Oonna ridge; and in its course it is joined by many tributaries from much higher regions. It is, in the beginning of its career, an inconsiderable stream, everywhere fordable, for sixty miles as far as the city of Cábul, a short distance beyond which it receives the Logurh from the south, and thenceforward has a rapid current of four to five miles an hour with

a great body of water. Forty miles below Cábul it receives from the north the Punjshir, which has a course of one hundred and twenty miles and brings a large accession of water, draining the Kohistán of Cábul and the adjacent sides of the Hindoo Koosh. About fifteen miles below this point the Tagoa, also from the Hindoo Koosh, with a course of eighty miles, joins it from the north. From the Hindoo Koosh again, some twenty miles farther down, it receives the united waters of the Alishang and Alingar, each after a career of about one hundred and twenty miles. Another twenty miles and the Soorkh Rood, or Red River, falls into it from the south after a north-easterly course of seventy miles. As this affluent drains the northern slopes of the lofty Sufaid Koh, it shoots along with great rapidity, and discharges a considerable bulk of water. Twenty miles farther on its eastward course, the Cábul is joined by the Koonur, or Kamah; which, after rising in Chitral, on the southern declivity of the Hindoo Koosh, and flowing through the mysterious Kafiristán, after a run of two hundred and twenty miles tumbles into the main drain a few miles beyond Jellalabad. At the ford above this last junction the Eleventh Bengal Lancers and the Tenth Hussars made the memorable passage. It can be imagined that, after all these accessions, the Cábul becomes a large stream, sweeping with prodigious velocity and violence along the northern base of the Khaibar Mountains; and, in consequence of its boiling eddies and furious surges, not navigable except on rafts of hides, and especially dangerous for the transit of heavily encumbered horsemen. Sir Alexander Burnes, on his return to India from his mission to Cábul, in May, 1838, instead of rethreading the Khaibar Pass, went down the Cábul River, from Jellalabad to the Indus, on a raft. He says: "The excitement in descending the river of Cábul is greater than the danger; nevertheless, much care and dexterity are required to avoid the projecting rocks and the whirlpools which they form. We were caught in one of them called Fuzl. One raft revolved in it for two hours; and it was only extricated by the united exertions of the crews of other rafts. The Camel's Neck, or the far-famed Shootur-Gurdun, presented an appearance, as we approached it, so grand and impressive, that it will never be effaced from memory. We had dropped down the river for half an hour under

heavy clouds, precipitous rocks rose some thousand feet high on either side, and the stream was deep and glassy. At length we saw, at the termination of a long vista which lay before us, the water boiling, or rather heaving itself up. Before we reached this point the rain fell in torrents, the lightning flashed, and tremendous claps of thunder reverberated from cliff to cliff. In the midst of the storm we passed down the rapids, the water dashing wildly upon us, and the wind roaring and hissing through the chasm. The scene altogether was sublime, almost terrific." No doubt the luckless squadron of the Tenth, or a part of it, missing the direct line of the ford, and getting into deep water, was involved in one of these eddies, or whirlpools, aggravated by a sudden freshet.

A very similar catastrophe to that which has happened to the Tenth Hussars befell the Sixteenth Lancers some forty years ago, when crossing the River Jhelum on their return with Lord Keane and the head-quarters of the Army of the Indus from Afghanistan. In traversing the Panjaub (which did not then belong to the British Indian Empire) on their way from Peshawar to Ferozapore, one of our frontier cantonments in those days, the troops under Lord Keane had to cross the Jhelum among other rivers. This river runs close past the town of the same name from east to west. The ford lies about three-quarters of a mile higher up the stream to the eastward, and there is a village about half a mile from the town between it and the ford. From a point a little above the village, the ford takes a diagonal direction to the right down the river to the centre, and then takes another diagonal course up-stream; so that the ford describes two sides of a triangle, which, where the two sides meet, points down the current; the landing-places being opposite to each other on the north and south banks of the river. The ferry is close to the town, where there were twenty large and six small boats. The river, opposite to the town, was about three hundred yards wide, but on account of the zig-zag direction taken by the ford, the actual distance from bank to bank was about five hundred yards. The water was more than three feet deep, very cold, and with a strong current near the south bank. From the report of the duffadar (native non-commissioned officer of cavalry), who had been sent on some days before, the depth of water was said to be up to the

middle of a man, and was, therefore, not considered too deep for cavalry to ford. But since the duffadar had crossed, the river must have risen, for it fell full eighteen inches in one night, disclosing a sandbank in the morning which had been invisible the day before. This fall at that time of the year could only have been occasioned by a previous sudden freshet, since, in the cold season, rivers, as a rule, are not given to fall suddenly. There was a further fall of six inches the day after. From information that had also been obtained from Lieutenant Conolly, whose party had crossed eighteen days before, it was concluded that the ford was quite practicable. The adjutant of the Sixteenth—one of the Havelocks, and a brother of the late Sir Henry—had ridden across and returned, reporting the ford practicable. Stakes were driven in to mark its course, and the provost-sergeant, by general order of the day previous, was posted at its entrance with his detachment to see that the camels were sent across in the order that they came up to the bank, and that no crowding occurred. The regiment, after a march of twelve miles from Rhotas, arrived near the town of Jhelum about half-past eight o'clock on the morning of December 11th, 1839. Soon after, it entered the ford by threes, and passed to the middle of the stream without accident. There, however, the guiding stakes were lost to view by the interposition of a line of camels then crossing over. The leading troopers tried to pass these beasts by going beyond them; but they went unfortunately to the right, and lower down the stream, by which they immediately got into deep water and the full strength of the current, and the horses were forced to swim. From the banks it was peculiarly distressing to witness the struggles that ensued. Horse after horse with its rider disappeared and suddenly rose again, and the impression on the minds of the spectators was that a troop at least would be lost. Boats were despatched to the scene of the disaster, but could not arrive in time to save many. The remainder of the regiment crossed over quite safely by taking the ford to the left and up-stream. On mustering the corps it was found that Captain Hilton, a corporal, and nine troopers, with their horses, were missing. The bodies of the captain and of four of the men were recovered, and buried close to the camp, opposite the town of Jhelum; a monument

being subsequently erected on the spot by the regiment. Lieut.-Colonel Cureton, commanding the regiment, who was afterwards killed at Bamnuggur in the second Sikh War, was nearly drowned by his charger taking fright at some camels and falling back in the water, thus compelling him to swim, hampered with his sword, and cap fastened under his chin. Lieutenant Pattle, now a lieutenant-general, had a very narrow escape, and was saved by Trooper Dobbin. Lord Keane was soon on the spot, and remained for some time, visibly affected by the sad scene. Neither men nor horses had any chance of saving themselves by swimming; hampered as the former were by their chin-straps, swords, and accoutrements, and the latter fettered by their bridles, martingales, and trappings. The horses, moreover, were tired and heated by a long march, and neither they nor their riders ought to have been allowed to enter the cold stream when they did. The thermometer at five o'clock in the morning had marked forty degrees; and the waters of the Jhelum, at the ford, have only a course of some forty miles from the snows of Cashmere in winter. Several men died subsequently from the effects of the immersion in the icy stream.

Two days afterwards, on December 13th, taught by the melancholy experience of the Sixteenth Lancers, the old Third Bengal Native Light Cavalry crossed over at three o'clock in the afternoon, in order that the sowars and horses should not suffer from the cold water in the morning after their long march. The thermometer that morning at five o'clock stood at twenty-two degrees in the open air, and at half-past eight at thirty-six degrees. The water of the river was scarcely warmed at the surface by the sun, and the day was very cold. The officers were ordered by Lord Keane to cross in boats, together with all the sowars who could not swim. The horses crossed in watering order, the saddles and trappings being sent over in boats. The horses of each troop passed over singly with a horse's length between each, and each troop was led by a guide procured from the town. The assistant-quartermaster-general, Lieutenant, now General Sir Arthur Becher, was sent with boats to station them in a position on each side of the centre point of the river near the ford, to prevent any horses, camels, or elephants passing below the line of demarcation, and the river was re-staked. The horses did at times get into deep water, but there was no accident,

though one was threatened at a moment when two or three elephants belonging to Lena Singh, the Sikh Mehmandar, were driven recklessly straight across the river, at the imminent risk of causing a stampede among the horses.

The foregoing details afford some points of comparison with the particulars, so far as they are yet known, of the disaster of the 31st March last. That accident, as has already been said, could not probably have been altogether avoided by any human foresight, unless the passage had been postponed till daylight, which perhaps the exigencies of the situation would not allow. The lancers crossed the Jhelum with ordinary precautions, ending in the loss of eleven valuable lives; while the Third Bengal Light Cavalry, with extraordinary safeguards, crossed without the loss of a man. The hussars were very unfortunate; whereas the native corps brigaded with them, the Eleventh Bengal Lancers—both curiously the Prince of Wales's regiments—who in this case preceded their British comrades, were very lucky. The Sixteenth crossed in daylight with a staked ford; the Tenth at night, when a staked ford would have been of little use. One sage military critic of the press has laid it down, *ex cathedra*, that the ford ought to have been lighted with torches—a singular notion; for the object of crossing at all in the night was secrecy, which would have been obviously defeated by the proposed illumination. The principal causes of the grief in the Cābul, as in the Jhelum, were without doubt sudden freshets, the icy current, and the hampered conditions under which both men and horses were sent into the water, aggravated in the case of the Tenth by the boulders, eddies, and darkness.

SONG.

STAY, sweet day, for thou art fair,
Fair, and full, and calm;
Crowned through all thy golden hours,
With Love's freshest, purest flowers,
Strong in Faith's unshaken powers,
Rich in Hope's bright balm.

Stay, what chance and change may wait,
As you glide away;
Now is all so glad and bright.
Now we breathe in sure delight!
Now we smile in Fate's despite.
Stay with us, sweet day.

Ah! she cannot, may not stop;
All things must decay;
So with head, and heart, and will,
Take the joy that lingers still,
Take the pause in strife and ill,
Prize the passing day.

VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XLVII. OVER THE SUMMER SEA.

ROBIE and Vixen left the battlements and descended the narrow stairs, and went side by side, through sunlit fields and lanes, to the old manor-house, happy with that unutterable, immeasurable joy which belongs to happy love, and to love only; whether it be the romantic passion of a Juliet leaning from her balcony, the holy bliss of a mother hanging over her child's cradle, or the sober affection of the wife who has seen the dawn and close of a silver wedding, and yet loves on with love unchangeable—a monument of constancy in an age of easy divorce.

The distance was long; but to these two the walk was of the shortest. It was as if they trod on flowers or airy cloud, so lightly fell their footsteps on the happy earth.

What would Miss Skipwith say? Vixen laughed merrily at the image of that cheated lady.

"To think that all my Egyptian researches should end in—Antony!" she said, with a joyous look at her lover, who required to be informed which Antony she meant.

"I remember him in Plutarch," he said.

"He was a jolly fellow."

"And in Shakespeare."

"Connais pas," said Rorie. "I've read some of Shakespeare's plays, of course, but not all. He wrote too much."

It was five o'clock in the afternoon when they arrived at Les Tourelles. They had loitered a little in those sunny lanes, stopping to look seaward through a gap in the hedge, or to examine a fern which was like the ferns of Hampshire. They had such a world of lovers' nonsense to say to each other, such confessions of past unhappiness, such schemes of future bliss.

"I'm afraid you'll never like Briarwood as well as the Abbey House," said Rorie humbly. "I tried my best to patch it up for Lady Mabel; for you see, as I felt I fell short in the matter of affection, I wanted to do the right thing in furniture and decorations. But the house is lamentably modern and commonplace. I'm afraid you'll never be happy there."

"Rorie, I could be happy with you if our home were no better than the charcoal-burner's hut in Mark Ash," protested Vixen.

"It's very good of you to say that. Do

you like sage-green?" Rorie asked with a doubtful air.

"Pretty well. It reminds me of mamma's dressmaker, Madame Theodore."

"Because Mabel insisted upon having sage-green curtains and chair-covers, and a sage-green wall with a chocolate dado—did you ever hear of a dado?—in the new morning-room I built for her. I'm rather afraid you won't like it; I should have preferred pink or blue myself, and no dado. It looks so much as if one had run short of wall-paper. But it can all be altered by-and-by, if you don't like it."

They found Miss Skipwith pacing the weedy gravel walk in front of her parlour window, with a disturbed air, and a yellow envelope in her hand.

"My dear, this has been an eventful day," she exclaimed. "I have been very anxious for your return. Here is a telegram for you; and as it is the first you have had since you have been staying here, I conclude it is of some importance."

Vixen took the envelope eagerly from her hand.

"If you were not standing by my side, a telegram would frighten me," she whispered to Roderick. "It might tell me you were dead."

The telegram was from Captain Winstanley to Miss Tempest:

"Come home by the next boat. Your mother is ill, and anxious to see you. The carriage will meet you at Southampton."

Poor Vixen looked at her lover with a conscience-stricken countenance.

"Oh, Rorie, and I have been so wickedly, wildly happy!" she cried, as if it were a crime to have so rejoiced. "And I made so light of mamma's last letter, in which she complained of being ill. I hardly gave it a thought."

"I don't suppose there is anything very wrong," said Rorie, in a comforting tone, after he had studied those few bold words in the telegram, trying to squeeze the utmost meaning out of the brief sentence. "You see, Captain Winstanley does not say that your mother is dangerously ill, or even very ill; he only says ill. That might mean something quite insignificant—hay-fever, or neuralgia, or a nervous headache."

"But he tells me to go home—he who hates me, and was so glad to get me out of the house."

"It is your mother who summons you home, no doubt. She is mistress in her own house, of course."

"You would not say that if you knew Captain Winstanley."

They were alone together on the gravel walk, Miss Skipwith having retired to make the tea in her dingy parlour. It had dawned upon her that this visitor of Miss Tempest's was no common friend; and she had judiciously left the lovers together. "Poor misguided child!" she murmured to herself pityingly; "just as she was developing a vocation for serious things! But perhaps it is all for the best. I doubt if she would ever have had breadth of mind to grapple with the great problems of natural religion."

"Isn't it dreadful?" said Vixen, walking up and down with the telegram in her hand. "I shall have to endure hours of suspense before I can know how my poor mother is. There is no boat till to-morrow morning. It's no use talking, Rorie." Mr. Vawdrey was following her up and down the walk affectionately, but not saying a word. "I feel convinced that mamma must be seriously ill; I should not be sent for unless it were so. In all her letters there has not been a word about my going home. I was not wanted."

"But, dearest love, you know that your mother is apt to think seriously of her wishes."

"Rorie, you told me an hour ago that she was looking ill when last you saw her."

Roderick looked at his watch. "There is one thing I might do," he said musingly. "Has Miss Skipwith a horse and trap?"

"Not the least bit in the world."
"That's a pity; it would have saved time. I'll get down to St. Helier's somehow, telegraph to Captain Winstanley to enquire the exact state of your mother's health, and not come back till I bring you his answer."

"Oh, Rorie, that would be good of you!" exclaimed Vixen. "But it seems too cruel to send you away like that; you have been travelling so long. You have had nothing to eat. You must be dreadfully tired."

"Tired? Have I not been with you? There are some people whose presence makes one unconscious of humanity's weaknesses. No, darling, I am neither tired nor hungry; I am only ineffably happy. I'll go down and set the wires in motion; and then I'll find out all about the steamer for to-morrow morning, and we'll go back to Hampshire together."

And again the rejoicing lover quoted the Laureate:

"And on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold;
And far across the hills they went,
In that new world which is the old."

Rorie had to walk all the way to St. Helier's. He despatched an urgent message to Captain Winstanley, and then dined temperately at a French restaurant not far from the quay, where the bon vivants of Jersey are wont to assemble nightly. When he had dined he walked about the harbour, looking at the ships, and watching the lights begin to glimmer from the barrack-windows, and the straggling street along the shore, and the far-off beacons shining out, as the rosy sunset darkened to purple night.

He went to the office two or three times before the return message had come; but at last it was handed to him, and he read it by the office-lamp:

"Captain Winstanley, Abbey House, Hampshire, to Mr. Vawdrey, St. Helier's."

"My wife is seriously ill, but in no immediate danger. The doctors order extreme-quiet; all agitation is to be carefully avoided. Let Miss Tempest bear this in mind when she comes home."

Roderick drove back to Les Tonnelles with this message, which was in some respects reassuring, or at any rate afforded a certainty less appalling than Violet's measureless fears.

Vixen was sitting on the pilgrim's bench beside the manor-house gateway, watching for her lover's return. Oh, happy lover, to be thus watched for and thus welcomed; thrice, nay, a thousandfold happy in the certainty that she was his own for ever! He put his arm round her, and they wandered along the shadowy lane together, between dewy banks of tangled verdure, luminous with glow-worms. The stars were shining above the overarching roof of foliage, the harvest moon was rising over the distant sea.

"What a beautiful place Jersey is!" exclaimed Vixen innocently, as she strolled lower down the lane, circled by her lover's arm. "I had no idea it was half so lovely. But then, of course, I was never allowed to roam about in the moonlight. And, indeed, Rorie, I think we had better go in directly. Miss Skipwith will be wondering."

"Let her wonder, love. I can explain everything when we go in. She was young herself once upon a time, though one would

hardly give her credit for it; and you may depend she has walked in this lane by moonlight. Yes; by the light of that very same sober old moon, who has looked down with the same indulgent smile upon endless generations of lovers."

"From Adam and Eve to Antony and Cleopatra," suggested Vixen, who couldn't get Egypt out of her head.

"Antony and Cleopatra were middle-aged lovers," said Rorie. "The moon must have despised them. Youth is the only season when love is wisdom, Vixen. In later life it means folly and drivelling, wrinkles badly hidden under paint, pencilled eyebrows, and false hair. Aphrodite should be for ever young."

"Perhaps that's why the poor thing puts on paint and false hair when she finds youth departed," said Vixen.

"Then she is no longer Aphrodite, but a wicked old harridan," answered Rorie.

And then he began to sing, with a rich full voice that rolled far upon the still air:

"Gather ye rose-buds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow will be dying.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And whilst ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may for ever tarry."

"What a fine voice you have, Rorie!" cried Vixen.

"Have I really? I thought it was only Lord Mallow who could sing. Do you know that I was desperately jealous of that nobleman once—when I fancied he was singing himself into your affections. Little did I think that he was destined to become my greatest benefactor."

"I shall make you sing duets with me, sir, by-and-by."

"You shall make me stand on my head, or play clown in an amateur pantomime, or do anything ridiculous, if you like. 'Being your slave what can I do——'"

"Yes, you must sing Mendelssohn with me. I would that my Love, and Greeting."

"I have only one idea of greeting, after a cruel year of parting and sadness," said Rorie, drawing the bright young face to his own, and covering it with kisses.

Again Vixen urged that Miss Skipwith would be wondering; and this time with such insistence, that Rorie was obliged to turn back and ascend the hill.

"How cruel it is of you to snatch a soul out of Elysium," he remonstrated. "I felt as if I was lost in some happy dream—wandering down this path, which leads I

know not where, into a dim wooded vale, such as the fairies love to inhabit?"

"The road leads down to the inn at Le Tac, where Cockney excursionists go to eat lobsters and play skittles," said Vixen, laughing at her lover.

They went back to the manor-house, where they found Miss Skipwith annotating a tremendous manuscript on blue foolscap, a work whose outward semblance would have been enough to frighten and deter any publisher in his right mind.

"How late you are, Violet," she said, looking up dreamily from her manuscript; "I have been re-writing and polishing portions of my essay on Buddha. The time has flown, and I had no idea of the hour till Doddery came in just now to ask if he could shut up the house. And then I remembered that you had gone out to the gate to watch for Mr. Vawdrey."

"I'm afraid you must think our goings on rather eccentric," Rorie began shyly; "but, perhaps, Vix— Miss Tempest has told you what old friends we are; that, in fact, I am quite the oldest friend she has. I came to Jersey on purpose to ask her to marry me, and she has been good enough"—smiling blissfully at Vixen, who tried to look daggers at him—"to say Yes."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Miss Skipwith, looking much alarmed; "this is very embarrassing. I am so unversed in such matters. My life has been given up to study, far from the haunts of man. My nephew informed me that there was a kind of—in point of fact, a flirtation between Miss Tempest and a gentleman in Hampshire, of which he highly disapproved, the gentleman being engaged to marry his cousin."

"It was I," cried Rorie, "but there was no flirtation between Miss Tempest and me. Whoever asserted such a thing was a slanderer and—— I won't offend you by saying what he was, Miss Skipwith. There was no flirtation. I was Miss Tempest's oldest friend—her old play-fellow, and we liked to see each other, and were always friendly together. But it was an understood thing that I was to marry my cousin. It was Miss Tempest's particular desire that I should keep an engagement made beside my mother's death-bed. If Miss Tempest had thought otherwise, I should have been at her feet. I would have flung that engagement to the winds; for Violet Tempest is the only woman I ever loved. And now all the world may know it, for my cousin has jilted me, and I am a free man."

"Good gracious! Can I really believe this?" asked Miss Skipwith, appealing to Violet.

"Rorie never told a falsehood in his life," Vixen answered proudly.

"I feel myself in a most critical position, my dear child," said Miss Skipwith, looking from Roderick's frank eager face to Vixen's downcast eyelids and mantling blushes. "I had hoped such a different fate for you. I thought the thirst for knowledge had arisen within you, that the aspiration to distinguish yourself from the rack of ignorant women would follow the arising of that thirst, in natural sequence. And here I find you willing to marry a gentleman who happens to have been the companion of your childhood, and to resign—for his sake—all hopes of distinction."

"My chances of distinction were so small, dear Miss-Skipwith," faltered Vixen. "If I had possessed your talents!"

"True," sighed the reformer of all the theologies. "We have not all the same gifts. There was a day when I thought it would be my lot to marry and subside into the dead level of domesticity; but I am thankful to think I escaped the snare."

"And the gentleman who wanted to marry you, how thankful must he be!" thought Rorie dumbly.

"Yet there have been moments of depression when I have been weak enough to regret those early days," sighed Miss Skipwith. "At best our strength is tempered with weakness. It is the fate of genius to be lonely. And now I suppose I am to lose you, Violet?"

"I am summoned home to poor mamma," said Vixen.

"And after poor mamma has recovered, as I hope she speedily may, Violet will be wanted by her poor husband," said Rorie. "You must come across the sea and dance at our wedding, Miss Skipwith."

"Ah," sighed Miss Skipwith, "if you could but have waited for the establishment of my universal church, what a grand ceremonial your marriage might have been!"

Miss Skipwith, though regretful, and inclined to take a dismal view of the marriage state and its responsibilities under the existing dispensation, was altogether friendly. She had a frugal supper of cold meat and salad, bread and cheese, and cyder, served in honour of Mr. Vawdrey, and they three sat till midnight talking happily—Miss Skipwith of theology, the other two of themselves and the smiling

future, and such an innocent forest life as Rosalind and Orlando may have promised themselves, when they were deep in love, and the banished duke's daughter sighed for no wider kingdom than a shepherd's hut in the woodland, with the lover of her choice.

There were plenty of spare bedrooms at the manor-house; but so bare and empty, so long abandoned of human occupants, as to be fit only for the habitation of mice and spiders, stray bat or wandering owl. So Roderick had to walk down the hill again to St. Helier's, where he found hospitality at an hotel. He was up betimes, too happy to need much sleep, and at seven o'clock he and Vixen were walking in the dewy garden, planning the wonderful life they were to lead at Briarwood, and all the good they were to do. Happiness was to radiate from their home, as heat from the sun. The sick, and the halt, and the lame were to come to Briarwood, as they had come to the Abbey House before Captain Winstanley's barren rule of economy.

"God has been so good to us, Rorie," said Vixen, nestling at her lover's side. "Can we ever be good enough to others?"

"We'll do our best, anyhow, little one," he answered gently. "I am not like Mallow; I've no grand ideas about setting my native country in order, and doing away with the poor laws; but I've always tried to make the people round me happy, and to keep them out of the workhouse and the county jail."

They went to the court-yard where poor Argus lived his life of isolation, and they told him they were going to be married, and that his pathway henceforward would be strewn with roses, or at all events Spratt's biscuits. He was particularly noisy and demonstrative, and appeared to receive this news with a wild rapture that was eminently encouraging, doing his best to knock Roderick down in the tumult of his delight. The lovers and the dog were alike childish in their infinite happiness, unthinking beings of the present hour, too happy to look backward or forward, this little space of time called "now" holding all things needful for delight.

These are the rare moments of life, to which the heart of man cries: "Oh, stay, thou art so beautiful!" and could the death-bell toll then, and doom come then, life would end in a glorious euthanasia.

Violet's portmanteaux were packed. All was ready. There would be just time for a hurried breakfast with Miss Skipwith, and then the fly from St. Helier's would

be at the gate to carry the exile on the first stage of the journey home.

"Poor mamma!" sighed Vixen. "How wicked of me to feel so happy when she is ill."

And then Rorie comforted her with kindly-meant sophistries. Mrs. Winstanley's indisposition was doubtless more an affair of the nerves than a real illness. She would be cheered and revived immediately by her daughter's return.

"How could she suppose she would be able to live without you!" cried Rorie. "I know I found life hard to bear."

"Yet you bore it for more than a year with admirable patience," retorted Vixen, laughing at him; "and I do not find you particularly altered or emaciated."

"Oh, I used to eat and drink," said Rorie, with a look of self-contempt. "I'm afraid I'm a horribly low-minded brute. I used even to enjoy my dinner sometimes, after a long country ride; but I could never make you understand what a bore life was to me all last year, how the glory and enjoyment seemed to have gone out of existence. The dismal monotony of my days weighed upon me like a nightmare. Life had become a formula. I felt like a sick man who has to take so many doses of medicine, so many pills, so many basins of broth, in the twenty-four hours. There was no possible resistance. The sick nurse was there, in the shape of Fate, ready to use brute force if I rebelled. I never did rebel. I assure you, Vixen, I was a model lover. Mabel and I had not a single quarrel. I think that is a proof that we did not care a straw for each other."

"You and I will have plenty of quarrels," said Vixen. "It will be so nice to make friends again."

