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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.

NEW SERIES.

VOLUME XXXV.

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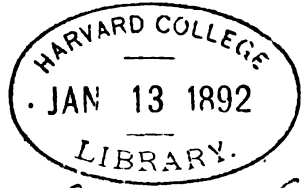
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CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS,
GREAT NEW STREET, FETTER LANE, LONDON,
AND CRYSTAL PALACE.

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AND ALSO

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THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER FOR 1884.

"IN LUCK AT LAST,"

BY

All the Year Round

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

No. 828. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1884.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICH.

CHAPTER XXXIV. THE EXPEDITION.

THE heat, and the flies, and the dust became worse and worse as the summer advanced; and one day, when Gerald was complaining of them terribly, Bob Stirling proposed that they should go off for a fortnight's expedition into the country to hunt springbok, and shoot partridges and wild turkeys. "And Mrs. Fane would find some sketches about the river," he added, for he was a little of an artist in his way, and admired some drawings that Theo had made at Wynberg, and on the journey up, and at the Fields.

They both entered into his plan with great spirit, and began asking questions, and talking about details, which were all at his fingers' ends; but presently he hesitated a little, looking doubtfully at Theo.

"I'm the worst feature," he said; "you won't want me—or would it be better if I brought another man? No, I don't think it would. I have put it into your heads, and now I shall leave you to carry it out."

"You won't do anything so unfriendly," said Gerald. "We were saying last night that you were as good as one's brother—so there, Bob! unless you don't want to come."

"Of course I want to come. Does he mean it, Mrs. Fane?"

"You knew him before I did," said Theo. "I mean what he says—will that do?"

Bob smiled cheerfully; he was quite contented now, and sat there looking gentle and happy, and talking about the expedition. Any colonial roughness he had was put on to suit his associates outside; he took it off with his hat when he came into Theo's house, and would sit for hours at a time talking to her about his mother and sisters.

"Till you came," he said to her one day, "I never mentioned their names to anybody here—not even to old Mother Jackson when she was nursing me in the fever."

The lady thus spoken of was rich and influential, and full of bustling kindness. She was an object of reverence, mixed with a little fear, to almost all the younger and poorer people at the Fields. Mrs. Lee adored her; her curiosity had made Theo treat her with a dignity and stiffness which effectually checked her