Now came the hurried breakfast—a cup of tea drunk standing, not a crumb eaten—agitated adieux to Miss Skipwith, who wept very womanly tears over her departing charge, and uttered good wishes in a choking voice. Even the Dodderys seemed to Vixen more human than usual, now that she was going to leave them, in all likelihood for ever. Miss Skipwith came to the gate to see the travellers off, and ascended the pilgrim's bench in order to have the latest view of the fly. From this eminence she waved her handkerchief as a farewell salutation.

"Poor soul!" sighed Vixen; "she has never been unkind to me; but oh! what a dreary life I have led in that dismal old house!"

They had Argus in the fly with them, sitting up, with his mouth open, and his tail flapping against the bottom of the vehicle in perpetual motion. He kept giving his paw first to Vixen and then to Rorie, and exacted a great deal of attention, insomuch that Mr. Vawdrey exclaimed:

"Vixen, if you don't keep that dog within bounds, I shall think him a great nuisance as a stepson. I offered to marry you, you know, not you and your dog."

"You are very rude!" cried Vixen.

"You don't expect me to be polite, I hope. What is the use of marrying one's old playfellow if one cannot be uncivil to her now and then? To me you will always be the tawny-haired little girl I used to tease."

"Who used to tease you, you mean. You were very meek in those days."

Oh, what a happy voyage that was, over the summer sea! They sat side by side upon the bridge, sheltered from wind and sun, and talked the happy nonsense lovers talk: but which can hardly be so sweet between lovers whose youth and childhood have been spent far apart, as between these two who had been reared amidst the same sylvan world, and had every desire and every thought in unison. How brief the voyage seemed. It was but an hour or so since Roderick had been buying peaches and grapes, as they lay at the end of the pier at Guernsey, and here were the Needles and the chalky cliffs and undulating downs of the Wight. The Wight! That meant Hampshire and home!

"How often those downs have been our weather-glass, Rorie, when we have been riding across the hills between Lyndhurst and Beaulieu," said Vixen.

She had a world of questions to ask him about all that had happened during her exile. She almost expected to hear that Lyndhurst steeple had fallen; that the hounds had died of old age; that the Knightwood Oak had been struck by lightning; or that some among those calamities which time naturally brings had befallen the surroundings of her home. It was the strangest thing in the world to hear that nothing had happened, that everything was exactly the same as it had been when she went away. That dreary year of exile had seemed long enough for earthquakes and destructions, or even for slow decay.

"Do you know what became of Arion?" asked Vixen, almost afraid to shape the question.

"Oh, I believe he was sold, soon after you left home," Rorie answered carelessly.

"Sold," echoed Vixen drearily. "Poor dear thing! Yes, I felt sure Captain Winstanley would sell him. But I hoped——"

"What?"

"That someone I knew might buy him. Lord Mallow perhaps."

"Lord Mallow! Ah, you thought he would buy the horse, for the love of the rider. But you see constancy isn't one of that noble Irishman's virtues. He loves and he rides away—when the lady won't have him. No, Arion was sent up to Tattersall's, and disposed of in the usual way. Some fellow bought him for a covert hack."

"I hope the man wasn't a heavy weight," exclaimed Vixen, almost in tears.

She thought Rorie was horribly unfeeling.

"What does it matter? A horse must earn his salt."

"I had rather my poor pet had been shot, and buried in one of the meadows at home," said Vixen plaintively.

"Captain Winstanley was too wise to allow that. Your poor pet fetched a hundred and forty-five guineas under the hammer."

"I don't think it is very kind of you to talk of him so lightly," said Vixen.

This was the only little cloud that came between them in all the voyage. Long before sunset they were steaming into Southampton Water, and the yellow light was still shining on the furzy levels, when the brongham that contained Vixen and her fortunes drove along the road to Lyndhurst.

She had asked the coachman for news of his mistress, and had been told that Mrs. Winstanley was pretty much the same. The answer was in some measure reassuring: yet Violet's spirits began to sink as she drew nearer home, and must so soon find herself face to face with the truth. There was a sadness, too, in that quiet evening hour; and the shadowy distances seemed full of gloom, after the dancing waves, and the gay morning light.

FRENCH THEATRICALS.

THE Comédie Française is one of the Paris theatres which, in consequence of their money allowance from the State, are required to be kept open, vacationless, all

the year round. But necessity knows no law; and law-breaking necessity is the cause of the visit now paid to us by that unrivalled company of actors. There is a time for all things, say theatrical managers; a time to be open, and a time to be shut; above all, a time to carry out indispensable repairs and alterations. As the troupe meanwhile can do nothing at home, it may as well take advantage of the unavoidable closing of their theatre to visit London.

Even for theatres not obliged to be always open, the shut-up time is anything but a period of repose, unless on the principle that change of work is as good as play. The "cloture" is often a busier season than the easy routine during the full run of a successful piece, which night after night brings crowded houses. As soon as a theatre is closed to the public, there are redecorations, restorations, and changes to be made, not to say a word about dustings, broomings, and cleanings up. There are scenery and costumes to refresh and renew; new pieces—hard task!—to read, and receive or refuse; new stars to hunt up and vacancies to fill; and—sometimes hardest task of all—accounts to balance and debts to pay.

A great merit of the Comédie Française is, that its performances are constantly varied, as ought to be the case with a theatre claiming so high a rank. "Noblesse oblige," with playhouses as with individuals. However successful a new piece or a revival may be, it cannot, there, be allowed to run on, for an eternity of nights, to the exclusion of other pieces of equal, often superior merit. This variety of performances will be especially enjoyable during the short season they are able to give to London.

We know something here of the "runs" a piece may have; but in the non-subventioned theatres of Paris, the runs are occasionally phenomenal—excusable also. Managers have not the heart to change their programme while money is pouring in every night. It is so hard to plug up the top-split in your cash-box while silver and gold are pouring into it regularly and fast.

A few years ago we recorded the vogue of a fairy spectacle, *La Chatte Blanche*, at the *Gaité*, with the remark that although *The White Cat* was the idol enshrined at that theatre at the time of writing the paper, whether it would be so at the time of your reading it was beyond the range of human foresight. Well, not only did *The*

White Cat hold her ground, but after an attempt to give her a little rest by a grand drama, with good acting, splendid scenery, bewitching ballets, and everything else likely to take, it was found that the grand drama was not the thing after all, and The White Cat had to resume her place and her antics on the stage. The scenery had become faded, the costumes worn out, the dancers' shoes and stockings holey, Thérèse's song threadbare. Never mind that. It was possible to repaint scenery, stitch up new dresses, fit the dancers with fresh chausures and—for those who wear any—fresh petticoats, and provide Thérèse with a brand-new song, crowning the whole with a new apotheosis. So refreshed, The White Cat ran on as lively as ever, and nobody could guess when she would stop. She has found repose at last, but, like the Sleeping Beauty, only to wake up, in all probability, one of these days, with renewed attractions.

The going-out of the winter theatres, some time in June or thereabouts, always takes the visitor to Paris by surprise, like the unexpected extinction of a candle, leaving you in the dark. And the worst of it is, that many places of public amusement in Paris, which never alter their bills or programmes in the newspapers, are often announced by the said newspapers to continue open nightly, after they are shut. Amongst these are the conjuring theatres, the tiny temples of legerdemain, where that great departed genius, Robert Houdin, once spell-bound his audience. The winter theatres may be roughly stated to come in and go out of season with oysters. Like that excellent bivalve, some of them are to be had a little after and a little before the months with an "r" in them; but if you think of enjoying any of them in the evening, we advise you to go in the morning and ascertain whether you will find them anything else than empty shells.

When the summer-shutting theatres are closed, the perpetuals have hot work of it; and at times they have it nearly all to themselves. If empty, they can say with Handel on a like occasion: "Ve shall hear te moosick all te petter." Critics favour them with slight attention, often allotting more space in their columns to the way in which the thermometer is playing its part; for it is quite a mistake to suppose that the English are the only people who talk about the weather. The most acceptable summer pieces are those which raise a

laugh, or provoke a smile at the very least. Winter is the season for dramatic sorrows. The dog-days are far too oppressive and weakening to allow us at once to weep and perspire. We cannot, then, afford to cry.

At such times the receipts of the Paris theatres have occasionally been incredible in respect to their smallness—one hundred francs, fifty francs, thirty francs. One night the Odéon took fifteen francs. The most astonishing fact connected with these fancy "houses" is, that they always contain an earnest spectator who has taken the trouble to secure his place. There is always somebody who, afraid of finding no room, rushes to the box-office in the morning to ensure his seat. Never was there a case of a box-office register being perfectly blank.

The variations in the receipts of the theatres, compared with the state of the temperature, offer a curious subject of enquiry. At the Théâtre Français, a register is kept of the receipts made by each dramatic work, which may almost be called barometrical. And it is the only way of arriving at a correct result. A masterpiece which has to fight against the thermometer is inevitably a lost masterpiece—done brown (shall we venture to say?) by the heat. At that theatre, by the side of the entry of each night's receipt, a note is made of the state of the weather, mathematically demonstrating that the slightest variation of temperature has a perceptible influence on the amount of money taken. When the weather in summer is absolutely fine, without the slightest indication of a change, the receipts descend to a minimum. An overclouding of the sky causes them to rise; a slight shower sends them up ten or twelve degrees. It is proved that a heavy rain setting in fills the treasury as surely as it does the water-butts. In London, doubtless the receipts of the Société will be independent of meteorological influence.

But, besides the weather, the variations in the receipts of the theatres are governed by other mysterious causes which not even Parisians can fathom. We should like to know, for instance, why one particular day of the week should be absolutely bad in respect to the money taken at one particular theatre, and another particular day excellent. Monday, the day raised to the dignity of a saint by sluggards, toppers, and idlers in general, the worst day of the week at the Gymnase, is the best at the

igu. At the Ambigu, Friday is the best day; whilst, singularly enough, at the Gymnase it is the most profitable. The day is ascribed to its being the eve of the new Sabbath, the day when Jews more particularly frequent the theatre. Such is the opinion of the cash-keeper. M. Jules Claretie, from whom we cite the facts, does it, at the same time professing to know nothing about it.

The same M. Claretie is one of those who believe that both writers and actors would gain by setting before themselves the task of inculcating some high elevating idea and end. That a dramatic author should amuse us, well and to the point; but—and he hopes the expression will not be misunderstood—a dramatic author ought not to be a mere amuser. There is no need for him to stick himself up as a pedant or a dominie, but there is a reason why he should not make himself up as well as agreeable. The weapon of the theatre is so powerful. The theatre is so high and conspicuous a tribune, from which, before hundreds and thousands of people, the same discourse is nightly read. May we not almost say with Victor Hugo that every dramatic author is the cure of souls? Certainly, although a dramatic author is not a priest, he is assuredly to feel his responsibility as a man and a citizen.

A little piece of advice may be given to all who would appreciate the finished excellence of the Comédie Française's performances; namely, to carefully read, in the morning, the work to be represented in the evening. Of all European languages, French, perhaps, is the most difficult for an unaccustomed ear to understand when spoken. People may read French fluently, yet be unable to follow it when they hear it pronounced by native lips. Even French is not so indispensable as it really is in many cases, such preparation will still be a profitable as well as an agreeable exercise. It is always a pleasure to renew an acquaintance with Molière; the recital of Corneille and Racine we may regard as to our conscience as a sort of duty. Victor Hugo's want of common-sense is glaring in his "théâtre" than in his other writings. Alfred de Musset bears a second reading, in spite of the taste of deep melancholy which he has behind him. Other pieces, whatever their faults may be, at least afford a study in the style and art-work of the best French dramatic authors.

MY LAND OF BEULAH.

A STORY IN FIFTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER X.

IN the "good old days" when torture was a science, there was one solace that not even the most cruel could deny their victims; for when nature could bear no more she wrought a cure for herself, and insensibility stilled the sufferer's pain awhile. As in bodily, so in mental pain, for its very keenness at last dulls sensation, and a sort of misty, unreal composure mercifully deadens the faculties.

From that one dreadful moment in which I, falling, seemed to meet the rising ground, a numbness came over me, and someone that was not I heard, as one hears things far off, voices that fain would have offered comfort, when no comfort could yet come, saw tears streaming down Miss Mary's face, and envied her in that she could weep. Someone led me in from the garden, and then I sat down in one of the big oak chairs by the side of Polly's cage. I wanted no one to speak to me, no one to touch me. I wanted to be left alone, face to face with one awful thought.

In an hour's time papa should have been here; we should have gone out through the fields together, as we did long since; but now he would never come again—he would never come again; the roses that he had loved would all bloom again when summer came, but, even then, I should never have seen him more.

I had been making a watch-guard for papa; now I drew it from the pocket of my little muslin apron, and twisted it round my fingers.

"Get her to go upstairs to her room," said someone; and I turned quickly to see Miss 'Dossia standing between me and the light from the hall door. She was as tall and rigid as ever, but—or was it part of the dream in which I was living?—her voice shook, and tears were on her cheek.

The strangeness of this softening on the part of my old enemy struck me as so marvellous a thing that I held out my hand to her, and smiled.

"He will never come again," I said. "I made this chain for him; look at it—it is no good now. What shall I do with it, Miss 'Dossia?"

What happened after this?

I can hardly tell. Time seemed to be no longer, and as I look back, one disjointed memory and another rises up, merging into each other in wild confusion. Yet one picture is clear and vivid. I was in a train;

the lamp above my head gave a sickly light, but enough to show me a figure in the opposite corner to the one in which I sat huddled, the figure of the vicar of Bromley, with a soft felt hat on the back of his head, and his hands folded over the rug across his knees.

As we whirled through the star-lit night, he neither spoke to me nor looked at me; he knew that fresh-made wounds cannot bear even the lightest touch. Once looking across at him, I saw his lips move, and I knew that all his simple, God-loving, and God-fearing soul was being lifted up in prayer for me. The knowledge brought no comfort. I was somewhere all alone in a thick cloud of darkness, through which no ray of heaven's comfort could come to me. I was alone with one thought—the old thought, yet a new phase of it. Papa would never speak to me, never kiss me again, but I should see him; there was yet time—a few days at most, but oh, what precious days!—in which the sight of my dead should be vouchsafed to me. I should kiss him, though he could not kiss me back; I should touch his hand, though it could no more close on mine.

Presently—whether in a long or short time, I cannot tell—Mr. Girdstone left his place by the window and came to my side; he took my hand, and held it close in one of his, patting it softly with the other.

"Nell," he said, "we are there now; tie your bonnet, child."

I had undone the strings, and thrown them back, for the one want I felt was air, plenty of air—something that should ease the strained tightness of my chest and throat, the burning throbbing of my temples. I did as he told me, and then our train drew up alongside the Hazledene platform.

I had no luggage with me, save a small hand-bag, and so we were quickly in a fly and on our way to the Hall. Mr. Girdstone held my hand still, and that kindly clasp seemed the only thing in all the world left to sustain me. As we passed through the gates, and under the dark shadow of the trees in the avenue, his hold grew closer, and he spoke to me—very quietly, but very distinctly—as if he wished to impress each word upon my mind.

"Nell, listen to me, dear, and try to remember what I am saying. I shall stay at the inn in the village until to-morrow night. If you want me, you have only to send a verbal message, and I will come."

As he finished speaking, our wheel grated against the curb of the steps.

I was at home once more.

The house was so still that the noise of our arrival seemed a sort of sacrilege; and as Terence appeared he stood staring at me, shaking from head to foot, and stretching out his poor trembling hands, almost as if he wanted to prevent me going in, and would fain keep me out in the chill autumn night.

"Miss Ellen, Miss Ellen," he managed to say at last, plucking at my dress as I passed him by; "wait a bit, my lady—wait a bit. Sit ye down in the chair here by the fire; ye must be cold; it's real chill to-night—too chill entirely."

He was kneeling by the fire, stirring the embers to a blaze; but as I put my hand upon his arm he rose and faced me, shaking still.

"Take me to papa, Terence," I said calmly. The nearness of my dead awed me into quietude.

"Is it myself that must do as my young lady bids me, your riverence?" he said, turning to the vicar. "Hadn't she best have a drop o' tea, and rest herself awhile?"

"No; let her have her way," was the answer. "I will come too."

So we passed down the gloomy corridors; Terence leading the way, I following, Mr. Girdstone last.

A door was opened, and the two others stood back to let me pass in.

In my agony I cried out to the ears that could not hear: "Papa, papa! it is Nell; it is your little girl—dear—I have come to you at last!"

The hour grew late. After a hurried conversation with Terence, Mr. Girdstone had left the Hall, promising to return early in the morning; and I, weakened and softened by the sight of that quiet face, whereon a smile still lingered, began to bethink me that I was not the only woman in that silent house.

"Where is Lady Vansitart?" I asked of Terence, who hovered about me, and seemed strangely ill at ease.

"She's in her room, Miss Ellen, along with Miss Dove. The new maid as come with her ladyship from foreign parts, she's there too, she is, Miss Ellen."

I put up my hand to my burning, aching eyes, and strove with all my might to grapple with this position of affairs.

"Does Lady Vansitart know that I am

here?" I said. Then I added: "But I daresay she is not able to come to me; I will go to her."

"Maybe," said Terence, rumpling his grey head with his hand as if in some sore bewilderment, "they'll not be after caring to see ye. I told the maid you'd come, and she's sartin sure to have told the mistress; maybe they'll send ye some bidding or other——"

"Send me some bidding—not care to see me," I repeated. "I can't understand what all this means."

"Well, Miss Ellen, then, it manes this: the lot of them's terrible skeered of the sickness that killed poor master, and they've been shut up there like so many nuns in a convent since iver he took ill."

Here the old man began to shake again, and the cup and saucer that he was placing on the table rattled in his hands.

"Ever since he was taken ill?" I said, holding tight on to the edge of the table by my side. "Do you mean to say, Terence—Terence, do you mean to say they left him to die—alone?"

Do what I would, my voice rose to a sort of shriek as I spoke.

"For God's sake, Miss Ellen, don't be after keening over it that way," cried poor Terence, wringing his hands. "How should the master be alone at-all at-all, when I was along wid him? Poor old Terence, as dandled him on his knee a score of times, when he wanted to ride cook-horse, and he no higher than the table, the cratur! and sure the doctor was there too."

But I might as well have been deaf for any comfort his words gave me.

"She was his wife—and she was afraid—she left him alone—to die. Oh, papa! papa!"

I was beside myself, and Terence was little better. I have a fancy that he tried to keep me from leaving the room. But no one could have kept me back. Across the hall, up the stairs, along the gallery above to the door of the room that had once been my mother's, I sped. Then I stood still, leant panting against the wall, and knocked. The key turned in the lock, the door was opened a little way, and Lettie, more bear-eyed, more sanctimonious than ever, looked through the aperture. She was short in stature, so that I could see into the room over her head, and once again a mirror told me the truth about the idol I had worshipped so blindly. The mirror, tall and wide, faced

the door, and gave me a full view of the widow's tall and slender figure draped in black. She was bending over a milliner's box, and her hand held some ganzy fabric, which she had evidently been examining when I knocked. On her knees beside the box knelt a dark-faced woman, doubtless the new maid "from foreign parts."

Eulalie, still holding the flimsy black stuff, turned her fair face towards the door, and listened intently to the colloquy between myself and her cousin.

A handkerchief that Miss Lettie held to her nose, and which gave forth a most disagreeable smell, somewhat impeded her utterance; but I made out that she was expressing her sorrow at the "sad home" I found myself in.

"Has she been to the——"

Thus far I caught a whisper from Lady Vansitart, and then, as the dark woman answered in the same low tone, I saw her sink down upon a chair, and heard her gasp: "Then tell her not to come in, please."

"Surely you know," mumbled Miss Dove, "that Sir Charles died of diptheria? You see how nervous poor Eulalie is. I really must ask you not to insist upon coming in."

"You need not be afraid, any of you," I cried; "I do not want to come in. I have been to papa—I have kissed him. Perhaps God in His mercy will let me die, like he did. But that is not what I came here to say. I came to ask you if it is true—if it can be true—that she—Eulalie—his wife—left him to die alone. Eulalie! Eulalie!—remember how we loved each other once; remember what I did for you in those days, and tell me—tell me that this thing is false!"

"Have you no respect for her sorrow?" urged the muffled voice close to me; "she is shattered—absolutely shattered—by this blow."

"And what am I?" I went on, heeding her not. "Do you know how I loved him? Do you know that you have robbed me of what you can never—never give me back?"

It is impossible to be sentimental and dignified, and hold your nose at the same time, but Miss Lettie tried her best.

"We can none of us rebel against the decrees of Providence," she said sniffingly, blinking reproachfully at me over the camphor-soaked handkerchief.

"Eulalie," I sobbed, for now my strength

began to fail me, "Eulalie, why did you not send for me? why did you not let me know? why have you been so cruel?"

All the time I could see her in the glass, but not her face, for she had turned away, and covered it with her hands.

"I feel that some responsibility rests upon my shoulders," put in Miss Dove indistinctly, "regarding Eulalie's shattered state; and I feel it to be my painful duty, Nell, to ask you to go. You are in a condition of much excitement; I hardly think you are answerable for what you say. I remember you were quite hysterical once before—I make all allowances."

"Ah, now, Miss Ellen, come away, won't ye? I knew you'd get no good at all at all, by coming here," whispered Terence, who had crept up the stairs, and now stood at my elbow.

At sight of the one who had tended Sir Charles to the last, and might naturally be looked upon as the very personification of contagion, Miss Dove closed the door with promptitude, and Terence and I were left looking at each other in blank bewilderment outside.

"I told ye, Miss Ellen, how it would be," he said plaintively; "come down and taste your cup of fine hot tea; it's famishing ye are, and nothing less."

I went down; I tasted the tea the old man brought in; I tried hard to swallow some food; I touched poor Frizzle's head, that bobbed up and down by my knee; I tried my best to put a brave face on things, but the heart within me was breaking, and every now and again cruel fancy would mock my ear with the echo of a firm quick tread and a low whistle that I had once been wont to hear, and that I should never, never hear again.

When the tea was cleared away I said to Terence: "Now tell me all about papa—don't keep back a single thing; they have robbed me of all the memories of his last hours, give me some of them back again; give me something to think of; tell me that he thought of me, spoke of me, longed for me."

Poor Terence cast a helpless look all round the room, sighed, twisted his hands together, and yielded to fate.

"There's no way out of telling ye the story of it all, is there, Miss Ellen?" he pleaded, nervously moving about, displacing and replacing this thing and that.

"None," I said; "absolutely none."

But even as I spoke with outward firmness I grew sick with the dread of what

was coming, and grasped the arm of my chair like a vice.

"Well, the master he took a chill—he took one of the worst chills as ever was; the doctor he came, and said it was as bad as bad could be. Master, he said, as how he was going—was going——"

"To see me," I put in, as Terence hesitated.

"To see you, Miss Ellen," he went on, drawing a deep breath; "and couldn't be kept in his bed nor nothing of that sort, but he was in great pain was master, even while he was sayin'——"

"In great pain! Oh, poor papa!" I moaned.

"Miss Ellen," said Terence, taking out his red handkerchief and wiping the sweat from his poor wizen face; "if you spake like that I can't get on—I shan't never get through, I know."

I made a sign to him that I would be silent.

"His throat was dry, and it was hard for a body to hear what he said, he spoke so thick-like. Well, Miss Ellen, that night the doctor he said as what ailed master was the diphtery, and Miss Dove she went into the worst 'stericks as ever I see. 'We'll all be dead in a week,' says she, squeakin' like a rat caught by the tail i' a trap; and her ladyship was skeered as bad, though, to be sure, she made less noise about it. Well, from that time they came no more anigh master, and he got wuss each hour; and, 'Master,' say I, 'let me write to Miss Ellen.' 'No,' says he; 'Lady Vansittart has done that; but I bid her to tell my dear child not to come; the risk,' says he, 'would be too great, Terence.' But he'd a kind of a hungry look on his face while he was spakin, as if he were longing for a sight o' ye for all as he'd said you mustn't be let come."

I had promised to be silent. I bit back the moanings that rose in my throat and choked me.

"'Twer'n't long after that as he began to spake nonsense, did master. I tried hard to make out what he said, but his words was like bits o' things as wouldn't join nohow; he kept scrabbling on the blanket wi' his fingers, like as if he were searching about for something."

"Well, go on; don't stop like that," I said, or someone said, for surely the voice that spoke was not mine.

"When the doctor came that night he brought another with him. Her ladyship and Miss Dove they wouldn't see the

doctor unless he went to them first of all; they were afraid for him to come from master's room to them."

Someone laughed.

It must have been I, for Terence stared at me with frightened eyes, thinking, no doubt, that his tale was driving me mad.

"All along master was very anxious for the ladies not to come anigh him, and I let him think they were kept back against their wills; it seemed more nat'ral like, you see, Miss Ellen."

An impatient gesture of my hand was all the reply poor Terence got.

"Master was very bad that night; he couldn't swallow not so much as a drop of water. I held him up against my shoulder, for to try if he could get his breath easier that way. I kep' him like that most through the night, and the doctors they kep' comin' in as easy as they could, and shakin' their heads and spakin' low the one to the other. I think there must ha' been a late moon, for Roland took to keenin' shockin', and master, he heard him. He turned his head towards the window; and he give a kind of a smile, too, did master. 'Is she come?' he says, says he; and his eyes looked up into mine, dim like, and as if he was trying to see me through some sort of a daze. He was thinkin' of you, Miss Ellen, was master."

He was thinking of me—thinking of me. My heart throbbled thick and fast; my eyes were suddenly blinded by a thick mist of tears. I gave a choking cry, and for the first time since that awful moment when I opened the letter little Amy brought me, I wept.

I had a confused consciousness of Terence and the housekeeper and the upper housemaid all hovering about me, and all offering comfort according to their lights. I heard the housekeeper say, as one who spoke from a vast fund of experience on such matters: "She'll be better for this, poor dear."

When at length my storm of sorrow had somewhat spent itself, and I lay back weak and weary in my chair, a sudden thought struck me: "Surely," I said to Terence, "poor Roland must know that this is a house of mourning? I have

never heard him bay once since I came home. I shall go and see him the very first thing in the morning; he loved papa, and papa loved him; he must be my dog now."

Terence looked wildly round as if for help; once more he brought out the red handkerchief and wiped his forehead. As for the two women, they shrank up to each other, as women will when some bewilderment comes upon them, and I caught the sound of a hurried whisper.

"Have you sent Roland away to keep the place quiet?" I said.

No one answered me at first; and then Terence, making believe to pounce upon a whole covey of dust upon the sideboard in an unexpected place, began to speak in a quavering voice:

"Don't ye go to the yard, Miss Ellen, don't ye now; he's gone, is Roland."

"Where to?" I put in authoritatively.

"Ah, now, and is it the likes of me can tell that, Miss Ellen? They say as beastis have no souls; but, anyway, Roland he followed the master best as he knew how. When I went to look at him the morning after master died he lay there dead upon the stones; he'd drawn his chain out as far as it would go, and laid him down and followed his master best as he knew how." And here the old man broke out crying like a child.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

SEBASTIAN STROME.

CHAPTER VI. THE MULBERRIES.

THE Mulberry Club occupied rooms up a darksome and narrow flight of stairs, in an antique hostelry not far from Covent Garden Market.

In respect of social and political occurrences, scandalous and otherwise, a modern club discharges a function somewhat akin to that of the chorus in the old Greek drama. It passes comment, according to its lights, upon the various current acts and episodes of the great human tragedy of which itself forms a part. There are, however, several easily noted points of difference between it and its ancient predecessor. The club's judgments, if not more intellectual, are at all events less emotional than those of the chorus, and, it may be added, less harmonious. The former delivers itself from a less insipid moral standpoint than the latter; it substitutes modern cynicism for primeval ingenuousness, and scepticism stands it instead of sympathy. A club, in fact, is a man of the world writ large—or, rather, boiled down; since men of the world, when they get together, act as solvents of any lingering traces of unworldliness in one another's composition, and as stimulants to all tendencies of the opposite kind.

Upon the whole, a man would rather belong to a good London club than to the most harmonious ancient Greek chorus. Poetical conceptions, and the grandest rhythmical utterance of them, seem imperfect compensation for the cosy club fireside, the spicy stories, the scathing satire, the pregnant innuendoes, the pipes, and the

toddy. Nor, to ascend from the general to the particular, could the best-equipped of Greek choruses have discussed the character, prospects, and antecedents of any given member who happened to be for the moment absent—as, for example, of Mr. Sebastian Strome—with anything at all resembling the shrewdness, the pungency, and the minuteness lavished upon it by the Mulberries. Human nature, seen through a drop of brandy and water, and aureoled with tobacco-smoke, is worth all the moral abstractions that were ever invented. "Abstract morality, indeed!" as Ephraim Arch, the wag, used to say; "abstract it, by all means, and let us have the major's song over again."

It was a sacred tradition of the Mulberry Club, which every member was bound to maintain and even to believe, that the cracked and worm-eaten old pint measure, which stood under a glass shade on the mantelpiece, was made out of a piece of Shakespeare's mulberry-tree, and was presented by the immortal bard, at the time of his leaving London, to a small knot of personal friends and kindred spirits, who were the original founders of the later club. We are in no respect concerned to question the authenticity of this charming legend. There, at all events, was the pint measure, with a hieroglyphic scratched upon it which the faithful interpreted as the initials W. S. The club had occupied its present rooms from a period of remote antiquity. It was composed, during its earlier generations, almost exclusively of the higher class of Shakespearian tragedians and comedians—fine old fellows, redolent of humour and deportment, with resonant enunciations, stalwart stage chuckles, and an understanding of a leg of mutton in its quiddity.

In later times this exclusiveness had been in some respects relaxed; perhaps there were no longer enough Shakespearian artists of the better class to fill up the muster-roll. They took in an outsider here and there; but always a man with something in him—not necessarily in his pocket, for the club was in perfectly easy circumstances, owning its own freehold, and being besides in possession of numerous legacies bequeathed by deceased members, the combined income from which would have supported it well enough, had the living members permitted their subscriptions altogether. There was no club in London that had such good wines, and so cheap by the bottle. There were not many clubs that had such a good chef—or one who drew so generous a salary. With all this, the Mulberry Club was very little known; many a man who fancied he knew London well had never so much as heard of its existence. The Mulberries, indeed, piqued themselves upon keeping this proud retirement and reticence; it was one of their unwritten laws that no member was ever to mention the name of the club, or anything that had occurred within its walls, in the hearing of anyone not connected with the club. The maintenance of this secrecy was rendered easier by the fact that there were so few persons to keep the secret; the roll of membership being limited to thirty-seven (perhaps in allusion to the number of the immortal bard's plays), and not always mustering even that.

The club accommodation consisted of three rooms: one large sitting-room on the first floor, and two smaller chambers overhead. The dusky walls of the sitting-room—so much of them as rose above the cracked and battered wainscot—were embellished with a dozen old mezzotints and engravings of bygone stage celebrities, male and female, each depicted in a favourite rôle and attitude. Sculpture was represented by a plaster bust of Shakespeare over the front doorway, which time and tobacco-smoke had tinted a mellow brown, and which cobwebs of fifty years' standing (unmolested in obedience to a by-law of the club) had veiled in a grey obscurity eminently dignified and appropriate. There was a piano in one corner of the room, now somewhat decrepit, but said to have responded in its day to the touch of I know not what renowned musicians and composers; and each one of the six or seven veteran mahogany

tables was assigned by tradition to some histrionic genius of yore, who had habitually eaten his chops and drunk his wine while seated at it, and by the name of whom it was now distinguished. There was, moreover, an adequate array of chairs of various designs, but all alike in respect of sturdiness of limb and rung, and that best of polish which is wrought by much friction of reposeful shoulders and elbows. The antique chimney-piece jutted out pent-roof-wise over the spacious hearth; and when, of a winter's night, the deep grate was filled with glowing coals, and the clock in the corner pointed to eleven, and Ashe, the grey-whiskered, bald-headed, reverential little waiter, was responding with methodical alacrity to the general aspiration for toddy—at such a time did the chosen Mulberries love to draw around the hearth, to puff their pipes, to tinkle their spoons, and to discourse one with another, critically, cynically, wittily, disputatiously, or scandalously, as it may happen. What effete Greek chorus ever enjoyed itself or poisoned the reputation of its friends as they did then!

It was nearly twelve o'clock, and three only of the Mulberries were left sitting there in front of the fire: Jasper Grannit (a son of Lord Porphyry's before that late lamented peer's marriage), Fred Culver, and Ephraim Arch.

Mr. Grannit, it should be premised, was just returned from a prolonged foreign tour, and this was his first appearance in the club since two or three years. He was some five-and-forty years of age, but looking older, with a medium figure, long dark face, stiff grey hair and whiskers. He was a brilliant fellow, but a good deal embittered by his peculiar position in the world and his experience of life. Twelve years ago he had written three very successful comedies, which had had the double effect of rendering him a literary lion of the first rank, and of annulling that codicil in his noble father's will apportioning him a legacy of twenty thousand pounds. From that time forth Jasper had nothing but his own wits whereby to support himself; and though they had proved fully adequate to the purpose, Mr. Grannit remained none the less in an attitude of unobtrusive but unmitigable animosity towards Lord Porphyry, and, for his sake, towards the British aristocracy at large. He acted as foreign correspondent for the great Liberal

newspapers; he wrote pungent essays and clever novels. He was a most agreeable companion, though laconic rather than valuable of speech; but what he said was uttered so gracefully, and in so melodious a voice, and there was withal a vein of such polished sardonic banter in many of his remarks, that most young men, and not a few old ones, were more or less under the spell of his fascination. He had mixed with all classes and nationalities of men, and had mastered the wisdom of the world: how best to enjoy its pleasures and parry its inconveniences, and—rarer knowledge still—how to sneer with courtesy. He was always faultlessly dressed, except that his jewellery was considered by some critics to be rather more expensive in quality, and a trifle more conspicuously worn, than severe taste demanded; and his manners were so good as to be generally esteemed old-fashioned. He never smoked, but indulged his handsome aquiline nose with delicate pinches of snuff, taken from a gold snuff-box presented to him by his father before their quarrel, and bearing on its lid the crest and arms of the family. It was the current belief that Jasper Grannit would not have accepted a fortune in ready money in exchange for that snuff-box, which no one else would have valued at ten guineas; but no one had ever cared to rally Mr. Grannit regarding his inconsistency on this point. It was not a promising subject for conversation; and Mr. Grannit, notwithstanding his uniform politeness, was understood to have imbibed certain fantastic Continental notions of honour, and of modes of vindicating the same, which are happily not in vogue in this country. Mr. Grannit's chair was drawn close up to the left-hand side of the fireplace, in such a position that his own face was in shadow, while those of his companions, sitting opposite, were fully illuminated. He was constitutionally prone to diplomacy and finesse, and was often subtle from mere habit, and without any special object in view.

Fred Culver, who was nearest him, was of quite another tendency. His egotism, instead of being withdrawn towards the centre of his moral organism, was spread over his outside, like the mantle of some kinds of shell-fish. Composure, dignity, reticence—these qualities were most foreign to him. He was continually feeling irritated or flattered, none save he knew wherefore. His bilious attacks, his

neuralgia, his last night's dream, his to-morrow's pleasure trip, were all that seemed to him worth talking about. If his little finger ached, he cried; if he was tickled, he laughed; if he was snubbed, he flew into a passion. If any member of the club happened to taste an onion, or wear squeaky boots, Culver memorialised the committee, and declared that either he or the offender must leave the premises. A spoilt child like this is apt to get his own way in the world; people are too lazy or too timid to cross him. Culver was long, lank, sallow, straight-haired, and nervous; he always dressed in black broad-cloth, smoked the strongest cigars he could buy, and bit his finger-nails to the quick. Ephraim Arch, the club humourist, was in the habit of declaring that his sole objection to Culver was the latter's musical faculty, which prevented him (Arch) from slaughtering him twice or thrice every day. Culver, in fact, though his conversational voice was harsh, possessed what was at that time considered the finest baritone in England, when he chose to uplift it in song. Unfortunately for his daily associates, this was not so often nor so regularly as would have been the case had he been dependent upon it for his livelihood. But Culver was the son of a wealthy merchant, and had always lived in luxury, and sang only when the mood took him. For the rest, he was still (at the age of thirty) sowing his wild oats—not very big oats, nor many of them, but (to quote Arch once more) he made up for it by cackling over each one like a hen over a new-laid egg.

As for Arch, he had a dry, homely air with him that served to give his witticisms projection, so to speak; it was, indeed, in the opinion of his detractors, the only funny thing about them. But it was as an actor that Arch had made his real mark; his talent and versatility were of the first order; the ease and completeness with which he assumed a part suggesting a doubt as to whether what purported to be his real self might not be one of the less successful of his impersonations. His garb was shabby, ill-cut, and formal; but it was worn with so much address and physical self-possession as to appear becoming. Except when his tongue was going, Arch had the look of a man who cogitates deeply and solidly within himself, and pays no attention whatever to what is going on around him. Those who knew him best, however, affirmed this to be a mere deceitful

appearance or snare; that Ephraim had the longest ears and the best memory in London; and that no old tea-drinking woman outdid him in love of gossip, or in store of material wherewith to carry it on. Since, in addition to these accomplishments, he possessed a caustic tongue, and a wonderful faculty of detecting the scandalous aspect of things apparently the most innocent, the uniform friendliness with which he was treated in the club may have been due, less to an appreciation of his social charms, than to a misgiving lest he might, if provoked, too clearly demonstrate his genius for social malediction.

These three gentlemen had been sitting for the last five minutes without uttering a word. At the end of that time, Jasper Grannit took advantage of some superfluous breath, which he had been compelled to collect in the course of a somewhat complicated yawn, to say:

"Ashe!"

"Yes, sir!" responded Ashe from behind the screen, and advancing with respectful shoulders and looks askance.

"Would you mind getting me a drop more cognac?" continued Grannit, drooping his eyelids in a world-weary manner habitual with him.

"Me, too, Ashe," said Ephraim. "No more for Mr. Culver—he can only afford one go this evening."

Ashe bowed and glided off.

"It seems to me very bad taste to chaff a man in the presence of a servant!" remarked Culver, in the tone of a candid person who has for a long time been concentrating his attention upon a distasteful problem.

Arch replied with an air of saddened conviction:

"Ah! you never had any consideration for servants, Culver. They need to be amused occasionally—makes 'em work better."

"What's the matter?" enquired Grannit, sitting up, and languidly feeling for his snuff-box.

"This Arch-humourist of ours was so impressed by my losing at cards last night, that he seems unable to think of anything else," said Culver, making the biting of his nails a pretext for twisting his features into a malevolent grimace while he spoke. "I really can't understand what concern it is of his."

"Is there much of that going on now?" pursued Grannit indifferently.

"Ever since Strome took to it—about three months ago. I must say I can't understand a student of divinity being so fond of cards, and so remarkably lucky with them too! He would show better taste to leave them alone."

"Better respect for your pocket, I admit," put in Ephraim.

"Strome, Strome," murmured Grannit, taking snuff, and seeming to question his memory between the inhalations. "Who is Strome? or what is he? I can't place him." It was a trait of this gentleman to be indolently ignorant of what everybody else knew; but in the present instance his long absence from London afforded him an excuse.

"He's not a person I think much of," said Culver.

"Which shows a truly magnanimous soul, considering he's got five hundred pounds of your money in his pocket! Ah, here's the grog! Now I, on the contrary, think a good deal of him, though he never won a penny from me in his life; and I happen to know a thing or two about him too. He might have been a capital actor by this time if he'd begun the study ten years ago."

"University man?"

"Oxford. Was there with Fawley. You know Fawley? that little sixty-percent., who got in here last year because I was down with sciatica and couldn't attend the election. They were at school together too; Strome beat him in scholarships. There never was any comparison between 'em as to brains, though; Fawley never could come near him."

"I don't see how you can venture to make such a statement," interposed Culver. "I happen to know the contrary—everybody knows it! Strome quarrelled with him precisely because Fawley was the better man, and Strome can't bear a rival."

"Seems to be a discrepancy here," observed Grannit, not unwilling to be entertained with a fracas between his two companions.

"Ignorance is Culver's foible rather than his fault," said Ephraim indulgently. "The truth is, Strome was fool enough—being then young and inexperienced—to take compassion on Fawley's ineptitude, and spend all his time coaching him for the Mods. They both came out somewhere among the first, and Fawley was above Strome, as Strome meant he should be. Strome was an enthusiastic sort of fellow

at that period, and if his friend had asked him for the loan of his soul for a week or two, would have handed it over at once."

"Quite a lovely character, 'pon my word; how came he to idolise Mr. Fawley to that degree?"

"A touch of nature; I'll sell it to you for your next novel: he gave him such a gorgeous thrashing at school one day that ever after he loved him and couldn't do enough for him. I shouldn't wonder, now, if Culver didn't believe that!"

Culver, thus appealed to, threw up his arms, and uttered a brief rasping shriek of laughter. He then relapsed into contemptuous silence. Ephraim took a sip from his tumbler, lifted one eyebrow at Grannit, who did not respond to the signal, and continued:

"After the Mods Fawley developed into a fine specimen of viper. He told pretty much the same story that Culver has swallowed. Strome was too proud to deny it, broke his heart over it in private, forswore all faith in human nature, and so forth. A moving tale, my masters! The long and short of it is, Fawley is not only bad form, but he owes me five pounds; and I shan't give you another version of the story until he repays it."

Grannit smiled graciously. "By-the-way, seems to me I once met a Strome, a collector, or governor, or something, out in India."

"Sebastian's uncle. Left him eight thousand pounds, free of conditions. It was in the Four per Cents. the last I heard of it."

"I'll wager it hasn't been there during the last three months!" exclaimed Culver. "He must have had nearly as much as that in his pocket last night."

"What was the game?" Grannit enquired, drooping his eyelids.

"Écarté. He thinks himself a great player, but I never saw such a run of luck in my life. It won't occur again!"

"Ah! He's going to give you your revenge, then?"

"Perhaps Culver doesn't feel quite so revengeful as he would do if runs of luck were less apt to follow Strome's play. For my part I wouldn't mind risking that fiver Fawley owes me that Culver never has luck as long as he plays against Strome."

"'Pon my word, you interest me. I should like to see this—er—paragon. By-the-bye, did somebody call him a divinity student?"

"Aha, yes! and the son of a Church of England clergyman!" cried the unappeasable Culver. "I suppose Arch will have an excuse ready for that too; but I must say I consider it scandalous, and in my opinion such a person should not be allowed to remain in the club. I shall bring it before the committee!"

"On what grounds does your worship propose to demand his dismissal?" asked Ephraim, making the square tops of his fingers meet in front of his face, and smiling covertly in the retirement thus afforded.

"What grounds? Isn't it grounds enough that a man who pretends to be preparing himself to preach the Gospel should go about card-sharpping—"

"Card-sharpping?" came gently from Grannit's lips, as he reclined placidly in his chair with half-closed eyes.

"Well, card-playing, then; it ought not to be put up with, whichever you call it."

"It may be all one to you," Ephraim said; "but before investigating that point I should like to know whether you ever played with Strome, or saw him playing, in other places besides this club?"

"I never have anything to do with him anywhere except here—it isn't likely! One place is quite enough for me!" returned Culver, throwing up his elbows, and crossing one knee over the other spitefully.

"In that case, my ingenuous young friend, you will lay no information against Strome; remembering that, by the unwritten law of the Mulberry Club, you can bring no indictment against practices which the unwritten law of the club permits within its premises. And, by the same token, neither can you, under penalty of expulsion, expatiate upon such matters to any persons not connected with the club. So now what are you going to do?"

Culver jerked himself out of his chair, and after prancing erratically about the room for awhile, flounced down before the piano, smote the keys, and broke out into song. Ephraim laughed quietly to himself as he finished his tumbler, and Grannit sat up and took another pinch of snuff.

"I used to be considered a tolerable hand at cards in my earlier days," the latter presently observed; "but Mr. Strome appears to be a champion."

"Not he! he plays no better than Culver himself; only he can keep his own

counsel, and his own countenance, too, which that long-armed grasshopper cannot."

"You're not altogether partial to grasshoppers?"

"There's no real harm in 'em; only they have to be taken out and exercised, once in a while, for the benefit of their bilious systems. Nobody else will take the job off my hands, so I occasionally devote myself in the interests of the common weal. He'll be as quiet as a lamb as soon as he's had his song out."

"Such an office as yours should not remain honorary in the club: not that money could recompense it, either. Mr. Strome is not quite the moral and mental colossus that you painted him, then?"

Arch laid his head over towards his right shoulder, and scrutinised Mr. Grammit's eyelids with a dry smile.

"Mr. Strome is a tolerably fair specimen of a man as men go," said he; "but if you want a trustworthy opinion of him, your best plan will be to form one from personal— Speak of an angel, and you hear his wings! How do, Strome? You're late. Ha! Smillet. Strome, here's a man desirous to make your acquaintance. Mr. Jasper Grammit, Mr. Sebastian Strome. Mr. Grammit is an old member; been away on the Continent. Let me also present Tommy Smillet—the club baby! Friends, this is an auspicious occasion—Christmas is not far off. What say you to a loving-cup?"

Strome, who had made his appearance in the room abruptly and almost noiselessly, according to the law of his physical movements, and who, after shaking hands with Grammit, had been warming himself at the fire, and unbuttoning and throwing back the cape of his surcoat, now looked at Arch and said with a smile:

"That American tour of yours got you into bad habits, Eph. We don't ask strangers to drink in this country. Moreover, Smillet and I have just dined. Good evening, Culver."

Culver had left the piano, and was moving aimlessly about the room, shrugging his thin square shoulders, wagging his head about on his slender neck, and transferring his hands from coat pockets to those of his trowsers; then clasping them behind him, and anon hitching a thumb into either arm-hole of his waist-coat. On hearing his name spoken, he stood still, and gazed in several directions, one after the other. When, at length, his eyes fell upon Strome, he started, as if

then for the first time aware of his presence, and said in a tone of icy constraint:

"I beg your pardon. Did you address me?"

Strome immediately went up to him, and patting his hand on his shoulder with a friendly but semi-authoritative air, said laughingly, "Come, Culver!"

Culver made a momentary effort to maintain his uncomplaining attitude; but the sight of Strome's face, alight with sturdy good-humour, in such point-blank proximity to his own, seemed to dissolve his resolution; the rigidity of his knees and elbows, and the haughtiness of his throat, underwent a thaw.

"I—hem!—I didn't expect to see you to-night," he said in a thin voice.

"You will see a great deal of me to-night," Strome answered with heartiness, adding in a lower tone: "Did you suppose I could sleep with that great wad of bank-notes on my conscience? You must help me off with it."

"Another gentleman anxious to be presented to Mr. Strome," said Ephraim Arch's dry resonant voice, close behind Sebastian's shoulder.

And he, turning, found himself face to face with Selim Fawley, who had come in while he was engaged with Culver. He held out his hand at once, and grasped Fawley's moist, nerveless fingers. The latter appeared somewhat exhilarated, either from having dined generously, or for some other reason, and his manner was effusive.

"Strome, old man, so glad to see you! Look here, now—by-gones be by-gones, eh? I've been on the Continent, you know—Paris, Vienna, and all that. Only got back a few days ago. I say, I had a glimpse of your governor and some mutual friends, you know. All right. So glad to find you here! Let's make a night of it."

"Hear, hear!" said Ephraim. "Mr. Fawley has spoken the sense of the meeting; is it not so, my masters? We will adjourn to the Star Chamber; Ashe shall brew us a bowl of punch, and then he may go to bed. There are six of us here: what say you to a little faro? I want to win five pounds from Fawley."

"The best thing you fellows can do is to go home and go to bed," piped Smillet from the corner of the fire-place, where he had been conversing with Jasper Grammit. "It's to-morrow morning already! I'm sleepy."

"You must be instructed how to keep

your eyes open, Thomas," said Strome, taking off his surtout and throwing it over his arm. "I presume," he added, pausing, and letting his two-fold glance travel from face to face, "that all here are illuminati—we all know the laws of the Star Chamber, and the penalties? Mr. Grannit, your three years' exile won't prevent you——"

"On the contrary," said Grannit, with a bland smile. He had been standing with a pinch of snuff delicately imprisoned between his thumb and forefinger, his half-closed eyes sagaciously studying the scene. He now bent forward, and applied the pinch with all the grace and fastidious expressiveness of an eighteenth century beau, flicked away the stray particles from the front of his evening dress with his silk handkerchief, and inserted his hands gently into his trowser pockets.

With the exception of Smillet, there seemed to be a unanimous spirit possessing the company in favour of the Star Chamber (as one of the two smaller rooms on the second floor had been nicknamed) and fars. By a curious coincidence, Arch's proposition had given words to the secret desire of all present; Arch himself being, probably, the least serious of them all in his ulterior purposes.

There was a pause, while each covertly inspected the others, as if to divine the force and capacity of the antagonists with whom he was to contend. But while the regards of Cuiver, of Grannit, and of Fawley, were bent chiefly upon Strome, his were mainly concentrated upon Fawley only; he was not concerned about the rest. This was the first time that Fawley and Strome had met with any outward profession of cordiality. Was it merely for the purpose of getting to sufficiently close quarters to try another and conclusive fall? These two men had been natural enemies for some years past, and each had aimed blows at the other's dearest interests; now they had met, by fate or accident, for a final engagement. Which should win? Strome's nature was compact of victorious elements; but there are times when the demon of luck goes mad, and runs amuck of all laws, human and divine. What was the meaning of Fawley's abnormal exhilaration? Was it an extra glass of wine merely, or did he feel the inspiration of a fatal success, uncontrollable by himself and irresistible to others?

The party now proceeded upstairs to

the Star Chamber, marshalled on their way by Ashe, bearing a steaming bowl of punch. Smillet came last, rubbing the back of his round head, and emitting inarticulate croakings.

FOLK-LORE OF QUEEN'S COUNTY

THE speculations that have tortured every mourner from the days of Shakespeare down to those of Tennyson, press upon the unlettered Irish peasant also, but he has a simple mode of solving them which the educated thinker cannot have. He believes that his priest can tell him the spiritual condition of his friend; and if it be unsatisfactory, he is told that a certain number of masses may avail for the soul's relief. How gladly does he pinch himself to provide the money for these masses! How willingly does he lie down cold, and get up hungry, that he may have funds to shorten the time of his father, or wife, or brother, in purgatory!

Faith aids him in another way even while his sorrow is in its freshest stage. A dread of troubling the repose of the beloved parted soul dries his tears, for he has been taught from childhood to believe that the grief of survivors has the power to keep the spirit hovering between earth and heaven, or even to render it restless and unhappy in heaven. This superstition is common to the peasantry in all parts of Ireland, but some of the most touching anecdotes on the subject have been told the present writer by natives of the Queen's County.

Mary O'Brien, of Portarlington, lost her only son, a little boy of eight years old; and although her priest told her that he was gone straight to heaven, she wept and would not be comforted. The lights were put out in her cabin, and she lay wakeful one night, the tears dropping ceaselessly on her pillow, when a light that was not of this world shone in the miserable place, and she saw her son standing beside the bed, in the fine white shirt she had buried him in, which seemed to cling to him as if wet.

"Willy, is it you, my darlin'?" sobbed the mother.

"Oh, mother, you're a bad mother to me," said the boy. "I was very happy in heaven, but you cried and cried after me, an' now you have me standin' up to the neck in a pond; the saints an' angels won't have me wid them; an' I can't get hearin' the music, nor seein' the lights of heaven."

Stop your cryin', mother, and I'll be happy again."

The vision faded, and Mary O'Brien dried her eyes, and from that time until the day of her death was never seen to shed another tear.

Much wiser was Mrs. Clarke of Clopook, another mother, who waked and buried her twelfth child, yet shed no tears.

A stranger happening to meet the funeral procession of the last child, turned to accompany it a short way, according to the custom of the country, and remarked to Mrs. Clarke: "That woman has buried childer before."

"Ay, has she," replied the mother. "I'm that woman, and this little boy is the twelfth I've buried."

"I knew it," said the stranger; "for look at those twelve white butterflies there lightin' on the coffin, an' flyin' off again. Those is your childer, poor woman, an' I'm certain sure you were a good mother to them."

The mother watched the twelve white butterflies. They accompanied the funeral to the graveyard, fluttering beside the coffin, now alighting upon it, and then flying off all together. She went home calmly, and that night her pretty little Francis came to her.

"Is it you, avick?" she asked, at the moment hardly remembering that he was dead.

"Ay, mammy," lisped the child. "You were a good mother to us all, an' I'm sent wid a message till you from heaven to comfort you. Which would you sooner have, twelve candles before you or behind you when your time comes to die?"

"Before me, surely," replied the mother, wondering.

"Well, I'm allowed to tell you that we'll be sent at your dyin' hour to light your way to heaven." And with a sweet joyous smile little Francis faded away.

The memory of an unpaid debt, or of any injustice done during life, is supposed to torment the soul in its disembodied state. The story of old Peggy Doogue is an instance of this.

Peggy lived in the townland of Crett-yard, in a cabin on the high road. One day, as she stood at her door, she saw Mark Cody driving by, and something fell off the cart upon the road. Peggy saw that it was Mark's coat, and she hobbled out, took it up, and carried it into the house.

She found that there was a pound in silver in one pocket, and ten pounds in notes in the other. She had intended to restore the coat, but changed her mind on this discovery, and felt very glad that no one had seen her lift it. That evening Mark Cody came to her in sad trouble, to ask if she had heard anything about his coat.

"Feen a word," she replied.

"I don't know where I dropped it, Peggy, dear. Maybe it wasn't on this road at-all at-all, for I was round by the Alt wid the cart; an' there was so many travellers that I'm feared some of them has lifted the coat. There was ten pound in notes in one pocket, an' one pound in silver in the other: it was the rent I'd gathered, an' I was goin' to the agent wid it. Musha, musha, but it wad be the sore loss for the likes of me!"

Mark had to bear the loss, for no enquiry brought him any news of the coat. Peggy Doogue was afraid to change the notes, so she left them in the pocket, and laid all in the box, hanging the key round her neck.

About six months afterwards she died rather suddenly, and her son, who lived a quarter of a mile farther on the same road, gave her a very decent funeral.

"Who's thon walkin' along wid us on the other side o' the hedge?" asked he of the neighbours, as they were returning home together from the graveyard.

"Feen a crathur," they answered, looking at him in surprise.

"Ay is there! She left the graveyard wid us, an' she's been keepin' up wid us all the way."

"Who is she, Tim, jewel?"

"Faix, boys, she's gone: I don't see her at the present time," replied Tim with a shudder.

"But who is she?" repeated the curious neighbours.

"Save us! There she is again! Do yous not see me mother on the other side o' the hedge?"

Nobody but Tim saw her. She passed her own door, showing every intention of accompanying him to his house.

"Come wid me, boys, an' I'll treat yous to a naggin apiece," implored the frightened man.

The evil moment was but deferred: Tim saw his mother in the room when his neighbours were gone.

"Mother," said he, when her silent presence had terrified him almost out of his senses, "what's keepin' you from your rest?"

"Go to my box, Tim," she said, "an' you'll find a coat wid ten pound in notes in the pocket. That's Mark Cody's coat that I lifted off the road last November, an' the money is his. You'll give it back to him, an' you'll make good one pound in silver that I spent. You'll do it at once, Tim, that your poor sinful mother may get leavin' this world."

Tim promised to do exactly as she directed, and he saw her no more.

The Irish peasantry are very careful to make due preparations for death, particularly to provide their last garment or "dead dress."

This care weighs much upon the invalid, who frequently orders those in attendance to take the shroud out of the box where it has lain in readiness perhaps for years, and air it properly.

The writer has more than once heard this command given while visiting the sick in the County Donegal. That the "dead dress" is the cause of solicitude to the people of the Queen's County even in another state of being the following anecdote will show. Two old women lived at Castle Pook, a rambling old place, once magnificent, and the scene of wild revelry so long as its owners had anything to squander. But the spendthrift landlords were dead and gone, and of the Dennis family only two members, an aunt and niece, remained. They were called "the ladies" by their poor neighbours, and were greatly looked up to on account of their ancient name; but they had not had any better education than that which a village schoolmaster could give fifty years ago. The elder Miss Dennis had a small annuity, and it was no wonder that Miss Honor was almost crushed by grief and selfish anxiety when she became very ill, and was given up by the doctor.

"Come here, Honor," whispered the dying woman from her pillow. "There's ten pound in that box: you'll have that, an' my clothes and the furniture, an' you'll be sure to wake me decent, an' put my fine linen night-gown wid the frills on me. Bring it out to let me see if it's all right?"

Miss Honor promised to obey, but miserliness overcame her, and she grudged the corpse so fine a dress. She happened to have some black calico covered with white spots, which she had bought a great bargain from a country pedlar, and she made the shroud of it, intending to turn the frilled night-gown into money at some future time. The villagers from Clopook who came to the

wake wondered at Miss Dennis's "dead dress," but nothing was said about it.

The funeral took place; and now began a dreadful visitation for Miss Honor. As regularly as darkness fell, Miss Dennis appeared in her black and white shroud at her niece's fireside. She pointed to her dress, and never spoke a word. Miss Honor could not bear it. On the third night the coffin was taken up and opened, and the frilled nightgown put upon its tenant instead of the black and whiteshroud. The ghost was now appeased; she did not again appear.

The friends of Manus White had, with much self-denial, scraped together the price of certain masses for his soul. Father Stephen, the parish priest, had said all the masses for which he had been paid, except one, in the presence of full congregations in the chapel; but, before that last mass could be said, the good priest was seized with a sudden illness and died.

It was on the Sunday evening after his funeral that Michael Flannagan, a very old man, feeling weary, sat down on the step of the confessional, and as the crowd pushed him he got farther and farther in, until at last he took possession of the priest's seat.

The incense and murmur of voices at prayer made him feel drowsy, and he fell asleep, and was not discovered when the congregation went away and the chapel was locked up for the night. He awoke when it was quite dark, and it was some time before he remembered where he was. He then composed himself to spend the remainder of the night in the confession-box, feeling secure in so sacred a place. He was dropping off to sleep again when he saw the altar illuminated, and a priest in his robes stepped before it, and facing the empty chapel, said: "Is there anyone present to hear mass read for the soul of Manus White?"

Old Michael started and shuddered, for the voice and face of the priest were those of Father Stephen, who had been buried the week before.

"Is there anyone present to hear mass said for the soul of Manus White?" repeated the dead priest, in a sadder and more anxious tone. Michael shrank back, and his mouth was so dry with terror that he could hardly say a word.

Once more Father Stephen asked: "If there is anyone present to hear mass said for the soul of Manus White, let him speak?"

Many thoughts flashed through old Michael's mind as the priest spoke.

"Must Manus White never reap the benefit of the money paid for him by his devoted friends? Must the poor priest himself languish in purgatory on account of an unperformed duty? Never!"

The old man made a great effort to conquer his terror, and cried out: "I am here—Michael Flamagan!"

Father Stephen turned to the altar immediately and performed mass; and then the lights went out, and Michael was left in darkness to think over what he had seen and heard.

VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XLVIII. WEARING OUT.

THE dusk was creeping slowly on as the carriage passed the lodge, and drove between green walls of rhododendron to the house. Captain Winstanley was smoking his cigar in the porch, leaning against the Gothic masonry in the attitude Vixen knew so well of old.

"If my mother were lying in her coffin I daresay he would be just the same," she thought bitterly.

The captain came down to open the carriage-door. Vixen's first glance at his face showed her that he looked worn and anxious.

"Is mamma very ill?" she asked tremulously.

"Very ill," he answered in a low voice. "Mind, you are to do or say nothing that can agitate her. You must be quiet and cheerful. If you see a change you must take care to say nothing about it."

"Why did you leave me so long in ignorance of her illness? Why did you not send for me sooner?"

"Your mother has only been seriously ill within the last few days. I sent for you directly I saw any occasion for your presence," the captain answered coldly.

He now for the first time became aware of Mr. Vawdrey, who had got out of the brougham on the other side, and came round to assist in the unshipment of Violet's belongings.

"Good-evening, Mr. Vawdrey. Where, in Heaven's name, did you spring from?" he enquired with a vexed air.

"I have had the honour of escorting Miss Tempest from Jersey, where I happened to be when she received your telegram."

"Wasn't that rather an odd proceeding, and likely to cause scandal?"

"I think not; for before people can hear that Miss Tempest and I crossed in the same boat, I hope they will have heard that Miss Tempest and I are going to be married."

"I see," cried the captain, with a short laugh of exceeding bitterness; "being off with the old love you have made haste to be on with the new."

"I beg your pardon. It is no new love, but a love as old as my boyhood," answered Horie. "In one weak moment of my life I was foolish enough to let my mother choose a wife for me, though I had made my own choice, unconsciously, years before."

"May I go to mamma at once?" asked Vixen.

The captain said Yes, and she went up to Mrs. Winstanley's room. Oh, how dear and familiar the old house looked, how full of richness and colour after the bareness and decay of Les Tourelles; everywhere a rich variety of form and hue that filled and satisfied the eye; a house worth living in assuredly, with but a little love to sanctify and hallow all these things!

The door of Mrs. Winstanley's room stood half open, and the lamplight shone faintly from within. Violet went softly in. Her mother was lying on a sofa by the hearth, where a wood fire had been newly lighted.

Violet went over to the sofa and knelt by her mother's side and embraced her tenderly, looking at her earnestly in the clear soft lamplight. Yes; there was indeed a change! The always delicate face was pinched and shrunken. The ivory of the complexion had altered to a dull grey. Premature age had hollowed the cheeks and lined the forehead. It was a change that meant decline and death. Violet's heart sank as she beheld it; but she remembered the captain's warning, and bravely strove to put on an appearance of cheerfulness.

"Dear mother, I am so happy to come home to you," she said gaily; "and I am going to nurse and pet you for the next week or so, till you get tremendously well and strong, and are able to take me to innumerable parties."

"My dear Violet, I have quite given up parties; and I shall never be strong again."

"Dearest, it has always been your habit to fancy yourself an invalid."

"Yes, Violet, once I may have been full

of fancies: but now I know that I am ill. You will not be unkind or unjust to Conrad, will you, dear? He has been all goodness to me. Try and get on with him nicely, dear, for my sake."

This was urged with such piteous supplication, that it would have needed a harder heart than Violet's to deny the prayer.

"Dear mother, forget that the captain and I ever quarrelled," said Vixen. "I mean to be excellent friends with him. And, darling, I have a secret to tell you if you would like to hear it."

"What secret, dear?"

"Lady Mabel Ashbourne has jilted Roderick!"

"My love, that is no secret. I heard all about it the day before yesterday. People have talked of nothing else since it happened. Lady Mabel has behaved shamefully."

"Lady Mabel has behaved admirably. If other women were wise enough to draw back at the last moment there would be fewer unhappy marriages. But Lady Mabel's elopement is only the prologue to my story."

"What can you mean, child?"

"Roderick came to Jersey to make me an offer."

"So soon! Oh, Violet, what bad taste!"

"Ought he to have gone into mourning? He did not even sing willow, but came straight off to me, and told me he had loved me all his life; so now you will have my trousseau to think about, dearest, and I shall want all your good taste. You know how little I have of my own."

"Ah, Violet, if you had only married Lord Mallow! I could have given my whole mind to your trousseau then; but it is too late now, dear. I have not strength enough to interest myself in anything."

The truth of this complaint was painfully obvious. Pamela's day was done. She lay, half effaced among her down pillows, as weak and helpless-looking as a snowdrop whose stem is broken. The life that was left in her was the merest remnant of life. It was as if one could see the last sands running down in the glass of time.

Violet sat by her side, and pressed her cold hands in both her own. Mrs. Winstanley was very cold, although the log had blazed up fiercely, and the room seemed stifling to the traveller who had come out of the cool night air.

"Dear mother, there will be no pleasure for me in being married if you do not take

any interest in my trousseau," pleaded Vixen, trying to cheer the invalid by dwelling on the things her soul had most loved in health.

"Do not talk about it, my dear," her mother exclaimed peevishly. "I don't know where the money is to come from. You will be rich when you are of age, but we are awfully poor. If we do not save money during the next few years we shall be destitute. Conrad says so. Fifteen hundred a year, and a big house like this to maintain. It would be starvation. Conrad has closed Theodore's account. I am sure I don't know where your trousseau is to come from."

Here the afflicted Pamela began to sob hysterically, and Vixen found it hard work to comfort her.

"My dearest mother, how can you be poor and I rich?" she said, when the invalid had been tranquillised, and was lying exhausted. "Do you suppose I would not share my income with you? Boris has plenty of money. He would not want any of mine. You can have it all, if you like."

"You talk like a child, Violet. You know nothing of the world. Do you think I would take your money, and let people say I robbed my own daughter? I have a little too much self-respect for that. Conrad is doing all he can to make our future comfortable. I have been extravagant; but I shall never be so any more. I do not care about dress or society now. I have outlived those follies."

"Dear mother, I cannot bear to hear you talk like that," said Vixen, feeling that when her mother left off caring about fine dresses she must be getting ready for that last garment which we must all wear some day, the fashion whereof changes but little. "Why should you relinquish society? You are in the prime of life."

"No, Violet, I am a poor faded creature," whimpered Mrs. Winstanley. "Stout women are handsome at forty, or even"—with a shudder—"five-and-forty; the age suits their style. But I was always slim and fragile, and of late I have grown painfully thin. No one but a Parisian dress-maker could make me presentable; and I have done with Paris dresses. The utmost I can hope for is to sit alone by the fireside, and work antimacassars in crewels."

"But, dear mother, you did not marry Captain Winstanley in order to lead such a life as that? You might as well be in a bagninage."

Vain were Vixen's efforts to console and

cheer. A blight had fallen upon her mother's mind and spirits—a blight that had crept slowly on, unheeded by the husband, till one morning the local practitioner; a gentleman who had lived all his life among his patients, and knew them well; informed Captain Winstanley that he feared there was something wrong with his wife's heart, and that he thought it would be well to get the highest opinion.

The captain, startled out of his habitual self-command, looked up from his desk with an ashy countenance.

"Do you mean that Mrs. Winstanley has heart-disease—something organically wrong?"

"Unhappily I fear it is so. I have been for some time aware that she had a weak heart. Her complexion, her feeble circulation, several indications have pointed to that conclusion. This morning I have made a thorough examination, and I find mischief, decided mischief."

"That means she may die suddenly, without an instant's warning?"

"There would always be that fear. Or she might sink gradually from want of vital power. There is a sad deficiency of power. I hardly ever knew anyone remain so long in so low a state."

"You have been attending her, off and on, ever since our marriage. You must have seen her sinking. Why have you not warned me before?"

"It seemed hardly necessary. You must have perceived the change yourself. You must have noticed her want of appetite, her distaste for exertion of any kind, her increasing feebleness."

"I am not a doctor."

"No; but these are things that speak plainly to every eye—to the eye of affection most of all."

"We are slow to perceive the alteration in anyone we see daily and hourly. You should have drawn my attention to my wife's health. It is unfair, it is horrible to let this blow come upon me unawares."

If the captain had appeared indifferent hitherto, there was no doubt of the intensity of his feelings now. He had started up from his chair, and walked backwards and forwards, strongly agitated.

"Shall we have another opinion?" asked Dr. Martin.

"Certainly. The highest in the land."

"Dr. Lorrimer, of Harley Street, is the most famous man for heart-disease."

"I'll telegraph to him immediately," said the captain.

He ordered his horse, rode into Lyndhurst, and despatched his telegram without the loss of a minute. Never had Dr. Martin seen anyone more deeply stricken by an announcement of evil.

"Poor fellow, he must be very fond of her," mused the surgeon, as he rode off to his next call. "And yet I should have thought she must be rather a tiresome kind of woman to live with. Her income dies with her, I suppose. That makes a difference."

The specialist from Harley Street arrived at the Abbey House on the following afternoon. He made his examination and gave his opinion, which was very much the same as Dr. Martin's, but clothed in more scientific language.

"This poor lady's heart has been wearing out for the last twenty years," he told the local surgeon; "but she seems, from your account, to have been using it rather worse for the last year or so. Do you know if she has had any particular occasion for worry?"

"Her only daughter has not got on very well with the second husband, I believe," said Dr. Martin. "That may have worried her."

"Naturally. Small domestic anxieties of that kind are among the most potent causes of heart-disease." And then Dr. Lorrimer gave his instructions about treatment. He had not the faintest hope of saving the patient, but he gave her the full benefit of his science. When he went out into the hall and met the captain, who was waiting anxiously for his verdict, he began in the usual oracular strain; but Captain Winstanley cut him short without ceremony.

"I don't want to hear details," he said. "Martin will do everything you tell him. I want the best or the worst you can tell me in the straightest language. Can you save my wife, or am I to lose her?"

"My dear sir, while there is life there is hope," answered the physician, with the compassionate air that had grown habitual, like his general sobriety of attire. "I have seen wonderful recoveries—or rather a wonderful prolongation of life, for cure is, of course, impossible—in cases as bad as this. But——"

"Ah!" cried the captain bitterly, "there is a 'but.'"

"In this case there is a sad want of rallying power. Frankly, I have very little hope. Do all you can to cheer and comfort your wife's mind, and to make her last

days happy. All medicine apart, that is about the best advice I can give you."

After this the doctor took his fee, gave the captain's hand a cordial grip, expressive of sympathy and kindness, and went his way, feeling assured that a good deal hung upon that little life which he had left slowly ebbing away, like a narrow rivulet dwindling into dryness under a July sun.

"What does the London doctor say of me, Conrad?" asked Mrs. Winstanley, when her husband went to her presently, with his countenance composed and cheerful. "He tired me dreadfully with his stethoscope. Does he think me very ill? Is there anything wrong with my lungs?"

"No, love. It is a case of weakness and languor. You must make up your mind to get strong; and you will do more for yourself than all the physicians in London can do."

"But what does he say of my heart? How does he explain that dreadful fluttering—the suffocating sensation—the——?"

"He explains nothing. It is a nervous affection, which you must combat by getting strong. Dear love!" exclaimed the captain, with a very real burst of feeling, "what can I do to make your life happy? what can I do to assure you of my love?"

"Send for Violet," faltered his wife, raising herself upon her elbow, and looking at him with timorous eagerness. "I have never been happy since she left us. It seems as if I had turned her out of doors—out of her own house. It has preyed upon my mind continually, that—and other things."

"Dearest, I will telegraph to her in an hour. She shall be with you as soon as the steamer can bring her."

"A thousand thanks, Conrad. You are always good. I know I have been weak and foolish to think——"

Here she hesitated, and tears began to roll down her hollow cheeks.

"To think what, love?" asked her husband tenderly.

If love, if tenderness, if flattery, if all sweetest things that ever man said to woman could lure this feeble spirit back to life, she should be so won, vowed the captain. He had never been unkind to her, or thought unkindly of her. If he had never loved her, he had, at least, been tolerant. But now, clinging to her as the representative of fortune, happiness, social status, he felt that she was assuredly his best and dearest upon earth.

"To think that you never really cared for me!" she whimpered; "that you married me for the sake of this house, and my income!"

"Pamela, do you remember what Tom Jones said to his mistress when she pretended to doubt his love?"

"My dear Conrad, I never read Tom Jones. I have heard dear Edward talk of it as if it was something too dreadful."

"Ah, I forgot. Of course, it is not a lady's book. Tom told his Sophia to look in the glass, if she were inclined to question his love for her, and one look at her own sweet face would convince her of his truth. Let it be so with yourself, dear. Ask yourself why I should not love the sweetest and most lovable of women."

If sugarplums of speech, if loverlike attentions, could have cured Pamela Winstanley's mortal sickness, she might yet have recovered. But the hour had gone by when such medicaments might have prevailed. The light had burned low in the socket; and who shall reillumine that brief candle when its day is over? It needed now but a breath to quench the feeble flame.

"Great Heaven!" cried Captain Winstanley, pacing up and down his study, distraught with the pangs of wounded self-interest; "I have been taking care of her money, when I ought to have taken care of her. It is her life that all hangs upon: and I have let that slip through my fingers while I have planned and contrived to save a few beggarly hundreds. Short-sighted idiot that I have been! Poor Pamela! A month—a week, perhaps—and she will be gone; and that handsome spitfire will have the right to thrust me from this house. No, my lady, I will not afford you that triumph. My wife's coffin and I will go out together."

CHAPTER XLIX. "ALL THE RIVERS RUN INTO THE SEA."

FOR some days Violet's return seemed to have a happy effect upon the invalid. Never had daughter been more devoted, more loving, fuller of sweet cares and consolations for a dying mother, than this daughter. The feeble and fading woman seemed to lean on the strong bright girl, to gain a reflected strength from her fulness of life and vigour. It was as if Vixen, with her shining hair and fair young face, brought healthful breezes into the sickly perfumed atmosphere of the invalid's room.

Roderick Vawdrey had a hard time of it during these days of sadness and

suspense. He could not deny the right of his betrothed to devote all her time and thought to a dying mother; and yet, having but newly won her for his very own, he longed for her society as lover never longed before; or at least he thought so. He hung about the Abbey House all day, heedless of Captain Winstanley's gloomy looks, and of the heavy air of sadness that pervaded the house, and was infinitely content and happy when he was admitted to Mrs. Winstanley's boudoir to take an afternoon cup of tea, and talk for half an hour or so, in subdued tones, with mother and daughter.

"I am very glad that things have happened as they have, Roderick," Mrs. Winstanley said languidly; "though I'm afraid it would make your poor mamma very unhappy if she could know about it. She had so set her heart on your marrying Lady Mabel."

"Forgetting that it was really my heart which was concerned in the business," said Rorie. "Dear Mabel was wise enough to show us all the easiest way out of our difficulties. I sent her my mother's emerald cross and earrings, the day before yesterday, with as pretty a letter as I could write. I think it was almost poetical."

"And those emeralds of Lady Jane Vawdrey's are very fine," remarked Mrs. Winstanley. "I don't think there is a feather in one of the stones."

"It was almost like giving away your property, wasn't it, Vixen?" said Rorie, looking admiringly at his beloved. "But I have a lot of my mother's jewels for you, and I wanted to send Mabel something, to show her that I was not ungrateful."

"You acted very properly, Rorie; and as to jewellery, you know very well I don't care a straw for it."

"It is a comfort to me to know you will have Lady Jane's pearl necklace," murmured Mrs. Winstanley. "It will go so well with my diamond locket. Ah, Rorie, I wish I had been strong enough to see to Violet's trousseau. It is dreadful to think that it may have to be made by a provincial dressmaker, and with no one to supervise and direct."

"Dearest mother, you are going to supervise everything," exclaimed Vixen. "I shall not think of being married till you are well and strong again."

"That will be never," sighed the invalid.

Upon this point she was very firm. They all tried to delude her with false hopes, thinking thus to fan the flame of life, and

keep the brief candle burning a little longer. She was not deceived. She felt herself gradually, painlessly sinking. She complained but little; much less than in the days when her ailments had been in some part fanciful; but she knew very surely that her day was done.

"It is very sweet to have you with me, Violet," she said. "Your goodness, and Conrad's loving attentions, make me very happy. I feel almost as if I should like to live a few years longer."

"Only almost, mother darling?" exclaimed Violet reproachfully.

"I don't know, dear. I have such a weary feeling; as if life at the very best were not worth the trouble it costs us. I shouldn't mind going on living if I could always lie here, and take no trouble about anything, and be nursed and waited upon, and have you or Conrad always by my side—but to get well again, and to have to get up, and go about among other people, and take up all the cares of life—no, dear, I am much too weary for that. And then if I could get well, old age and death would still be staring me in the face. I could not escape them. No, love, it is much better to die now, before I am very old, or quite hideous; even before my hair is grey."

She took up one of the soft amber tresses from her pillow, and looked at it half sadly.

"Your dear papa used to admire my hair, Violet," she said. "There are a few grey hairs, but you would hardly notice them; but my hair is much thinner than it used to be, and I don't think I could ever have made up my mind to wear false hair. It never quite matches one's own. I have seen Lady Ellangowan wearing three distinct heads of hair; and yet gentlemen admire her."

Mrs. Winstanley was always at her best during those afternoon tea-drinkings. The strong tea revived her; Roderick's friendly face and voice cheered her. They took her back to the remote past, to the kind squire's day of glory, which she remembered as the happiest time of her life; even now, when her second husband was doing all things possible to prove his sincerity and devotion. She had never been completely happy in this second marriage. There had always been a flavour of remorse mingled with her cup of joy; the vague consciousness that she had done a foolish thing, and that the world—her little world within a radius of twenty miles—was secretly laughing at her.

"Do you remember the day we came home from our honeymoon, Conrad," she said to her husband, as he sat by her in the dusk one evening, sad and silent, "when there was no carriage to meet us, and we had to come home in a fly? It was an omen, was it not?"

"An omen of what, dearest?"

"That all things were not to go well with us in our married life; that we were not to be quite happy."

"Have you not been happy, Pamela? I have tried honestly to do my duty to you."

"I know you have, Conrad. You have been all goodness; I always have said so to Violet—and to everyone. But I have had my cares. I felt that I was too old for you. That has preyed upon my mind."

"Was that reasonable, Pamela, when I have never felt it?"

"Perhaps not at first; and even if you had felt the disparity in our ages you would have been too generous to let me perceive the change in your feelings. But I should have grown an old woman while you were still a young man. It would have been too dreadful. Indeed, dear, it is better as it is. Providence is very good to me."

"Providence is not very good to me, in taking you from me," said the captain, with a touch of bitterness.

It seemed to him passing selfish in his wife to be so resigned to leaving life, and so oblivious of the fact that her income died with her, and that he was to be left out in the cold. One evening, however, when they were sitting alone together, this fact presented itself suddenly to her mind.

"You will lose the Abbey House when I am gone, Conrad."

"My love, do you think I could live in this house without you?"

"And my income, Conrad; that dies with me, does it not?"

"Yes, love."

"That is hard for you."

"I can bear that, Pamela, if I am to bear the loss of you."

"Dearest love, you have always been disinterested. How could I ever doubt you? Perhaps—indeed, I am sure—if I were to ask Violet, she would give you the fifteen hundred a year that I was to have had after she came of age."

"Pamela, I could not accept any favour from your daughter. You would deeply offend me if you were to suggest such a thing."

This was true. Much as he valued

money, he would have rather starved than taken sixpence from the girl who had scorned him; the girl whose very presence gave rise to a terrible conflict in his breast—passionate love, bitterest antagonism.

"There are the few things that I possess myself—jewels, books, furniture—special gifts of dear Edward's. Those are my own, to dispose of as I like. I might make a will leaving them to you, Conrad. They are trifles, but——"

"They will be precious souvenirs of our wedded life," murmured the captain, who was very much of Mr. Wemmick's opinion, that portable property of any kind was worth having.

A will was drawn up and executed next day, in which Mrs. Winstanley left her diamonds to her daughter, her wardrobe to the faithful and long-suffering Pauline—otherwise Mary Smith—and all the rest of her belongings to her dearly-beloved husband, Conrad Winstanley. The captain was a sufficient man of business to take care that this will was properly executed.

In all this time his daily intercourse with Violet was a source of exceeding bitterness. She was civil, and even friendly in her manner to him—for her mother's sake. And then, in the completeness of her union with Rorie, she could afford to be generous and forgiving. The old spirit of antagonism died out: her foe was so utterly fallen. A few weeks and the old home would be her own. All could be once more as it had been in her father's lifetime, and no trace of Conrad Winstanley's existence would be left; for alas! it was now an acknowledged fact that Violet's mother was dying. The most sanguine among her friends had ceased to hope. She herself was utterly resigned. She spent some part of each day in gentle religious exercises with kindly Mr. Scobel. Her last hours were as calm and reasonable as those of Socrates.

So Captain Winstanley had to sit quietly by, and see Violet and her lover sitting by his fading wife's sofa, and school himself, as he best might, to endure the spectacle of their perfect happiness in each other's love, and to know that he—who had planned his future days so wisely, and provided, like the industrious ant, for the winter of his life—had broken down in his scheme of existence, after all, and had no mere part in this house which he had deemed his own than a traveller at an inn.

It was hard, and he sat beside his dying wife with anger and envy gnawing his

heart—anger against fate, envy of Roderick Vawdrey, who had won the prize. If evil wishes could have killed, neither Violet nor her lover would have outlived that summer. Happily the captain was too cautious a man to be guilty of any overt act of rage or hatred. His rancorous feelings were decently hidden under a gentlemanly iciness of manner, to which no one could take objection.

The fatal hour came on one September afternoon about six weeks after Violet's return from Jersey. Captain Winstanley had been reading to his wife, till she sank into a gentle slumber. He left her, with Pauline seated at work by one of the windows, and went to his study to write some letters. Five o'clock was the established hour for kettledrum, but of late the invalid had been unable to bear even the mild excitement of two or three visitors at this time. Violet now attended alone to her mother's afternoon tea, kneeling by her side as she sipped the refreshing infusion, and coaxing her to eat a waferlike slice of bread-and-butter, or a few morsels of sponge-cake.

This afternoon, when Violet went softly into the room, carrying the little Japanese tray and tiny teapot, she found her mother lying just as the captain had left her an hour before.

"She's been sleeping so sweetly, miss," whispered Pauline. "I never knew her sleep so quiet since she's been ill."

That stillness, which seemed so good a thing to the handmaid, frightened the daughter. Violet set her tray down hastily on the nearest table, and ran to her mother's sofa. She looked at the pale and sunken cheek, just visible in the downy hollow of the pillows; she touched the hand lying on the silken coverlet. That marble coldness, that waxen hue of the cheek, told her the awful truth. She fell on her knees beside the sofa, with a cry of sharp and sudden sorrow.

"Oh, mother, mother! I ought to have loved you better all my life!"

BROKEN UP.

THERE is a sight common enough in London streets, and which yet never fails to touch the great heart of the people. It is that of a cart driven by a greasy man—so greasy, that one forgets to see whether he is young or old, short or tall, well or ill favoured. He suggests nothing

but grease from the top of his head to the soles of his boots, hideous with gruesome incrustations. To look upon he is the embodiment of greasiness and filth; but when he comes betwixt the wind and my nobility, I become aware of an odour more dreadful than that of grease, a sickening savour which brings back sad memories of the grim residuum of glory—of what is left when the last charge has been made, the last standard taken, the last shot fired, the last bugle sounded, and the last cheer rung out through the murky air. It is the odour which attracts the long-winged birds of dusky plume, who wheel aloft in great circles before settling on the plain; the odour which rises from the dreadful long trench, before it is covered in and the crosses are planted over it; the odour of carnage, the faint air of the shambles.

Before this greasy man of evil scent is a horse of that angular outline and unequal surface which suggests to ribald minds comparison with a hair-trunk. Stimulated by whipcord, and possibly by a trace within his worn and battered carcass of his sometime spirit, the dash and fire transmitted through long generations from his desert sire, the animal steps out with long well-bred stride, despite his shabby coat and callous knees, an aristocrat every inch of him. The greasy man knows him well enough. "What this old crock? Why, bless your soul, this is own brother to Marlingspike by Tom Tug out of a Flagstaff mare—the genuine old Rattan and Sngarocane-strain—a cast-off as a young 'un. Never any good, sir. Tried him they did on the flat and over-timber, but no good. He was bred to be a good 'un, but like some of us two-legged 'uns, sir, ran a duffer all the way." Then comes a cut straight on the shoulder, followed by another awakener on the ribs, and the shabby man shoots on, leaving behind him the trail of grease and scent of shambles not entirely concealed by the stream of smoke which issues from his short pipe.

In the cart behind him hangs downward, his once proud crest trailing in the dust, a courser in worse case than the poor "hair-trunk" in the shafts. For the end of this one has come at last after many vicissitudes. He could hardly boast the illustrious lineage of the hair-trunk; but he was a well-bred hunter, nevertheless. Who but he led the field a merry dance over the grass counties when Percy Nightshade was in the first flight and had the

best box at Harborough? Poor Percy! everybody knew him; for he was dear old Monkshood's eldest son, hope, and despair. What a light hand he had on a horse's mouth, and, alack, on a dice-box! How very good-looking he was, and what a fortune he married, and how he ran to dandyism and silk and braid and curls and velvet! Poor fellow!—sound of heart but soft of head—he is gone now; the strawberry leaves of the Monkshood coronet sit on another brow; and this limp carcass, with neck once clothed in thunder now hanging nerveless, is all that is left of his favourite Skyscraper. It is all over with Skyscraper now. He, or rather his carcass, is bound for King's Cross, and farther yet to the region wherein that noble animal the horse is redistributed into his elements. His hide, sorrowful screen, villainously thwacked and manled in life, banded with whips and pitchforks, kicked with clumsy heels of thick-skulled oafs, and prodded with cruel spurs, is yet a valuable article of commerce. It will make excellent leather, and when called Cordovan or Morocco, will fetch a goodly price. The once taut sinews, which carried him through many a bullfinch, will make glue; the bones will be valuable for china-making or for manure; the flesh will find its way about London as catsmeat, for Skyscraper is too old and tough a morsel for a hippophagist. So is defunct Skyscraper resolved into his constituents and passes away, so far as his concrete existence is concerned, into high-art chinaware, to be painted at Stoke-upon-Trent by skilled French artists; into early peas, potatoes, and asparagus; into waving blades of wheat and barley; into boots and saddles to vex other hapless steeds; into food for the very cats which in his lifetime loved to sit on his high withers and sink into slumber on his plump haunches. He is gone, clean gone, only so much phosphate, stearin, albumen, and the rest of it, remains, unless, indeed, he have a disembodied spirit now resident in the elysium of beasts.

The break-down and probable breaking-up of Skyscraper have kept us longer than they should have done in the Grosvenor Road, as it is called, to the neglect of our proper destination at the foot of Vauxhall Bridge. It is, to the writer, a seductive subject this of redistribution, of the operation of the chemistry of nature, perpetually evolving new organisms, and resolving them into their constituent elements to reconstruct again. Nature is

perpetually at this work—building-up and breaking-down to rebuild again—and man in his little way imitates the Great Mother, and converts and reconverts the material she has confided to his hands. As we stand at the foot of Vauxhall Bridge, there is before us a laboratory in which may be studied the disintegration of the work of men's hands in the department dearest to an Englishman.

As I step across the threshold of the Baltic Wharf, I encounter, as it were, a whiff of salt air, a flavour of the deep sea, and I fancy that the true saline savour hangs upon my lips. There is something curiously bracing and stimulating—to maritime nations, at least—in this arid odour of the salt, salt sea. Long before the water is visible, and while there is as yet no indication of its existence save the stunted trees and thinner herbage, there is the sensation of the sea-air in the nostrils, its refreshing touch on the brow. To me the flavour of the Baltic Wharf revives the memories of great deeds and hardy ventures done and encountered by the old race of Englishmen, whose pluck was undoubted if their purpose was often doubtful. I feel as one walking in Davy Jones's locker itself, amid the ghosts of departed craft, vast shadows of dead galleons and sunken three-deckers; of saucy caravels, and furrow-smiting sharp-prowed galleys; of swift-sailing frigates, apt at duels, with the blue waters for turf, long sixty-eights for weapons, and a submarine forest tenanted with strange creatures for a grave; of long low schooners and brigantines equipped with heavy guns and many men, good store of flags of all nations, not forgetting one of rich black silk; of still swifter clippers of the Baltimore build dropping down on the thick tide of African rivers; of ample argosies, sumptuous merchantmen, the fat-ribbed burgesses of the sea, lined with tea, and silk, and spices, wending their way from Indian seas under the flag of John Company. Through this gallery of phantom ships float—mingled with the sea-breeze—faint odours of less savoury things: the sickening scent of the "chiourme," the toiling galley-slaves, straining and quivering under the lash; the more potent odour of the slaver, and the pungent smell of gunpowder. Dim sounds hover in the air: the crack of the driver's whip, and his hoarse shout; the voice of the speaking-trumpet, bearing the order to back the maintop-

sail; the shrill tone of the boatswain's whistle piping to quarters; the boom of cannon and the quick rattle of musketry; the yell of the boarders, and the clash of pike and cutlass; the rustle of the cordage; and, above all, the sullen roar of the tempest and the hiss of the squall. All these, and a thousand more weird shapes, sounds, and scents wake, like the odour of musk in Josephine's rooms at Malmaison, at the touch of the blackened fragments of mighty ships piled in great heaps in the Baltic Wharf.

It is a strange matter this life of a ship and the record of its vicissitudes. Built for one purpose, and launched to that particular end, who shall predict the life of a ship any more than that of a man? I must premise, however, that we can only discourse of the ships which have lived out their life to decrepitude, and are then finally sold to the Messrs. Castle to be broken up. Very, very few—perhaps two in a hundred—thus live on and on till they die as though in their beds, and are handed over to the surgeon for dissection. These are veritable die-harders, the veterans possessed of the longevity conferred by long generations of canals. Wind, weather, fire, and water, are powerless to destroy them, so they must be handed over at last to the tormentors, who will pluck their mighty ribs apart and reduce them to the elements from which they came. If barely two in a hundred of wooden ships refuse to die till they are plucked apart, what becomes of the ninety-eight? Thackeray has told of the whist-players, one of whom enquired after an absent player, one who had cut in with him for years at the same table. The answer was short—a simple point of the finger downwards. This explains the destiny of almost all ships—Davy Jones. Either in the flush of youth, or in creaking old age, the destiny of ships is the bottom of the sea. Their luck marks their duration. Many unfortunates go down on their first voyage; many more before they have performed twenty; a few last from generation to generation, but their final home is with Davy Jones; either in his coral-fields—treacherous as beautiful, fringed with palms, but fanged with deadly reefs; in his sandy nooks, such as that wherein the great plate ship lies buried beneath the deep blue waters of the Spanish Main; or on desert rock-bound shores like those of the Skagerack—a charnel-house of ships. There is a wreck-chart and a

register of wrecks—that is to say, of the wrecks known and properly laid down on the map; but these comprise but a proportion of the vast number of ships which die and make no sign. The ship sails gaily out of the bay. There are leave-takings, sorrowful and pleasant: the wrenth that tears something out of life; the merry "Meet you at Christmas; another glass of champagne—and so good-bye." The ship is not telegraphed when due. She becomes overdue, and there is a bustle at Lloyds. Premiums advance; underwriters look serious, and slowly, if she be a large packet-ship, the hundreds of belongings of passengers and crew give her up. She is "missing" even until doomsday. A great wail goes up for the three hundred or five hundred lost, and the President or the City of Boston is never heard of again. They have not, however, been lost without note being taken of the fact by the public; but of the great army of shipwrecks how many are heard of beyond the class particularly interested in such things? Ships laden with hematite ore for making steel rails, or with the rails when ready made, grow overdue, missing, and are gradually understood to be lost, without exciting the slightest commotion. These luckless vessels are the victims of many accidents, and it is stoutly averred, oftentimes of design. Long narrow ships, not very seaworthy at best, are laden to the water's edge with iron or grain—both dangerous cargoes, if too heavy and unskilfully disposed; the Bay of Biscay and the North Sea are paved with such. Then there is loss, from absolute stress of weather, of ships unhandy, and either undermanned or with such lubberly folk that on the slightest pinch there must be disaster. Other disasters are those from collision, and experience has taught that the Atlantic is not wide enough to prevent clumsy shipmen from fouling their craft. If this be so, how many unknown collisions must occur in the narrow seas! There are also two excellent reasons why no accurate record of collisions can be made. If both ships go down within a few minutes, it is only too fatally certain that nobody is left to tell the tale; if, on the other hand, one ship sinks, there is a strong motive for the survivor to keep the dreadful secret. In olden times piracy explained the loss of many ships, but such piracy as there is now is managed differently, and a centre-bit or a "rat" will suffice to defraud underwriters to the extent required

by the pirates of to-day. Dim rumours of crime on the high seas are nevertheless uncomfortably suggestive. If mutinous crews and drunken skippers are for ever coming into collision, is it not possible that the crew sometimes gets the better of it, and that a scuttled ship sinks to Davy Jones, while a crew with money in waistband and a plausible story on lip make their way in the long-boat to the nearest port?

All these chances against her being considered, the ship must be strong and fortunate that lasts long; but some are possessed of such vitality, that after degradation to the timber and coal trades, it is found necessary at last to break them up. Of such tough stuff was the ship in which Captain Cook sailed round the world, and which, after serving as a cellier for many years, was at last condemned, not for unsoundness, but slowness. Ships, like men, are subject as they get old to the disease known in certain circles as "the slows." Men are unfortunately difficult to cure of this dire disease, but ships are amenable to treatment of a somewhat heroic kind. They may be cut in two and lengthened, or they may be lengthened forward. Their run may be altogether altered, and their rig adapted to the very latest new fancy. They may be given new masts; they may be given more freeboard; they may be "rased," or cut down. Sometimes a ship becomes like the celebrated Irishman's knife: what with new blades and new handles, there is little of the original left. Such an one was the old *True Love*, a barque of two hundred and ninety tons, built at Philadelphia just one hundred and five years before she was delivered to the ship-breakers; and the *Brotherly Love*, which ought to have been a twin ship, and, in fact, enjoyed a twin existence. In breaking up these old ships, which have only been given up when the disease referred to just now has proved incurable, the breakers come upon timber of various ages, the oldest of which is not the worst. It is blackened by the salt-water, and pierced with holes for the trenails and copper bolts, but is firm and solid, and wondrously close and heavy. In Messrs. Castle's yard at Millbank, which is only the storehouse for broken ships, for the work is done lower down stream, may be found specimens of curiously old wood, still fit for long service as camp-shedding and for a variety of other purposes. In the counting-house are preserved the famous figures from the quarter-gallery of the

"Fighting *Téméraire*," and carried by that celebrated ship at the battle of Trafalgar. These colossal figures are carved in pine and very well executed. This famous old ship is an example of a continuity in principle among Englishmen deserving of the highest praise in a nation proud of its solidity of character. As our modern playwrights adapt French plays, so did the sailors of the Ditchin period adapt French ships. There was a difference, however: they took the ships in fair fight, altered them to their own fancy, manned them with Englishmen, and won battles with them against their original brave builders and owners. Some time since the question was raised whether the *Téméraire* had her elaborate quarter-galleries on the glorious twenty-first of October, but this question is quite set at rest by the figures which are now at Millbank, and which were taken from the old ship when she was broken up by Mr. John Benson, the predecessor of the Messrs. Castle. These old figures from the famous war-ship are by no means the only relics of their kind to be found at Baltic Wharf, and scores of figure-heads have been lost in the process of decapitation. The approved method of removing them from the ship is to cut them through, let them fall into the water, and float them away to Vauxhall or elsewhere; but it has often been found that these giants of pine-wood tumble to pieces on contact with the water—that the heads which ever remained erect in battle crumble to dust at that last unkind blow in their old age. A few still remain at Baltic Wharf, some supplying the place of lamp-posts, others staring out at nothing, like so many Polynesian idols, while some again have served for models for the admirable picture of Mr. H. Stacy Marks, R.A., in this year's Academy exhibition. Among the grim regiment are the figure-heads of the once famous *Leander*, of the *Edinburgh*, *Princess Royal*, *Eurotas*, *Emerald*, *Constance*, and other ships of mark in their day. There they remain as "garden gods," these relics of adventure on the great deep; and the small boy of the neighbourhood wonder, and would throw stones at them, if they thought the juvenile sport would not be visited with instant punishment.

To the romantic mind it may appear strange that no great finds of treasure have been made by ship-breakers. At the first blush nothing would appear more likely than that those charged with uncovering the ribs of *Leviathan* and laying bare

the muscles of Behemoth should find strange deposits. Successful warriors gorged with plunder must have had secret nooks and corners in which they hid their booty before they went on deck for the last time, and fell without revealing its hiding-place. Wedge and adze must before now have opened crannies stuffed with guineas, odd crevices filled with jewels and plate. Natural as all these ideas may seem, they have actually no basis in real fact. Sailors never got their prize-money till long after the battle, and then went ashore and spent it, lighting their pipes with bank-notes, and frying their watches like jovial sea-dogs as they were. Before they got another ship they gleefully consumed every fraction of their pay and prize-money. There was therefore never any money on board a king's ship except in the chest, too large a matter to be easily lost, except in such cases as the wreck of the Hussar, when the military chest of the royal army went down at Hell Gate, by New York, or in the blowing up of the Orient, when six hundred thousand pounds, the plunder of Malta, was distributed in the bay of Aboukir. Even in the case of a slaver or pirate, the savage crew carried their wealth on their persons. So there is nought of the pleasure of treasure-hunting in ship-breaking—a tough business at the best, and requiring very nice calculation to make a profit out of. Of late years it has decreased rapidly. As steel ships now threaten to supersede iron, the latter have long superseded wood. Large wooden ships are now rare, and with their disappearance the trade of the ship-breaker will come to an end. It may be said that he will only become an iron instead of a wood merchant; but this is hardly accurate. Iron ships—as the old example of the Richard Cobden, and the more recent one of the conversion of the Nubia into the school-ship Shaftesbury, have shown—are costly things to pull to pieces; and, so long as underwriters are content to “sandwich” good and bad lives, will probably continue to find their last resting-place at the bottom of the sea.

MY LAND OF BEULAH.

A STORY IN FIFTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER XI.

“THE man must have been mad!”

The speaker was my Aunt Idumea, otherwise Mrs. Bertie Lumley.

We were all assembled in the long library at Hazledene, where the books papa

had loved lined the walls from floor to ceiling. An empty chair stood in the recess formed by the oriel window, and in vain I strove to banish from my thoughts the picture of the dear presence that had been wont to fill it.

The family lawyer had just finished reading the will of Charles Lewis Vansitart, Bart., of Hazledene Hall; by which will all his personal effects were left, without reservation or exception, to “Eulalie, my dearly loved wife.”

The only dower my own mother had brought to her husband had been her beauty and her love; and now I was commended to the loving care of the woman who had been her successor, and all provision for my future welfare was left in her hands. Hazledene itself passed to a cousin of my father's, but all else was Eulalie's; not absolutely, but for her lifetime, after which it reverted to me. If I married, she would make a fit provision for me; so ran this will that set the county talking for many a long day to come.

A graceful, pathetic, and perfectly beautiful figure of chastened woe, Eulalie sat on the couch near the fire, supported on her right hand by the tender and sympathetic Lettie, smelling-bottle and fan in hand. On the other side of the fire-place sat Aunt Idumea, and my place was close beside her, with my hand in hers.

At the time of his second marriage papa had “had words” (on paper) with this his only sister. She was a little woman, capable of much fierceness; but loving of heart, and true to the core. She had spoken (on paper) what he chose to consider hard words of Eulalie, had been even less measured in her language of himself, telling him that she looked upon him as a “fool,” of which genus there was no specimen so pronounced as an “old” one. After this the old lady, for Aunt Ida was many years her brother's senior, had gone off, with a maid as peppery as herself, and a pug dog as peppery as the two put together, to a foreign watering-place, and had never by word or letter acknowledged the existence of Sir Charles and Lady Vansitart.

Papa was not a man to stand the interference of relatives, and so the matter had rested, until one eventful morning when the cross maid had found her mistress lying back in bed sobbing and shivering, with an English paper clutched in her hand, and the pug barking like mad to try and attract someone's attention to the sad state of affairs.

The day after the funeral Aunt Ida arrived in our midst, and as I threw myself into her arms I felt that God had sent me a friend in my desolation, and no longer let me mourn alone.

On her head was a huge bonnet, with huge bows, and this erection she removed and held upon her knee while I told her the story of our bereavement.

Her ejaculations, the wonderful way in which she jerked her body to this side and that, as I stumbled through my narrative, were marvellous things to hear and see; and the fact that tears were falling fast and thick down her small high-featured face did not detract in the smallest degree from the sternness of her aspect as she denounced the heartless conduct of Eulalie and her "accomplice." In vain I represented to her that the term was one we had no right to use to Lettie Dove. From that time up to the present day the old lady never has spoken of that admirable maiden by any other soubriquet. She also persists in talking of papa's marriage as "a plot," and her first meeting with Eulalie was an occasion upon which I never look back without a shudder.

That I had to rouse myself from those stupors of grief that at times seemed to turn me into the likeness of a stone, to endeavour to keep the peace between these two, was perhaps a good thing. No one knew how the death of poor old Roland had affected me. I had fancied I should have found some comfort in reading a wistful longing for one that came not in his great brown eyes; and now there was nothing but the empty kennel, and the chain coiled up upon the stones!

But I am drifting sadly from the thread of my story.

Where was I?

In the library, that was dim in the grey misty light of the autumn day, sitting close by Aunt Ida's side; and Mr. Chitty, the lawyer, had just stopped reading.

"The man must have been mad!" said Aunt Idumea; and she gave such a jerk as she spoke, that even I, accustomed as I was to her vehemence, could not repress a start. Miss Dove turned a reproachful face upon the speaker, pulled the stopper from the scent-bottle in her hand, and then blinked pleadingly at Mr. Chitty.

"I think some consideration might be shown to my feelings," began Eulalie, raising the beautiful head, that had hitherto been bent like a drooping flower.

"Your feelings are very unmanageable

things, apparently; and I should advise you to get them into better order," began Aunt Ida. But Mr. Chitty coughed so long and so persistently that she had to give in, and leave the rest of her advice to the widow unuttered.

"I may state," said Mr. Chitty, still troubled with a tickling sort of cough, "that I—er—ventured to remonstrate with—er—my esteemed client, the late Sir Charles Vansitart, upon the—er—extraordinary nature of the document which I have just had the—er—honour of reading."

"You remonstrated, did you, sir?" said Aunt Ida. "You should have told my brother that he was mad—besotted—fooled by a woman's witcheries."

"I really cannot stay to listen to such language," said Eulalie, rising to her feet and to the occasion at the same time; "my husband had the most perfect trust in me; he considered me the fittest guardian for his daughter; he felt that she would be safe under my control; I trust I may prove myself worthy of his confidence."

Here Miss Lettie made an effort to put in a word for her cousin; but as Aunt Ida totally ignored her existence at all times and seasons, the effect proved somewhat futile. It is always a difficult thing to contend with a person who makes believe neither to see you nor hear you, and looks stonily over your head in your most eloquent moments.

"My brother, madam," said Aunt Ida, rising also, and taking up a position that entirely prevented Lady Vansitart's intended flight, "was, like many another man before him, besotted by a woman's beauty; the world has seen such things before, I believe. Paris—Antony—a dozen more——"

"Really," said Eulalie, sinking down upon the couch once more, while Miss Dove hovered about—a ministering angel with smelling-bottle all ready uncorked for action—"such examples are not very correct as applied to—— No one ever yet breathed a word——"

"Against a person of your immaculate reputation?" interrupted Aunt Ida. "Pray do not believe for a moment that I wish to cast a doubt upon your perfect respectability; I feel quite sure you are far too calculating to injure yourself by following any imprudent impulse whatever; but in my experience of life I have found, madam, that the most correct women in the world are often the bitterest enemies to those

about them; that those who plume themselves upon the clear lines in which their own lives have run, often make the greatest havoc in the lives of others; and though they scorn the frail and the tempted, think nothing of sundering those who love one another, or betraying the confidence reposed in them, and are, in fact, to be shunned, as you, madam, shunned the disease that killed my brother."

Happily at this point the speaker's breath failed her; and Lady Vansittart, seeing a vague surprise upon the lawyer's sharp-featured face, felt called upon to enter into some protest in her own behalf.

"You cannot regret more than I do," she said, with the old pitiful pleading in her soft brown eyes—the look I knew so well, and of which I too had once felt the power—"my inability to tend the dying-bed of my dear and generous husband; my own state of health—so very virulent a disease—" she murmured brokenly, gradually subsiding into a handkerchief deeply edged with black. "My physician said that the risk was too—"

"Your physician, madam, is a knave, or a fool, or both combined, if he said anything of the kind," broke in Aunt Ida. "The only place for any respectable woman when her husband is ill is by his bed-side."

"I have never been spoken to in this way before," moaned auntie's victim, whom Miss Dove was by this time assiduously fanning.

"I daresay not," snapped the enemy; "if your mother, or somebody, had spoken a little plainly to you long ago it would have been all the better for you, and people wouldn't have had such a scandal to tear to bits, as that my brother died with no one near him but that faithful old man—that faithful old man."

Down streamed the tears over Aunt Ida's cheeks, falling hot and fast upon my bowed head. Her words brought all the cruel scene before me in strange and terrible distinctness.

The faint light struggling through the gloom; the grey ashen face on which it fell; the poor chill fingers groping for some hand to clasp them. I clung to auntie, she to me, and we wept anew together.

I thought at the time, and I think still, that Mr. Chitty had a certain grim enjoyment in this unseemly altercation between the sister and the widow of his late client. I fancied I saw a twinkle in his

little keen eyes as he glanced at Eublie's drooping head, crowned with its snowy widow's cap. I think he knew more than he ever told, more than any of us ever knew, how that strange will came about. He made a vast pretence of putting up papers, and inducing them with much humouring to go into a blue bag he had on the table beside him; but I am sure I caught the faintest reflection of a grin upon his countenance as Aunt Ida—not looking one whit less stern for the tears that washed her wrinkled cheeks—took up her parable again.

"I hear you shut yourself up in your room, when the man who loved you, and took you from a life of toil and poverty, lay dying. You would not even send for this dear child to fill the place that, to your shame, was vacant. No—no; that would hardly have done, would it? He might have had some misgiving if he had seen her bending over him; he might have made a fresh will—he was not too far gone to sign his name. Oh!" she moaned, rocking herself to and fro, and clasping me close in her trembling arms, "it's all my wicked temper; if I hadn't been so stiff with him—if I'd forgiven my poor boy for his folly, he would never have died with no one but poor old Terence—whom may God bless!—near him. So they kept you away, my dearie, did they?" she went on, putting back my hair from my forehead, and patting my cheek tenderly; "they kept you away, my dearie, did they?"

It may have been that Lady Vansittart saw the ugly look of things in general; it may have been that some spark of remorse came to life in her heart. I know not; but she evidently felt called upon to put in a word for herself.

"I was quite helpless in the matter," she said, letting her clasped hands fall upon her lap, and raising her lovely pleading eyes to Mr. Chitty, as being the only man present, and therefore the most likely person to feel their power. "I had no choice; Sir Charles himself did not wish— Nothing can be more unseemly than that my husband's actions should be questioned in my presence," she added, suddenly quitting her ground, and taking her stand on the matter of the will.

"No one questions my brother's actions, madam," replied Aunt Ida promptly. "Sir Charles was an honourable gentleman, and he thought he had good reason for what he did; I saw well assured his thought

he was acting for his girl's good; but he was mad at the time."

"Mad!" gasped Eulalie; and Mr. Chitty screwed up his mouth very tight indeed, and made a sort of whistling noise through his teeth.

"Auntie, auntie!" I whispered, putting up my face to hers, and hugging her fast in my arms; "don't speak to her like that; remember how papa loved her; and, indeed—indeed, it doesn't matter one bit."

How can anything matter now? was the thought that tore at my heart. I never blamed papa for what he had done then; I have never blamed him since. There was some reason for it that I did not know—that I never shall know. They knew what it was, those two; and if they had wronged me to him—if here and there a sentence in his loving letters puzzled me still—he knew all the truth when for him the clear light of eternity beat upon the shrouded things of time.

When, two days after the reading of the will, Aunt Ida proposed that I should go with her to London for a time, Eulalie made no demur.

A cessation of open hostilities had taken place subsequent to the grand engagement in the library. Eulalie posed herself as a martyr to circumstances, Lettie as the confidante of the said martyr. Aunt Ida was mostly in her room, and I—what did I do with the days that seemed so empty? For one thing, I wandered about the house gathering, as it were, pieces of memories, to be laid by like sweet-scented herbs for use and solace in the future.

Hazledene would pass into the hands of one who was almost a stranger to me; new lives would begin to live their little day in the old rooms that were so sacred to me; perhaps a new dog would guard the house, and live in Roland's kennel.

It is so in life: the scenery remains much the same; it is the players that change.

It is cheering to me even now to look back upon those last trying days at Hazledene, and call to mind the dear and tender words of comfort that came to me from my Land of Beulah. The first letter of Miss Mary's that I put into Aunt Ida's hand swiftly melted that warm-hearted creature into tears. "Oh, my dear," she said, "what must the heart be like from whence come such thoughts of love and peace!"

If there was one room in the old home more endeared to me by precious association it was the library. Among

the vast store of books that enriched its shelves were one or two volumes specially dear; for could I not remember, on the occasion of my first holiday at home, sitting on papa's knee in the mellow light that shimmered in from the oriel window, and looking at the quaint illuminations round the pages? Did I not fall into little ripples of laughter at the droll figures of birds and beasts here and there to be found among exquisitely-tinted foliage, and gorgeous flowers such as never yet grew in any earthly garden? Was I not awed into admiring silence by the still loveliness of some saintly figure, or the calm awful joy of the maiden mother's face? I knew that the library was not mine, and might never be; but I made up my mind to ask Eulalie to give me the old illuminated missals that I loved.

Going listlessly enough one day, just before my departure, into the dear old room, I saw one of my favourites lying upon a side-table, and near it a bag, from whose gaping mouth protruded silks innumerable; in a word, Miss Dove's Dorcas-work. I sat down on the piled velvet cushions in the window, and laying the book upon my knee, opened it and read the following inscription: "Lettie Dove; from dear Sir Charles Vansitart." Then came a date, of some months back. A little, just a little pang contracted my heart. Papa had often called those quaint old books "Miss Nell's property," and laughed to see me stagger with one of them across the slippery-polished floor; and now, the funny creatures in the trees, the calm-eyed saints, the sweet, sad Madonnas, were all Miss Dove's. It was only a little thing, but it brought the tears to my eyes.

Before I could clear my sight from that mist of piteous regret, Miss Lettie came gliding in, decorously robed in sable of the deepest dye. A dye that was of quite another shade rose in her plump cheeks as she glanced at the book on my knee.

"So papa gave you this, Lettie?" I said sadly, with a sort of hope rising in my mind, that when I told her how I valued the book she would offer to give it back to me.

"Yes," she said, fumbling with her silks; "ever such a while ago, on my birthday."

"Why, you told me your birthday was in August," I said, opening my eyes wide, "and the date in this is December."

I laid my finger upon the writing in the

book as I spoke, and a faint, very faint smear became visible.

"Why, look! one would think it was hardly dry—and—yes, it has made a mark upon the page opposite."

I spoke in perfect good faith. I was never a good hand at double meanings.

"Such insinuations——" began Miss Dove, her face now literally in a blaze.

But she stopped short, for at that moment Aunt Idumea came sailing in, with Frizzle at her heels.

Gathering up her Dorcas-work, Miss Dove prepared to leave the room; but lingered, casting uneasy glances round about, as if she had mislaid something. She always retreated in disorder before Mrs. Bertie Lumley; and if you met her hurrying along a passage, you were pretty safe to see Aunt Ida appear in the distant vista of the same. On this present occasion, as on all others, the little old lady, whose graceful dignity of carriage exceeded that of the tallest of women, simply and wholly ignored Miss Dove's presence, and looked up as the door closed upon her retreat as though rather wondering who had passed through it. In these days little Frizzle was about the only cheerful thing in Hazledene, and now he appeared to be possessed by the very spirit of frolic. He worried Aunt Ida's dress, making believe she was hiding a lively young rat in its folds; he made rushes at me when I tried to remonstrate with him; finally he dived under the couch by the writing-table, and came out again, with an absurdly pompous demeanour and a violently agitated tail, carrying a crumpled up ball of paper in his mouth.

"What is that the rogue has got?" said Aunt Ida, peering through her eyeglass.

I took the paper from Frizzle, opened it, saw with untold thankfulness that my companion's attention was claimed by something outside, and stuffed the paper into my pocket.

It was the fly-leaf of the old missal; and on it, in the dear bold handwriting that I loved, was papa's own name above our family crest and motto.

That day was a busy one, for Aunt

Idumea and I were to leave for London to-morrow. Terence, too, and Frizzle were to go with us. "And it's a bad sort of a time I'll be after having with the doaty beast, I'm thinking," quoth the old man with a sigh; "he'll be for looking out o' window all the blessed way, and barking like mad at every cratur that he sees."

There was plenty to do; and, hardest work of all, to stifle the expression of the bitter sorrow in my heart. When night closed in, and I need fear no watchers, I stole to the churchyard, where the voice of the sea upon the beach below seemed ever keening a dirge over the quiet dead. I made my way to the railed vault of the Vansitarts. I stretched out my hands towards the place where my dead lay.

Could papa see me? I wondered, as I knelt there by that cruel rail. Could he see the passion of grief that shook me from head to foot as I murmured through pale lips: "Good-bye, good-bye; your little girl is very, very lonely without you; the world seems so large and desolate; there is such a terrible silence come into my life since you left me? Oh, papa, papa!"

Someone—could it be Terence?—came stealing over the graves to where I lay huddled on the damp ground. Yes; it was that faithful servitor.

"I missed ye, Miss Ellen, and thought it would be just by here I'd find ye. Ah, now, what would the master say if he could see ye lying here, and the dew fallin' like rain?"

So I rose to my feet, steadied myself by the vault-rail for a moment, and took my way home, followed by poor Terence, scarcely less grief-stricken than his mistress.

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No. 55. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 1879.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

SEBASTIAN STROME.

CHAPTER VII. BAD WEATHER.

ON Thursday morning the occupant of the back room on the first floor of Number Ninety-seven, Falkirk Road, awoke to a sense of having an exciting and arduous journey to perform. It was colder than yesterday, and the dull grey clouds, a square section of which was visible above the soiled muslin window-screen, foreboded snow. The ashes of last night's fire lay dead in the grate. Near the door stood a moderate-sized trunk, ready packed, but still open, to receive whatever articles might turn up at the last moment. Upon the end of the trunk was fastened a label bearing the address, "Mrs. Francis, Cedarhurst," written in a drooping, feminine hand. The floor was strewn with odds-and-ends of rubbish, such as most human beings, about to change one place or state for another, leave behind them.

The young woman described upon the trunk-label as Mrs. Francis got up and partially dressed herself, completing her costume for the nonce with a flowing dressing-gown, no longer so fresh and pretty as it once had been. Her soft pale-brown hair hung down about her shoulders. Having gathered together some scraps of paper, and other kindling material, she quickly built up a fire, filling the grate with the remains of the coal in the wooden box that did duty as coal-scuttle. She half-filled the kettle and placed it on the hob, and then moved languidly to the window and looked out, drawing back her hair from her cheek with the small idle fingers of one hand; the other hand rested apathetically on the sill.

The room was small, and might formerly have been both pretty and comfortable; but now it had an exhausted and negligent air; its brightness and orderliness had departed, insomuch that a pure and wholesome mind would have felt oppressed and anxious there. The once-cheerful carpet was neutral-tinted and threadbare now, and the divisions of the boards beneath had printed themselves off upon it. The wallpaper, stamped with a blue figure of not ungraceful design, was torn and stained in several places. The window curtains, of some flowered blue fabric resembling damask, had faded under the action of the light to a dirty yellow hue, except where portions of the trimming, fallen away, disclosed the original colour beneath. At some previous period there had been several pictures on the walls; but these had been removed, and only oblong squares of darker tint remained to show where they had hung. There was not much furniture in the room—a small table, two or three chairs, an ottoman, a bedstead; all somewhat defaced and shabby, but bearing evidence of having been sightly and comfortable enough when new. Altogether, therefore, a sad, pathetic little room, which had come upon evil days, and might anticipate worse days still. Its window, moreover, overlooked back yards and a wilderness of hideous brick, and although heaven was visible, if you raised your eyes high enough, the hideous brick had a hideous fascination.

The young woman, at all events, had not raised her eyes, save for one brief glance, which fell again discontented, because the sky was all clouds. After awhile she turned away from the window, and walked with a somewhat heavy step to the fire-place, where

she sat down. She kept up a constant tattoo and drumming with her fingers; and she was ever and anon changing the position of her body and limbs, now nervously and impatiently, now with a languid and apathetic weariness. She had a way of pushing the hair quickly back from her face, and then remaining for a minute or two with her face upturned, revealing the full length and delicacy of the white throat, her hand arrested just beneath the ear. Then hand and face would droop again, and the tattoo would begin once more.

The face, under prosperous circumstances, might have been very pretty. The best that could be said of it now was, that it possessed a certain dim and fitful attractiveness, due more to attitudes, and, so to say, reminiscences, than to any positive significance of feature. With advantages of colour, health, vivacity, and the consciousness of admiration, this countenance was doubtless full of piquant little charms; but apart from these contingencies, pale, harassed, with darker semicircles beneath the eyes, and a sorrowful relaxation of the corners of a rather large and mobile mouth, few men would have retained any recollection of it a moment after passing it in the street. Except for an unsophisticated element that pervaded it, in the midst of its trouble and lapse, it would have seemed quite trifling and vacant; but thereby it acquired pathos, and so was lifted to a higher than its legitimate level of interest. When an incorrigibly childish and mercurial nature falls into evil, the spectacle touches our heart more nearly than does the deeper fall of a mature intellect.

During the interval before the kettle began to come to life, this young woman's mind, which dwelt mainly on the past, and held the future in aversion, was hovering about the event of the previous evening. She had had a visitor; and a visit, although not from the person she most wished to see, was nevertheless a marked episode in a life like hers. To this visit was it owing, indeed, that yonder trunk stood ready packed near the door. He was a kind gentleman, this visitor, and he had told her great news—news which would alter everything for her—if only the news were true. But on that point she had grave doubts: it might possibly be true—but she would almost have preferred an established negative to an affirmative with misgivings. Hers was a character unfitted to endure suspense. Of course it couldn't be true. Oh, but if it should be true! She would

never believe it until she knew it. Yet it would be so sweet to believe it, that, in spite of herself, the sweet belief could not consent to be denied. Besides, how could anyone have had the heart to tell her such a thing, if he had not known it was true? And he had looked like a very kind gentleman, and when he had told her of this, he had held her hand softly, and smiled at her with his red lips, and his eyes had glistened benevolently.

But to be married! honestly married! Well, why not? A year ago, had she not looked forward to marriage with confidence? Surely she had a right to be married—a terrible right! No doubt she had done very wrong; but she had suffered for it very much. She had loved someone very much—oh! with her whole heart and soul. He had said he loved her; and so she had given herself to him, and had gone away with him to be happy—as she thought. She had loved him so very much—more than anything, more than God, even; and perhaps that was where the wrong lay.

To be married—to be his wife. He used to call her "my little wife" at first—a year ago. But really she had hardly cared, then, whether he married her or not: all she had wanted was to love him and to have him love her. It had been all happiness at first. Afterwards, the happiness had been less, though her love had not been so. There had not always been enough money; he had been often away from her; and when, about six months since, she had whispered to him something which she had come to know, and which had made her hot and cold with fear and love and wonder, his face had changed suddenly, he had got up as if displeased, and had walked to the window and stood there for several minutes with his back turned upon her, tapping the floor with his foot, his hands behind him, one gripping the wrist of the other so hard that the ends of the fingers whitened. No; that had not been a happy day.

From that time she had begun to wish that she might be married; and it was then that she had first been brought to realize that he might never marry her. He had never refused, in so many words, to do so; but he looked stern when she mentioned it (as she did sometimes, trying to speak lightly and playfully, and not to let the tears come to her eyes), and kept away from her more than ever—it was nine weeks to-day since she had seen him. She had often been very miserable: she had

wished she were dead: sometimes she had felt reckless and wicked. He might at least have written to her—have answered her letters! What was to become of her when she was ill! The landlady had said she must not stay in her house, unless her husband came and stayed with her; and had added that for all she knew there might be no husband in the case. This was at a time when the rent had been overdue a good while. She had written to him again; he had sent money, but had not come himself. She would have to go to the hospital then. But day by day the feeling had gained upon her that she would not be alive after that; and she had pondered over it all, and feared, and doubted, and hesitated, being left all to herself, with no one to give her advice or talk with her; and at last, like a ray of light, it had come into her mind to write to the good old minister who once had held her in his arms and baptised her, and had asked God's blessing upon her. She would ask only that the little baby, which its mother might not live to see, should not be left nameless and unknown in the great forlorn hospital. She would not tell who its father was; but, perhaps, for its wicked mother's sake, somebody would care for it.

That letter had been written and posted only three days ago. The same morning she had seen, in the City, a face that she knew—a man who once, in the old days, had asked her to marry him. Poor Prout! she had not given a very kind answer to that question which he had put so earnestly and so awkwardly, growing red to the tips of his ears, and treading upon the skirt of her new dress: she had laughed at him then; but she had not suspected that the time would come when she would be ashamed to have him look at her! On this morning, when she caught sight of him, sitting on the top of a 'bus, she had just posted her letter: she turned the corner of the street at once, and hurried home. Had he followed her? She could not help fancying that he had; and, from something the landlady said that afternoon, that he had made enquiries about her. Thinking about it had made her nervous all the rest of the day; and she had longed more than ever for an answer to her letter. She would not doubt that an answer would come.

It had come in an unexpected way, in the shape of the red-lipped, moist-eyed gentleman of yesterday evening. He had not told his news at first; he had asked her various questions, intending, doubtless, to

prepare her mind for the surprise in store. At last he said that he was just from Cedarhurst, where he had spoken about her with some friends of hers. Had the minister got her letter? she asked. He looked hard at her for a moment, pushing out his under lip and wrinkling his forehead; and then had said, Yes; that he had come to tell her she was to return to the Vicarage at once; that all the wrong was to be righted; that she would meet her husband there. "What do you mean?" she had asked; and he answered, taking her hand and smiling into her face with his little brown eyes: "Yes, your husband; as he has long been to all intents and purposes, and as he now will be legally and religiously. He could not come here to-day to tell you this himself; so I came in his place. To-morrow you will meet; I hope you will be happy. He sent you this, with his love," it was a five-pound note; "you are to pay all your debts here, and pack your trunk, and be sure to catch the four o'clock train to-morrow. There will be someone to meet you at the station there."

All this he had said in his whispering thick-sounding voice, with a smile and a glistening of the eyes between each sentence; and soon afterwards he went away. In thinking over his visit, she had felt some doubts which, in the hurry and excitement of the moment, had not occurred to her. Who was this gentleman? What proof had she that he had told the truth? Why had he given no explanation as to why her husband, as he called him, had been prevented from coming? These and other questions disturbed her mind while she was packing her trunk, and made her dreams feverish and uneasy. But when, on the other hand, she had asked herself what motive he could have had to deceive her, and had been able to imagine none, she had gradually become reassured, and almost believed that the end of all her troubles was at hand. She sat for a long time, on this last morning, immersed in restless reverie; and the kettle had almost boiled itself out before she emerged to a perception of outward things.

The reader, who will long ago have come to the conclusion that she was a very undesirable person, with vague or even scandalous notions on religious and moral subjects, will not care to follow her too closely in her various thoughts and acts during the forenoon of this day. They were not important, merely the paying of sundry small bills, and of the past month's rent; a prolonged farewell gossip

with her landlady, who evinced a rather gratifying curiosity as to whither her lodger might be going; to which enquiry the lodger replied by shadowing forth a destiny in comparison with the splendours of which the fortunes of the heroines of the Penny Reader would appear tame. Then there was a lunch to be eaten, whereat, also, the benevolent landlady assisted, and preoccupiedly disposed of the whole of the "pure unsweetened" which she had counselled her lodger to procure for "soothin' the nerves." Finally, there was the four-wheeler to be called, and the trunk, with its imperfect lock, and its supplementary rope fastening that would not keep in place, to be hoisted on top; and, after all, the long dazing jolt and rattle to the railway-station, and the hurry and bewilderment there.

She had got a first-class ticket, for there was money enough left in her purse, and she wished, if possible, to be alone. She wore her best clothes: a black silk dress, a cloak trimmed with fur, a bonnet and muff to match. She had put on, also, a pair of kid gloves, which she had bought during the morning. Altogether, with her pale, tired, but expectant and still girlish face, her appearance was refined and gently attractive. Two points, at least, of her former prettiness yet remained to her: the long curving sweep of her eyelashes, and the tender unsophisticated pout of her upper lip, which projected somewhat beyond the thinner lip below. These features lent grace to her profile, as it was relieved against the dark blue cushion of the railway carriage. But there was no one there to look at it.

It had begun to snow at noon, and now the air was dense with fine thick-coming flakes, driven slantwise by the north wind. The short day was already over, and the storm hastened and increased the gloom of twilight. The lamp in the roof of the carriage was lit, and the traveller could see a phantom picture of the comfortable compartment projected upon the outer darkness, and the likeness of herself seated within it. The monotonous roar in her ears, the swift even motion, the elastic luxury of the cushioned seat, gradually brought about a kind of forgetfulness of her physical self. She felt, for the time being, emancipated from the galling weight of bodily fetters, and the immaterial part of her was able to stand aloof, so to speak, and contemplate its worldly plight undisturbed. She would call that unsubstantial

figure in the storm outside her real self; and she, sitting here, the unreality.

Would it not be well if this disembodiment were to last for ever? She was leaving behind her her life of the past year; why not take leave of life altogether? Come what might, she could hardly hope to be as happy in the future as she had been in the past. She had had experience; but it had not taught her why wrong was wrong, or goodness good. She had felt almost everything of pain and pleasure that a girl like her could expect to feel—almost, not quite all! but what was to come would soon be over. The pleasure would be, to hear him call her wife before them all; the pain—that she could not forecast. Perhaps it would not be so bad as they said. Everything, just now, seemed unreal, even the past.

The train slackened speed and stopped. A porter outside called the name of the station—the next station to Cedarhurst. Moved by a sudden impulse the young woman put down the window, opened the door, and got out. She felt the cold wind and the snow upon her face. The porter shut the door, and the train moved on, leaving her standing on the platform.

It had occurred to her that she did not wish to be met by the person who was waiting for her at Cedarhurst, and so be exposed to the looks and remarks of the people there, whom she had known, and who would recognise her. She could escape this by getting out here and proceeding the rest of the way on foot. Cedarhurst Vicarage, whither she was bound, was rather less than a mile distant, on the hither side of Cedarhurst station. She knew a short way of getting there, by a footpath, and, for some three hundred yards, along the railway itself. She had walked it scores of times as a girl. It would bring her to her destination almost as soon as if she had ridden on to Cedarhurst, and then taken a fly back to the Vicarage; and she would enjoy the advantage of arriving quite unseen. As to the drawbacks of the storm and the darkness, she had not thought of them; still less was she deterred by the remembrance of her own physical unfitness for exertion. All she felt was, that by this and by no other way must she go.

She had an umbrella, which she spread before passing the gate, thus screening her face from the scrutiny of the ticket-collector stationed there. A voice asked her whether she would take a cab? She only

shook her head and hurried on. In a few moments she was following the darkened pathway, safe from observation. The strong wind rendered the umbrella so troublesome that at length she determined to do without it: it was only an old one; she closed it and stuck it beneath the hedge; then slipped both hands into her muff, bent her head, and quickened her steps.

By-and-by she came to the stile; after passing which the path crosses the railway and resumes its course on the other side. She climbed over the stile with difficulty; she was feeling a good deal exhausted, and the whirl of the snow bewildered her. After getting on the railway, instead of crossing directly over, she must follow down the line till past the curve, and only take the road again when almost at the bridge—in this way saving about a quarter of a mile. Walking on the line was forbidden; but this was not the first time she had walked in forbidden ways. She struggled along, staggering now and then, and feeling her way rather than seeing it. In fact, her whole mind was so intent upon the meeting which lay a little farther on in the future, that she scarcely gave heed to anything else. She was out of her body as much as she had been while in the train, and was out of sympathy with its exhaustion and distress. It had stumbled and recovered itself: never mind! she was thinking of how his face would look when she first appeared before him; of how his lips would move before he spoke; and of what he would say. Would he call her "wife"?

How the wind roared—how it shrieked, louder and louder! Was it the wind? What was that sudden glare round the curve, causing the glistening rails to flash into visibility, and the blinding snow-flakes to whirl in dazzling rings? What was this devouring, earth-shaking rush? None too soon did she step aside to let that iron-shod, headlong monster hurl past. But her limbs felt as if sheathed with lead, and her heart was as water within her. She knew not which way she was moving, or whether she were moving at all. Someone had shouted to her; she had heard his voice above the rattle of the flying train; there had seemed to be in it a note of familiar sound. But her ears were so stunned she could not be sure; and now that roar and rattle seemed to be approaching again. There was the shout again, too—was the train coming back? But if so, was she not on the other track, and therefore safe? She

turned partly round; she saw it come, terrible as before, and still she was in its path. She could not escape this time. There she stood, lifting her muff so as to cover her eyes; not so much caring if death were come, but yet unwilling to look it in the face. Oh, that roar! it was the worst of all. When would the shock come?

The Reverend Arthur Strome, throughout the morning of this day, had seemed to be in one of his states of angelic communion. A light that was not light, but something of a yet more subtle brightness, rayed forth from every line and eloquent feature of his ardent, guileless face. There was an unusual amount of parish work to attend to; and whatever he found to do or to say was so said and done as to exhale a fragrance of charity and love. Several persons whom he met told him that they had never seen him looking better; and Doctor Stemper, one of the jolliest and most laughter-loving physicians on record, vowed, with a chuckle and a twinkle, that "By George, parson, you—you grow younger every day—eh? Ha, ha! I shall find you turning up a boy one of these days—eh? and be called in to doctor you for—for scarlet fever and teething—eh? Ha, ha, ha!"

The minister stopped a moment, his arms hanging down at his sides, and his eyes fixed half smilingly, half musingly, upon his friend's face. "It's surprising how old I am, though," he said at last, in a measured tone that contrasted with the tripping hurry of the physician's speech. "I was talking of it with Mary Dene yesterday: I've been married thirty years! I'd be willing to go through it all again, just on the chance of being as happy as I have been. It would be worth the risk!"

The doctor looked comically grave, and heaved a big sigh. "By George, parson, that's tremendous!" he said, shaking his head. "Never heard a man say that before—eh? never! I wouldn't—no, I wouldn't! and you'd think I'd been as happy as most men to hear me laugh! But go through it all again? By George, no!—eh? Not if I know it!"

This conversation took place at the door of the dispensary, where the two old friends had paused to exchange parting words, the minister having stepped in to apprise the doctor of the expected arrival of Fanny Jackson. "I expect Sebastian with her to-night or to-morrow morning," the minister had said; "he will have got

Mary Dene's letter before this time. Look in at the Home on your way down, and see that all is in readiness." This the good doctor had promised to do, but, in his own mind, he had thought it none too probable that Fanny would appear. He fancied he knew more about the ways of women like her than the parson did. "Wants money," he had said to himself; "wants money—eh? That's about the size of it!"

It was about two o'clock when the minister reached the Vicarage, after the conclusion of his labours. He had arranged to have no occupation that would take him away from the house this afternoon, in order to be on hand if any message should come about Fanny. He sat in his chair in the little study, with paper before him on which to jot down thoughts for his Christmas sermon. Mrs. Strome was in her seat beside the fire, upright and quiet, sewing on some tiny baby garment. The minister could never write his sermons unless his wife were in the room: not that he ever asked her assistance in composition, but he needed the silent influence of her presence.

On this occasion, however, he did not find himself in the mood to write. Following on the activity and ardour of the morning, a tender and musing gravity had taken possession of him. When he spoke it was in a hushed tone, and always with an indescribable gentleness.

"I remember once—ever so long ago—reading a theory that when the time of death approaches—while it is yet several hours distant, and without the man being necessarily in expectation of his end—his soul is already in process of being withdrawn from the body. The angels come to him betimes on his last day; and order it so, that the withdrawal is completed at the moment when what is called the stroke of death falls."

"I like that theory," said Mrs. Strome, after duly reflecting upon it. "I never liked the idea of the soul being torn out of the body at a moment's warning. But what made you think of it to-day, Arthur?"

"Oh, I'm in a fanciful humour! I feel particularly easy and comfortable—as if there were no more work to be done in the world! How little useful work a man contrives to do in this life! It's well for him that he has eternity to improve in. I have lived a long time, but I've made ducks and drakes of half of it."

"Of which half, dear?" enquired Mrs.

Strome, with an unusual approach to dry humour.

"Not of you, Susie!" rejoined her husband, smiling. "But, I mean, the thousand blunders I've made in the way of my calling. Intuitions have been my undoing; there never was anybody so easily convinced as I that he had received a direct revelation of divine truth. The trouble was, that before I found out my mistake, I'd persuaded a hundred innocent folk to follow me into the mire. That is worse than waste of time; idleness would have seemed safer. There's one comfort, though: I should have done worse but for you!"

It was Mrs. Strome's habit, when she heard anything with the purport of which she disagreed, and which yet did not demand opposition from the moral or religious stand-point, to say nothing whatever. And it is to be observed, for the edification of womankind at large, that although Mrs. Strome was a woman of considerable dialectic powers, she seldom succeeded in devising a retort more efficacious than this of silence. As her husband had often told her, it was the only infallible method of getting the last word. On this occasion, accordingly, several minutes were allowed to pass before Mrs. Strome remarked, drawing the thread serenely through a stitch:

"I wonder whether it will be a boy or a girl!"

"Non omnis moriar!" murmured the minister, who was also pursuing his independent vein of thought. "The only lasting benefit I shall have bestowed upon mankind is Sebastian; but he will compensate for a multitude of shortcomings. Poor fellow! how he must have suffered to-day. I hope there has been no mishap."

"I hope so, too."

"Oh, there's no danger: he has the savoir faire of a Napoleon! I think I shall step over to the station presently to see whether they arrive by this train."

"Don't go out this evening, Arthur!" said Mrs. Strome suddenly.

"Oh, Susie!"

"I am sure you had better not. Sebastian will be sure to send word if he wants you to meet him. Very likely he won't bring her until to-morrow. See what a storm has come on! Don't go, Arthur! Besides, some important message might come while you were away."

"That is true," assented the minister, though reluctantly. "Well, I will stay then; but it's only ten minutes to the

station, Susie, and I think a breath of this snowy air might drive away this lazy fit that has come over me."

Again the wife entrenched herself in silence; and the husband, after a longing gaze through the darkening window-pane, against which the faint rustle of the falling snow was audible, relapsed into abstraction. Presently, as the gloom increased, Mrs. Strome laid aside her sewing, and came and sat in a low chair beside her husband. He immediately put his arm over her shoulder, so that his hand hung down where hers could clasp it; thus disposed, the two old lovers, in the fitful gleam of the firelight, might have been mistaken for the fiery youth and the pure steadfast girl of thirty years before. Those thirty years had strengthened, instead of weakened, their marriage bonds. Those years that had seen them grow grey had been to them opportunity, not time. With respect to each other, they were already living in eternity. In this firelight silence, hand-in-hand, they were perhaps more deeply together and more happy than they had ever been before. More could not be asked for them.

"Which of us will go first, Susie?" queried the husband at last.

"God has made us one, and we shall not be parted," said the wife's quiet voice. "My love and thought will follow you, Arthur, wherever you go; and what else is there that is me?"

She lifted her face as she spoke, and he bent his towards it. But the room was now almost dark; for the light of Heaven does not reach mortal eyesight.

"Did you see that?" exclaimed the minister, with a start.

"That spurt of flame from the coal?"

The minister passed his hand over his forehead; it was moist and cold; his heart was beating heavily. The vision had vanished.

"Susie, I must go. Something will happen to that poor child! I baptised her—there is a bond between us—and an obligation! I'll come back!"

He had risen; Mrs. Strome felt that he was trembling slightly; her heart sank; but she encouraged it again. A real crisis seemed to be at hand demanding strength.

"Shall you go to the station?" she asked with cheerfulness. "The train will just have arrived."

"Yes. It will not be there; but I shall know!" He was putting on his

cloak and hat, she helping him. "I shall bring her here," he went on, thinking aloud. "What can have become of Sebastian? I did not see him."

"I have put the flask in your pocket," said his wife to him at the door. "All will be ready when you come back. God be with you, my husband!"

"And with thy spirit!" he answered, kissing her, and was off.

Running and walking, he reached the station in but little over five minutes. The train had just gone on. At the door he met Prout. The two men, without need of questions, divined the thought that filled both of them. They sunk the catechism that was only logically necessary, and so arrived immediately at the point.

"Fanny has not come?"

"She was to 'come by this train, sir; but she wasn't in it when it was here. On'y a box, with 'Mrs. Francis' on it. But guard said as a young lady got out of a first-class at t'other station."

"That's right! so I thought. Now listen, Prout. Get a cab, and drive straight to the bridge—you know. I shall go by the path. When you get there, whistle, and come to me when I answer. Here's five shillings—"

"I don't want it, sir, please. I cared for her myself, 'nd do so still."

"Good! then off with you."

They separated, hurrying away in different directions in the darkness. The minister seemed almost to be acting according to a plan previously foreseen and resolved upon. There was no delay and no doubt. The bridge, where the high road crossed the railway, was about half a mile distant by the path; by the road it was farther. The minister ran all the way. His hope was to get there before the passing of the down express and of the up train, which were timed to meet each other at about this point; but as he ran he heard the whistle of the latter behind him. He quickened his pace; he and the train arrived at the bridge together. He glanced along the line; fifty yards farther down, in the glare of the bull's-eye, he caught a glimpse of a woman's black figure. So had he beheld it once before in his vision that evening. He gave a great shout, and sprang down on the steep turf-side of the cutting, plunging forward and downward. The express was now just appearing round the curve. Ten yards more! She did not see him; she stood, veiling her eyes. The train was upon them.

A FEW WISHING CUSTOMS.

IN whatever grade of society or position of prosperity we are placed, we still hope for something better, and as mankind is never in this world perfectly happy, we find ourselves constantly wishing for some future blessedness superlative to that we at present enjoy. Consequently, a host of futile customs to meet this want are practised among the vulgar, who believe in their efficacy, and many of them are even patronised by the educated. In the West of England, "Wishing Wells" are very plentiful, and young damsels longing for married felicity offer up the following petition :

A husband, St. Catherine,
A handsome one, St. Catherine,
A rich one, St. Catherine,
A nice one, St. Catherine,
And soon, St. Catherine.

At Abbotsbury, they used to go on a certain day in the year to the Norman chapel of St. Catherine, at Milton Abbey, and make the same prayer. It is somewhat singular that on the Continent this saint should be considered the special patroness of spinsters. At Holywell, or St. Winifred's Well, in North Wales, those who are not satisfied with their circumstances in life must find the "wishing stone," which is two feet below the water, and while kissing it make the necessary wish. In Pennant's History of Whiteford Parish, we find an account of the Walsingham Wells; they were formerly used to cure ailments of the head and stomach, but as this idea is now exploded, the superstitious in the district still believe them to be able to accomplish human desires. There is a stone between the two wells, upon which the suppliant must kneel with his bare right knee; he can then reach both wells, which he is required to do with his hands, and to take as much water as they will hold, and drink it. The wish formed during this operation will be gratified in the ensuing twelve months; and if this fail, it is put down to incredulity.

A peculiar method of divination is practised near Kirkmichael, Banff, at the fountain of St. Michael. There wives go to know if their husbands will get well, and girls for their sweethearts. The sacred guardian is personated by a fly, which skims over the surface of the water, and is supposed to be immortal; the issue of their wish is foretold by its dejected or animated appearance. An old man used to clear the well, which was otherwise neglected, and plant fragrant flowers round it, lamenting

the degeneracy and unbelief of these modern times. According to Grose's Provincial Glossary (1811), to see a future spouse in a dream, "the parties enquiring must be in a different county from that in which they commonly reside; and on going to bed must knit the left garter about the right legged stocking, letting the other garter and stocking alone; and as they rehearse the following verses, at every comma knit a knot :

This knot I knit,
To know the thing I know not yet;
That I may see
The man (or woman) that shall my husband (or
wife) be;
How he goes, and what he wears,
And what he does all days and years.

During the season when the cuckoo's note is heard, many curious customs are observed; thus in England, as well as Germany, it is believed by the peasantry, that if asked, it will tell you how many years you have to live, by the repetition of its cry; so they say :

Cuckoo, cherry-tree,
Good bird, tell me,
How many years have I to live.

As soon as the Danish village girls hear this bird, they kiss their hand and ask, "Cuckoo, cuckoo! when shall I be married?" Among the Swedes, too, the girls exclaim :

Cuckoo grey, tell to me,
Up in the tree, true and free,
How many years I must live and go unmarried?

Superstitions in connection with the appearance of the moon are very numerous; it generally presides over lovers' wishes. In Devonshire, the young people, as soon as they see the first new moon after midsummer, go to a stile, turn their backs to it, and say :

All hail, new moon, all hail to thee!
I prythee, good moon, reveal to me
This night who shall my true love be;
Who is he, and what he wears,
And what he does all months and years.

In Ireland, they sometimes show the new moon a knife, and invoking the Holy Trinity, say :

New moon, true morrow, be true now to me,
That I ere the morrow my true love may see;

afterwards placing the knife under the pillow, and keeping strict silence lest the charm should be broken. In Berkshire, at the new moon, the maidens go into the fields, and looking at it, say :

New moon, new moon, I hail thee!
By all the virtue in thy body,
Grant this night that I may see,
He who my true love is to be.

A curious custom exists in Cornwall of

gathering the club-moss, which is considered good for all diseases of the eyes. Hunt, in his Popular Romances of the West of England, says the gathering is regarded as a mystery, and if any ventures to write the secret, the virtues of the moss will be of no more use to him. The third day of the moon, when it is seen for the first time, they show it the knife with which the moss is to be cut, and repeat:

As Christ healed the issue of blood,
Do thou cut what thou outtest for good.

At sunset, having carefully washed the hands, it is to be cut kneeling, wrapped in a cloth, and boiled in water from the nearest spring; this may be used as a fomentation, or the moss made into an ointment with butter made from a new cow's milk. Vallancey tells us that the Irish, on seeing the new moon, knelt down, repeated the Lord's Prayer, and then said: "May thou leave us as safe as thou hast found us." Aubrey says, speaking of old English manners, the women sit astride a gate or stile the first night of the new moon, saying: "A fine moon, God bless her!" Halliwell, in his Popular Rhymes, speaks of a peculiar divination practised during the harvest moon. When going to bed, put under your pillow a prayer-book open at the words, in the matrimonial service, "with this ring I thee wed;" place on it a key, a ring, a flower, a sprig of willow, a small heart-cake, a crust of bread, and these cards: a ten of clubs, nine of hearts, and the aces of spades and diamonds. Wrap these in a muslin or gauze handkerchief, and on getting into bed cross your hands and say:

Luna, every woman's friend,
To me thy goodness condescend,
Let me this night in visions see,
Emblems of my destiny.

If you dream of storms, it portends trouble; a calm after it, so your fate will be; the ring or ace of diamonds, marriage; bread, industry; cake, prosperity; flowers, joy; willow, treachery in love; spades, death; diamonds, riches; clubs, a foreign land; keys, confidence, power, and plenty; birds, many children; and geese, you will marry more than one. In Staffordshire, when a child has the whooping-cough, they believe they can cure it by the magic influence of the moon. In Cornwall, the use of the following invocation for good luck:

Even ash, I thee do pluck,
Hoping thus to meet good luck.
If no luck I get from thee,
I shall wish thee on the tree.

In Devonshire the girls believe that if they

pluck yarrow from a man's grave, and place it under their pillow, repeating these lines, they will dream of their lovers:

Yarrow, sweet yarrow, the first that I have found,
And in the name of Jesus I pluck it from the ground.
As Joseph loved sweet Mary, and took her for his dear,
So in a dream this night, I hope, my true love will appear.

In Lancashire, if the enquirer wishes to know the abode of a lover, an apple-pippin is taken between the thumb and finger, and, while moving round, squeezed out, when it is supposed to fly in the direction of the lover's house. These words are said at the same time:

Pippin, pippin, paradise,
Tell me where my true love lies:
East, west, north, or south,
Pilling Brig or Cookermouth.

Halliwell, in his Popular Rhymes (1849), says that girls formerly practised divination with a "St. Thomas's onion," which they peeled, wrapped in a clean handkerchief, and laid under their heads, saying the following rhyme:

Good St. Thomas, do me right,
And see my true love come to-night,
That I may see him in the face,
And him in my kind arms embrace.

In Shropshire, to find one's future partner, the blade-bone of a lamb must be procured, which is to be pricked at midnight with a penknife, and these words repeated:

'Tis not this bone I mean to pick,
But my love's heart I wish to prick;
If he comes not and speaks to-night
I'll prick and prick till it be light.

In Derbyshire they have a method which it would take a bold heart to perform: the young woman, to find out her future husband, runs round the church at midnight, as the clock strikes twelve, repeating the following:

I sow hempeed, hempeed I sow,
He that loves me best
Come, and after me mow.

After which her destined partner is believed to follow her. Barnabe Googe, in his translation of Naogeorgus, better known as the Popish Kingdom (1570), refers to the pretty custom of making gifts on New Year's Day as follows:

The next to this is New Year's Day, whereon to every
most costly presents in do bring and New Year's gifts
do send.

These gifts the husband gives his wife, and father
eke the child,
And maister on his men bestowes the like with favour
milde,
And good beginning o' the year they wishe and wishe
again,
According to the ancient guise of heathen people
vaine.

Some localities become, by time-honoured custom, the wishing-places of lovers, such as the well-known gate at Grassmere; it being the popular belief that any wish formed there will be fulfilled. A beautiful view of the lake can be had from it, which romantic situation lends it an additional charm. Wordsworth has made it the subject of one of his touching poems. The old gate is, however, replaced by one now covered with initials in the real English style.

VIXEN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c. &c.

CHAPTER L. THE BLUEBEARD CHAMBER.

THE day before the funeral Captain Winstanley received a letter from his step-daughter, offering to execute any deed he might choose to have prepared, settling upon him the income which his wife was to have had after Violet's majority.

"I know that you are a heavy loser by my mother's death," she wrote, "and I shall be glad to do anything in my power to lessen that loss. I know well that it was her earnest wish that your future should be provided for. I told her a few days before she died that I should make you this offer. I do it with all my heart; and I shall consider myself obliged by your acceptance of it."

The captain's reply was brief and firm.

"I thank you for your generous offer," he said, "which I feel assured is made in good faith; but I think you ought to know that there are reasons why it is impossible I should accept any benefit from your hand. I shall not re-enter the Abbey House after my wife's funeral. You will be sole and sovereign mistress of all things from that hour."

He kept his word. He was chief mourner at the quiet but stately burial under the old yew-tree in Beechdale churchyard. When all was over he got into a fly, and drove to the station at Lyndhurst Road, whence he departed by the first train for London. He told no one anything about his plans for the future; he had no address but his club. He was next heard of, six months later, in South America.

Violet had telegraphed for her old governess directly after Mrs. Winstanley's death; and that good and homely person arrived on the day after the funeral to take up her abode with her old pupil, as companion and chaperon, until Miss

Tempest should have become Mrs. Vawdrey, and would have but one companion henceforward in all the journey of life. Boris and Vixen were to be married in six months. Mrs. Winstanley had made them promise that her death should delay their marriage as little as possible.

"You can have a very quiet wedding, you know, dear," she said. "You can be married in your travelling-dress—something pretty in grey silk and terry velvet, or with chinchilla trimming, if it should be winter. Chinchilla is so distinguished-looking. You will go abroad, I suppose, for your honeymoon. Pau, or Monaco, or any of those places on the Mediterranean."

It had pleased her to settle everything for the lovers. Violet remembered all these speeches with a tender sorrow. There was comfort in the thought that her mother had loved her, according to her lights.

It had been finally settled between the lovers that they were to live at the Abbey House. Briarwood was to be let to any wealthy individual who might desire a handsome house, surrounded by exquisitely arranged gardens, and burdened with glass that would cost a small fortune annually to maintain. Before Mr. Vawdrey could put his property into the hands of the auctioneers, he received a private offer which was in every respect satisfactory.

Lady Mallow wished to spend some part of every year near her father and mother, who lived a good deal at Ashbourne, the duke becoming yearly more devoted to his Chillingham oxen and monster turnips. Lord Mallow, who loved his native isle to distraction, but always found six weeks in a year a sufficient period of residence there, was delighted to please his bride, and agreed to take Briarwood, furnished, on a seven-years' lease. The orchid-houses were an irresistible attraction; and by this friendly arrangement Lady Mallow would profit by the alterations and improvements her cousin had made for her gratification, when he believed she was to be his wife.

Briarwood thus disposed of, Boris was free to consider the Abbey House his future home; and Violet had the happiness of knowing that the good old house in which her childhood had been spent would be her habitations till she, too, was carried to the family vault under the old yew-trees. There are people who languish for a life for whom the newest is ever the best; but it was not thus with Violet Tempest. The people she had known all her life, the scenes amidst which she had played when

round the cornice; curtains mud-colour, with a mediæval design in dirty yellow, or, in upholsterers' language, "old gold."

"I should like to show you the stables before it is quite dark," said Rorie presently. "I made a few slight improvements there while the builders were about."

"You know I have a weakness for stables," answered Vixen. "How many a lecture I used to get from poor mamma about my unfortunate tastes. But can there be anything in the world nicer than a good old-fashioned stable, smelling of clover and newly-cut hay?"

"Stables are very nice, indeed, and very useful, in their proper place," remarked Miss McCroke sententially.

"But one ought not to bring the stables into the drawing-room," said Vixen gravely. "Come, Rorie, let us see your latest improvements in stable gear."

They all went out to the stone-paved quadrangle, which was as neatly kept as a West End livery-yard. Miss McCroke had an ever-present dread of the ubiquitous hind-legs of strange horses: but she followed her charge into the stable, with the same heroic fidelity with which she would have followed her to the scaffold or the stake.

There were all Rorie's old favourites. Vixen knew them all, and went up to them and patted their graceful heads, and made herself at home with them.

"You are all coming to the Abbey House to live, you dear things," she said delightedly.

There was a loose-box, shut off by a five-foot wainscot partition, surmounted by a waved iron rail, at one end of the stable, and on approaching this enclosure Vixen was saluted with sundry grunts and snorting noises, which seemed curiously familiar.

At the sound of these she stopped short, turned red, and then pale, and looked intently at Rorie, who was standing close by smiling at her.

"That is my Bluebeard chamber," he said gaily. "There's something too awful inside."

"What horse have you got there?" cried Vixen eagerly.

"A horse that I think will carry you nicely when we hunt together."

"What horse? Have I ever seen him? Do I know him?"

The grunts and snortings were continued with a crescendo movement; an eager nose was rattling the latch of the door that shut off the loose-box.

"If you have a good memory for old

friends, I think you will know this one," said Rorie, withdrawing a bolt.

A head pushed open the door, and in another moment Vixen's arms were round her old favourite's sleek neck, and the velvet nostrils were sniffing her hair and cheek in most loving recognition.

"You dear, dear old fellow!" cried Vixen; and then turning to Rorie: "You told me he was sold at Tattersall's," she exclaimed.

"So he was, and I bought him."

"Why did you not tell me that?"

"Because you did not ask me."

"I thought you so unkind, so indifferent about him."

"You were unkind when you could think it possible I should let your favourite horse fall into strange hands. But perhaps you would rather Lord Mallow had bought him?"

"To think that you should have kept the secret all this time!" said Vixen.

"You see I am not a woman, and can keep a secret. I wanted to have one little surprise for you, as a reward when you had been especially good."

"You are good," she said, standing on tiptoe to kiss him. "And though I have loved you all my life, I don't think I have loved you the least little bit too much."

EPILOGUE.

VIXEN and Rorie were married in the spring, when the forest glades were yellow with primroses, the mossy banks blue with violets, and the cuckoo was heard with monotonous iteration from sunrise to sundown. They were married in the little village church at Beechdale, and Mrs. Scobel declared that Miss Tempest's wedding was the prettiest that ever had been solemnised in that small Gothic temple. Never, perhaps, even at Eastertide, had been seen such a wealth of spring blossoms, the wildlings of the woods and hills. The duchess had offered the contents of her hothouses, Lady Ellangowan had offered waggon-loads of azaleas and camellias, but Vixen had refused them all. She would allow no decorations but the wild flowers which the school children could gather. Primroses, violets, bluebells, the firstlings of the fern tribe, cowslips, and all the tribe of innocent forest blossoms, with their quaint rustic names, most of them as old as Shakespeare.

It was a very quiet wedding. Vixen would have no one present except the Scobels, Miss McCroke, her two bridegroom-

Sir Henry Tolmash, an old friend of her father, who was to give her away. He was a white-haired old man, who had given his latter days up to farming, and had not a thought above turnips and top-dressing; but Violet honoured him, because he had been her father's oldest friend. For bridesmaids she had Colonel Carteret's daughters, a brace of harmless young ladies, whose conversation was as stereotyped as a French and English vocabulary, but who dressed well, and looked pretty.

There was no display of wedding gifts, no ceremonious wedding breakfast. Vixen remembered the wedding feast at her mother's second marriage, and what a dreary ceremonial it had been.

The bride wore her grey silk travelling-dress, with grey hat and feather, and she and her husband went straight from the church to the railway station, on their way to untrodden paths in the Engadine, whence they were to return at no appointed time.

"We are coming back when we are tired of mountain scenery and of each other," Violet told Mrs. Scobel in the church porch.

"That will be never!" exclaimed Rorie, looking ineffably happy, but not very much like a bridegroom, in his comfortable grey suit. "You might just as well say that we are going to live among the mountains as long as Rip Van Winkle. No, Mrs. Scobel, we are not going to remain away from you fifty years. We are coming back in time for the hunting."

Then came kissing and handshaking, a shower of violets and primroses upon the narrow churchyard path, a hearty huzza from the assembled village, all clustered about the oaken gate-posts. The envious carriage-door shut in bride and bridegroom, the coachman touched his horses, and they were gone up the hill, out of the peaceful valley, to Lyndhurst and the railway.

"How dreadfully I shall miss them," said Mrs. Scobel, who had spent much of her leisure with the lovers. "They are both so full of life and brightness!"

"They are young and happy," said her husband quietly. "Who would not miss youth and happiness?"

When the first frosts had seared the beeches to a fiery red, and the berries were bright on the hawthorns, and the latest bloom of the heather had faded on hill and plain, and the happy pigs had devoured all

the beech-nuts, Mr. Vawdrey and his wife came back, from their exploration of Alpine snows and peaceful Swiss villages, to the good old Abbey House. Their six-months' honeymoon had been all gladness. They were the veriest boy and girl husband and wife who had ever trodden those beaten tracts. They teased each other and quarrelled, and made friends again like children, and were altogether happy. And now they came back to the Forest bronzed by many a long day's sunshine, and glowing with health and high spirits. The glass of time seemed to be turned backward at the Abbey House; for all the old servants came back, and white-haired old Bates ruled in the well-filled stables, and all things were as in the dead and gone squire's time.

Among Roderick's wedding gifts was one from Lord Mallow: Bullfinch, the best horse in that nobleman's stable.

"I know your wife would like you to have her father's favourite hunter," wrote Lord Mallow. "Tell her that he has never been sick or sorry since he has been in my stable, and that I have always taken particular care of him for her sake."

Among Violet's presents was a diamond bracelet from Lady Mallow, accompanied by a very cordial letter; and almost the first visit that the Vawdreys received after they came home was from Lord and Lady Mallow. The first great dinner to which they were bidden was at Briarwood, where it seemed a curious thing for Rorie to go as a guest. Matrimony with the man of her choice had wondrously improved Mabel Ashbourne. She was less self-sufficient and more conciliating. Her ambition, hitherto confined to the desire to excel all other women in her own person, had assumed a less selfish form. She was now only ambitious for her husband; greedy of parliamentary fame for him; full of large hopes about the future of Ireland. She looked forward complacently to the day when she and Lord Mallow would be reigning at Dublin Castle, and when Hibernian arts and industries would revive and flourish under her fostering care. Pending that happy state of things she wore Irish poplin and Irish lace, Irish stockings and Irish linen. She attended Her Majesty's Drawing-room on St. Patrick's Day with a sprig of real shamrock — sent her by one of her husband's tenantry — among the diamonds that sparkled on her bosom. She was more intensely Irish than the children of the soil;

just as converts to Romanism are ever more severely Roman than those born and nurtured in the faith.

Her husband was intensely proud of his wife and of his alliance with the house of Ashbourne. The duke, at first inclined to resent the scandal of an elopement and the slight offered to his favourite, Borie, speedily reconciled himself to a marriage which was more materially advantageous than the cousinly alliance.

"I should like Borie to have had Ashbourne," he said mournfully. "I think he would have kept up my breed of Chillingham cattle. Mallow's a good fellow, but he knows nothing about farming. He'll never spend enough money on manure to maintain the soil at its present producing power. The grasp of his mind isn't large enough to allow him to sink his money in manuring his land. He would be wanting to see an immediate result."

As time went on the duke became more and more devoted to his farm. His Scottish castle delighted him not, nor the grand old place in the Midlands. Ashbourne, which was the pleasure dome he had built for himself, contained all he cared about. Too heavy and too lazy to hunt, he was able to jog about his farm, and supervise the work that was going on to the smallest detail. There was not a foot of drain-pipe or a bit of thatch renewed on the whole estate, without the duke having a finger in the pie. He bred fat oxen and prize cart-horses, and made a great figure at all the cattle-shows, and was happy. The duchess, who had never believed her paragon capable of wrong-doing, had been infinitely shocked by Lady Mabel's desperate course; but it was not in her nature to be angry with that idolised daughter. She very soon came back to her original idea, that whatever Mabel Ashbourne did was right. And then the marriage was so thoroughly happy; and the world gladly forgives a scandal that ends so pleasantly.

So Lord and Lady Mallow go their way—honoured, beloved, very active in good works—and the pleasant valleys around Mallow are dotted with red brick school-houses, and the old stone hovels are giving place to model cottages, and native industries receive all possible encouragement from the owner of the soil; and, afar off, in the coming years, the glories of Dublin Castle shine like the Pole Star that guides the wanderer on his way.

In one thing only has Lady Mallow been false to the promise of her girlhood. She

has not achieved success as a poet. The duchess wonders vaguely at this; for though she has often found it difficult to keep awake during the rehearsal of her daughter's verses, she had a fixed belief in the excellence of those efforts of genius. The secret of Lady Mallow's silence rests between her husband and herself; and it is just possible that some too candid avowal of Lord Mallow's may be the reason of her poetic sterility. It is one thing to call the lady of one's choice a tenth muse before marriage, and another thing to foster a self-delusion in one's wife which can hardly fail to become a discordant element in domestic life. "If your genius had developed, and you had won popularity as a poet, I should have lost a perfect wife," Lord Mallow told Mabel, when he wanted to put things pleasantly. "Literature has lost a star; but I have gained the noblest and sweetest companion Providence ever bestowed upon man." Lady Mallow has not degenerated into feminine humdrum. She assists in the composition of her husband's political pamphlets, which bristle with lines from Euripides, and noble thoughts from the German poets. She writes a good many of his letters, and is altogether his second self.

While the Irishman and his wife pursue their distinguished career, Borie and Vixen live the life they love in the Forest where they were born, dispensing happiness within a narrow circle, but dearly loved wheresoever they are known; and the old men and women in the scattered villages round about the Abbey House rejoice in the good old times that have come again, just as hearty pleasure-loving England was glad when the stern rule of the Protector and his crop-headed saints gave place to the reign of the Merry King.

From afar there comes news of Captain Winstanley, who has married a Jewish lady at Frankfort, only daughter and heiress of a well known money-lender. The bride is reported ugly and illiterate; but there is no doubt as to her fortune. The captain has bought a villa at Monaco—a villa in the midst of orange-groves, the abandoned plaything of an Austrian princess; and he has hired an apartment in one of the new avenues just outside the Arc de Triomphe, where, as his friends anticipate, he will live in grand style, and receive the pleasantest people in Paris. He, too, is happy after his kind, and has won the twenty-thousand-pound prize in the lottery of life; but it is altogether a different kind

of happiness from the simple and unalloyed delight of Rorie and Vixen, in their home among the beechen woods whose foliage sheltered them when they were children.

MY LAND OF BEULAH.

A STORY IN FIFTEEN CHAPTERS. CHAPTER XII.

THE thread of my story has now shifted from Hazledene to Aunt Idamea's house in London. What then is there to say of my Land of Beulah?

Do you think it was forgotten in my changed life? Do you think the friends of my child-life there were forgotten in the new ties and scenes among which my lot was now cast? Nay; not so.

When Aunt Ida said she could never again bring herself to part with me, I went down to Summerfield for a week, and might have been there still had not the old lady herself come to fetch me. She delighted in these sudden appearances when she was least expected, and took to my three dear ladies at once, especially to Miss Mary. She also paid a visit to the Vicarage, to thank the vicar for his kindness to me in my trouble, and his escort of me on that never-to-be-forgotten journey to Hazledene.

I must not omit to mention that at this time Miss 'Dosa was rendered almost helpless, and a constant sufferer, from her rheumatics, and that, with this change in her physical condition, a wondrous mental one had come about. Her fingers were still as hard and knobby as ever, but they had a way of clinging to a kindly hand; and the face, that grew each day more worn and lined by pain, had lost much of its hardness. So touched was I by this strange new gentleness in my old enemy, that, on the occasion of our first meeting after my return to Summerfield, I bent down and kissed the pale cheek, that I had last seen wet with tears of pity for my own bitter grief, before I knew what I was doing.

Just when the trees in Kensington Gardens had put on their fulness of summer beauty, Miss Mary wrote and told me that the vicar's sister was dead; and I was glad to look back upon that unpremeditated "kiss of peace."

I fancy the vicar must have been very lonely when Miss 'Dosa was gone. Is it not dear Charles Lamb who says that we miss even the "crossnesses" of those who are taken from us? Well, it is true; and I doubt not that my dear old friend missed even the little tyrannies of the sister who

died with her hand in his, and a hope upon her lips that he had forgiven her for being so contrary in past days. At all events, strange and marvellous news shortly reached me from my Land of Beulah. Miss Jane, the youngest of the three sisters, was going to be married to Mr. Girdstone, and the girls had had a whole holiday and a picnic to the Falls to celebrate the betrothal. How I loved to hear of their quiet happiness! I wanted to go and see them all at once; but Aunt Ida said: "No, no, Miss Nell; I shall never get you back again!" She delighted in my three friends, and said she thought the vicar the most charming of men, "though why he should wear his hat so much on the back of his head, I'm sure I don't know," she would add. But she was very jealous of them all, all the same. It always seemed to me that she made a sort of expiation of her love of me for her resentful indignation at papa's marriage with Eulalie, and the estrangement that had arisen between them in consequence—an estrangement turned by death into lasting remorse.

This reminds me to say that news of Lady Vansitart had not been wanting. We heard that the new owner of Hazledene came to claim his own; that he had several interviews with the beautiful widow; that he at last agreed that she should rent the old house from him during her pleasure. Aunt Ida, who hated the branch of her family connections to which this cousin belonged, chuckled over this.

"She'll marry him, my dear, in the end; you'll see if she doesn't."

"And then, I wonder, will Lettie Dove still live there?" said I.

But to this auntie made no reply. She never had recognised the existence of that young person, and was not going to begin to do so now.

But in her prophecy as to Eulalie marrying the owner of Hazledene, Aunt Ida was wrong. That he was ardent to do so, on his second appearance in the county the autumn following, all the county knew; that he was refused the boon he craved was also generally known, and that he went away in a state of abject despair.

Now, as my dear father had left Eulalie wholly unshackled as to her future life, and as all the county knew that this was so, young Lady Vansitart, always popular, became a universal idol. Her youth, her beauty, her faithfulness to the memory of a husband who had been "almost old enough to be her father," made a sort of

also about her fair head in the eyes of her neighbours; and Miss Dove had the happiness and pleasure of murmuring pretty subdued assents to numberless encomiums upon her cousin's many virtues. She also murmured other things, about her cousin's step-daughter, as I subsequently learned: things, doubtless intensely interesting to the hearers thereof, but having the one drawback of being a tissue of falsehoods from beginning to end. I make no doubt her plump white hands were often at work on the Dorcas-basket, while her lips lied so glibly. Maybe she applied the oft-perverted text about charity "covering a multitude of sins" to her own case, and thought that the said basket condoned such slandering of her neighbour. I was, according to Miss Lettie's version of things, an unmanageable, bad-tempered young woman, imbued with the vile and petty spirit of that innate jealousy that scents a wrong in the simplest word, and is for ever misconstruing the actions of others. I had tried to make mischief between my father and his young wife; finally, there "had been things" at school, of which "dear lady Vansitart" knew; which knowledge ad prepared her in some measure for the trials that in her "short, sweet married life," came upon her through her husband's laughter.

The only living creature left to me that papa had cared for was little Frizzle. So I loved the dog, and when he went out walking—together with auntie's pug, who never ceased to snarl at his approach, and indeed, ultimately spent its last wheezy breath in a feeble defiance of him—in charge of the faithful Terence, many were the cautions given to that worthy retainer as to the habits and customs of the London dog-stealer. Terence was long since formally installed as butler in the quaint old house, that suited the quaint old gentleman who inhabited it as perfectly as its hell suits a snail; but we lived a somewhat quiet and retired life, and Terence had plenty of time on his hands to take the two dogs out airing. Unfortunately his distrust of the inhabitants of the metropolis was such, that he felt more comfortable in his mind with one of these animals tucked under each arm than when they were disporting themselves in the grass, barking at the ducks in the pond, or sniffing at the heels of strangers, who, however well dressed and immaculately respectable, were always in the eyes of the watchful Terence possible dog-stealers.

"Oh, Aunt Ida!" I said, as on a lovely autumn afternoon she and I sat by one of the tall windows at our work; "do look at Terence."

The old man was coming in from what he called "exercising of the beastie." From under one arm protruded the bullet-head of the pug, its pink tongue protruded, and a malevolent expression in the eye nearest to Frizzle, who balanced his enemy as one pannier does another. Poor Pug was evidently in a high state of excitement, and wriggled his best—ineffectually.

"Ah! be quiet and pacable, can't ye?" we heard Terence say; "ye'll bring me grey hairs with sorrer to the grave wi' the tricks of ye, making ever so free wi' the biggest rogue ever I see, and him wi' a fine red herrin' tucked snug into each tail-pocket, I'll warrant."

Pug was in disgrace evidently.

And it further appeared that the "biggest of rogues" had really serious designs upon the "beastie;" for, following in Terence's wake, I saw a tall lithe figure swinging along, and making for the garden gate.

Terence touched his hat to us at the open window, and squeezed the two dogs so tightly that they both gave a yelp. Then he stood glowering at the stranger.

But Auntie Ida, dropping her work, and letting the bobbins roll helter-skelter about the floor, clapped her small black-mitted hands together, and cried, as the stranger stood with uncovered head beneath the window: "Why, it's Royal!"

In another moment she had rushed into the hall, opened the door, and was pouring forth glad words of welcome.

"Now who may 'Royal' be?" thought I to myself, leaning my arm on the window-ledge, and looking at the crimson flood of light that the setting sun was pouring through the trees in the distance, till they looked as if they were on fire.

A tall young fellow, with curly brown locks and beard to match, a bright winsome face, and attired in a velvet coat and a soft, low-crowned felt hat—that was what Royal was like to look at. Who he might be was a mystery. But Pug seemed to know all about it, for I heard him blundering about the hall in an ecstasy of delight, and barking little sharp short barks that were the best welcome he knew how to give. Then I heard a clear ringing voice say:

"There you are, Pug; fatter than ever, I declare!" and I was sure that obese

animal was being patted, and grovelling and abasing himself at the new-comer's feet in consequence. The babble of Aunt Ida's treble voice, the deeper tones of her companion's, died away as the library door was shut upon the two, and I was left alone watching the sunset. Somehow, in the rosy mist that its brightness made before my eyes, I saw the picture of a winsome face, a curly head uncovered, a pair of deep blue eyes, full of laughter, looking upwards, and a smile the sweetest I had seen since—was it really long ago, or did it only seem so?—papa waved his hand to me in a farewell that was now my dearest memory of him.

"The Lord forgive me, Miss Ellen, for an old fool that's bin and called one of the mistress's friends, and him a rale gentleman, 'the biggest rogue as ever was.' What'll I do, at-all at-all, that's committed meself along of them beastis, and isn't fit to stand in a lady's presence, or hold me old head up as one that's used to be along o' the quality."

This lament from Terence, delivered in a quavering voice, and accompanied by much sighing and shaking of the head, broke in upon my reverie, and made me turn my sun-dazzled eyes upon his distressed old face.

"I'm sure, Terence, you needn't fret about the mistake," I began comfortingly, when the delinquent sprang aside as if he had a spring in his body, and Aunt Ida, followed by the supposed dog-stealer, came into the room.

"Nell, this is my adopted son, Royal Drew. Roy, this is my very dear niece, Nell Vansitart." So Mr. Drew and I shook hands; and as I looked up a pair of blue eyes full of merriment met mine.

"Perhaps you object to making the acquaintance of the biggest of rogues, Miss Vansitart?" he said, laughing outright.

"No, I don't," I answered, laughing too; "but poor Terence is breaking his heart over his blunder. You see he is quite a 'country cousin' still, and has dog-stealers on the brain."

"I believe it is a highly lucrative profession," said Royal gravely; "but I must say I should hardly like to have to carry my old friend Pug very far."

Pug, who stood wheezing at Mr. Drew's feet, wagging his tightly curled tail as much as its nature would permit of, looked up on hearing his name, and with a gigantic effort stood up on end, resting his front paws on his knee.

"Pug is as glad to see you, Roy, as I am," said Aunt Ida, tears twinkling in her eyes as she spoke; then, with an evident wish to take refuge in commonplaces, she drew his attention to the red glow of sunset through the trees. "There's a bit for an artist now! Just look at that ruddy gold tint; you ought to have your palette here, sir."

So Royal is an artist, thought I to myself, demurely taking in the artistic points of his costume. All the men that I had hitherto seen in London were given to tall hats and frock-coats; and I thought the dead-leaf coloured velvet, with a red rose in the button-hole, and the loosely knotted scarf, a picturesque and agreeable change.

"Don't look at Roy as if you thought he had dropped from the clouds, Nell," put in Aunt Ida impatiently.

"Indeed, I have not dropped from the clouds, Miss Vansitart," said he, as I took my place at the round table by the hearth that was now filled with ferns; "the fact is, I have been in disgrace; haven't I, Aunt Ida?" and he bowed his handsome head as if his sins pressed heavily upon him.

"You are forgiven now, Royal," said the old lady, with a tremble in her voice; then she held out to him her little black-mitted hand, and he, taking it reverently and tenderly in his, raised it to his lips.

Chivalry in a man never fails to make him attractive in the eyes of a woman; and as I handed Royal his tea, I felt that I was glad he was not only a penitent, but a shriven one.

When Royal left us, the pug, who persisted in standing whining at the gate, with his snub nose dolorously elevated, had to be fetched in by Terence, who was too subdued in spirit even to rebuke the perverseness of the "cratur's" conduct; indeed, the "beastis" might have been guilty of almost any enormities without fear of retribution for the rest of that day.

Leading off the hall in my new home was a tiny many-cornered room that Aunt Idumea called her "snuggery." It was certainly not meant for a large party to be snug in; indeed, three friends filled it well. A lamp hung from the ceiling, its light softened by a shade painted with Watteau groups; a low couch with double ends—a very valley of poppies—stood at one side of the low open fire-place; and, so placed as to be within reach of the occupant of the same, was an ebony book-stand, wherein reposed works, plainly bound, by Aunt Ida's favourite authors: Chancer, Spencer,

Dryden, my friend John Bunyan, De la Motte Fouquet, and many others. Vis-à-vis to the valley of poppies was a chair—such a chair! a perfect haven of rest—wide and low, and spreading outward at the sides, without any definite arms, yet yielding the most delicious support to the elbows. The room held no large table, only a Chippendale or two, tall and slender; and on the walls, in oval ebony frames, were a few rare engravings; flowers on brackets—three or four choicest blossoms in specimen glasses—here and there made the little chamber sweet; and to-night, the night of the day on which Royal Drew came from wherever he had been while in disgrace, they gave out their scent all the more lavishly, because the first fire of autumn glimmered on the hearth, and its warmth drew out their sweetness.

"Doesn't the very first fire after the summer seem cosy?" I said to Aunt Ida. "After all, there is no season so nice as autumn."

Auntie made no answer; she was holding a screen of crimson feathers between her face and the fire, and from the rapt expression on her face might have been reading her fortune in its gently stirring plumes.

At my side stood a work-stand; it was formed like a cup, supported on a tripod, and filled with skeins of wool, also with my last pet, Tabitha, a little pussie as white as milk, just come to that time of life when her own tail was a puzzle to her. There she sat, a compact patch of white fur, upon a bed of crimson wools, evidently in a state of no small wonderment as to the fluffy tip that persisted in following her everywhere, and now and then stirred itself gently as if to provoke her to make a dart at it with a venturesome paw.

"Isn't it a funny thing, pussy?" I said laughing; "if I were you I'd bite it."

Auntie wouldn't talk to me, and I did want someone to chatter to. I could not have told anyone, not even myself, why I felt so light of heart. It was as if in the midst of a dull grey day you were wandering through hill and vale, and all at once the sheen of the sunshine gladdened the world and you with it, so that you would like to sing as you went. Well, something bright had shone out for me—a smile like the one I had lost; a pair of blue eyes that told me they found me fair. So, in the gladness of my heart, as I had no one else to talk to, I talked to Miss Puss. Presently she clambered on to the edge of the work-basket, and gave a little piteous mew as it

dawned upon her that beyond its limits were perils innumerable. I lifted her on my knee, from which she slid, and took to wandering about the carpet; but in came Terence with the coffee, and in a moment pussy was on her back with four little white paws in the air and claws extended, while Pug stood over her triumphantly, and Frizzle, barking like mad, danced round the two.

The din roused auntie from her fit of musing, and soon poor puss, whose only fault lay in her misfortunes, was banished, and Pug sat serenely with his tongue out, basking in the luxury of the fire.

"Well, child, and what do you think of Roy?"

The question made me start, for just at that moment I was thinking with all my might of the individual in question—in fact, wondering when he would come again.

Aunt Ida smiled at my confusion.

"Curious, my dear, like all our sex, I see," she said, slowly waving the scarlet feathers to and fro; "you've been puzzling your little head all day, I suppose, about my adopted son, who dropped from the clouds like a meteor."

"I was a good deal surprised, Aunt Ida, because I didn't know there was such a person."

"Quite so; well, you know it now, child; you'd have known more about your old auntie long since if she hadn't been such a quarrelsome old woman all her days."

In a moment I had pushed Pug out of the way, and was down on my knees on the white furry rug, with my arms on auntie's knees and my hands holding hers.

"She is not a quarrelsome old woman; she is the dearest, kindest, best!" I cried, kissing the little black mittens as tenderly as ever Royal himself could have done. "God sent her to me to comfort me when I lost all I had—when I kissed papa's dead face, praying that God would let the same swift death take me too away from the world that was so lonely without him."

"My darling child!" she said, looking not one whit less outwardly dignified for the tears that chased each other down her cheeks; "I'm a silly old woman to-night, instead of a quarrelsome one; the sight of Roy's blue eyes has set my thoughts running on the past. Neil, would you like to hear a love story?"

From the training that had been mine, love was to me no vulgar jest, but a sacred mystery. From the day that I had read *Ivanhoe*, and suffered with the Jewish

maiden as she bade farewell to Rowena, daring say no parting word to the man both loved, to the day when the deeper pathos of Evangeline's patient tenderness, and Jane Eyre's passionate devotion, spoke yet more loudly to my heart, love had been to me a sacred thing; but these creations were, after all, but phantoms; now I was going to hear the real love story of a real person—to be told of things, not that might have been, but that had been.

"Whose love story, auntie, are you going to tell me?" I said, settling myself in a comfortable heap on the rug at her feet, while Pug, with his tail quite uncurled and limp, crept dejectedly into the vacant corner that was left.

"Mine, child," she answered, laying her hand upon my shoulder. Then she was silent again, watching, as it seemed, faces in the fire.

I stroked her hand gently, by way of reminder that I was waiting for the promised story.

"Yes, yes," she said, smiling at my impatience; "you know I must begin 'properly at the beginning,' as the children say, and I am searching for the end of the thread. Well; does it sound very conceited, I wonder, for an old woman to say she was once a beauty?"

I shook my head; but the word "once" seemed out of place. I have never since seen such a beautiful old lady as was my Aunt Idumea; I hardly think there are such old ladies nowadays; lovely, with no futile striving after youth, but lovely with the loveliness of small high features, silver-white hair, and that exquisite grace of speech and manner that is to a woman, be she old or young, what its perfume is to a flower.

"Yes; I was a beauty, Nell, and I liked being admired—what woman, indeed, does not, save the one who, finding the grapes out of reach, says she knows them to be sour? I had the dire misfortune to lose my mother just when most I needed her, and it seemed to me as if God sent a friend across my path to soften the pain of my loss. My friend was a year or two older than myself, and—so the world said—not so handsome; but to me she was perfection. I could not be happy without Alice by my side, and my father offered her a home with us. We had scarce a thought hidden from the other.

"Alice and I were very happy together, and gradually my sorrow for the dear mother I had lost became less passionate and more resigned. The old house at home

was merry with our laughter and our songs. There is one window in a turret there that to this day I could not look up at without fancying a blonde head among the greenery, and a little hand flinging rose-leaves in a scented shower upon my lap as I sit reading in the garden; and 'Gather ye roses while ye may' sings the voice that is silent this many a long year. I remember that one day so well because, just as its light was dying, and a star or two had begun to shimmer in the soft summer sky, Royal Drew first became my father's guest."

"Royal Drew?" I said, under my breath.

"Yes; a Royal, blue-eyed and bonny as the Roy you saw to-day; a Royal with the same sweet quick-coming smile, the same nameless charm in all he said and did."

Here auntie stopped a moment in her story, and I felt the hand that nestled in mine grow chill.

"In the days that followed I gathered the roses of life eagerly enough; but they were set thick with thorns, Nell, and the thorns tore my heart. It is not a very new story I have to tell you, child; the thing has happened often before, and will happen often again, that a woman should believe herself loved, when all the time she is only trusted. I fancied I was the heroine of a romance, and, after all, I was only playing the rôle of confidente. I have said that I was vain of my beauty, but love, if it 'casteth out fear,' also casteth out vanity. I cared not to read in any other eyes than Roy's blue ones that I was fair; I shrank from the notice of others as from something that desecrated the new sweetness that was shining for me over all the world. Alice and I were always together, always loving as of yore, but there was one name we seldom spoke—the name of Royal Drew. No woman can speak glibly of the man who has stolen her heart. For her the very walls have ears to catch the tremor of her voice as she speaks his name; the very daisies in the field are like a thousand eyes spying out her secret. I dreamt my dream; I strove to be worthy of the gift I fancied was my own; I read the books that Royal loved; fought with the crazy German characters that I might study his favourite authors, Goëthe and Schiller; no task seemed too hard to undertake if only I might render myself a truer companion for a highly cultured man. I was grateful for my friend's silence; I thought it had its rise in her delicate thought for me.

The end came at last, Nell. Over there, under the trees, dear, with the soft May sunshine filtering through the tender green of the young leaves, Royal told he that he loved my friend. He said that he had seen my sympathy for him, that he knew I had read his heart long since. He was so full of thoughts of Alice that—God be thanked!—he hardly looked at me. He held my hand close in a brotherly clasp, as he told me the tale of the last few weeks of hopes, and fears, and lover's fancies. But his voice came all blurred and indistinct to my ears; he seemed to be speaking from somewhere a great way off; I could not see the sunshine, and the trees were but a dull mist of green. 'You are glad, Ida, are you not? You have always been my friend, I know—nay, more; you have been like a sister to me who am so strangely without kith or kin—are you not glad that Alice loves me?' I heard Nell, this time, clearly enough; and God gave me strength to look up in his face and say: 'Yes, I am glad, Royal.'

I had my face down on auntie's lap by this time. Oh, how sad was this love-story that she had set herself to tell me! And yet, unhappy as her love had been, I felt it was her woman's crown—the love "that never found its earthly close," was still divine, nay, the diviner in that through suffering was it purified.

"Alice and Royal were married in the summer that followed that spring, and as he had just obtained an Indian appointment, they passed away from my ken together. That they were happy, I have never doubted, but it was with a happiness that did not last through the second year. By one mail I had a letter from my friend full of the very sunshine of content; in the papers that came by the mail following I read the birth of her son, and the record of her death. Roy was free, and I had lost my dearest friend. Time passed on, but I never heard anything of Royal. At thirty years of age I married Bertie Lumley, a man twenty years older than myself. He had had his romance, as I mine; but we were very happy together, and grew nearer to each other as the years went on. You know, don't you, child, that for two years before his death my husband was a helpless sufferer? Well, it may seem strange to

say so, but I look back upon those two years as among the happiest of my life. I was eyes, and hands; and feet to him; I learnt more and more of the chastened beauty of his mind and character as our quiet companionship went on from day to day, and from week to week. He suffered much, yet never complained throughout those two long weary years. When he died, it was as if a strain of music had died out of my life. At the time of your mother's death, Nell, I wanted your father to let me have you: he refused, and I showed myself a quarrelsome old woman. That is how it has come about that you and I have seen so little of each other, child. Well, not very long ago—four years or so—I went to an exhibition of pictures. Among them was one that everybody was talking about; I turned to the catalogue, and found the artist's name—Royal Drew. Then someone said softly to me: 'There is the artist himself. See—at the other side of the room, talking to that lady in olive-green.' Nell, I turned round, and saw the Royal who had stood by my side in the sunshine that filtered through the fresh young leaves in Kensington Gardens. 'Dear Mrs. Lumley, are you ill?' said the friend who was with me. No; I was not ill, but I had seen a ghost of my youth, and the sight had sent the blood curdling round the heart that should have been too old to beat so heavily at the sight of a pair of blue eyes."

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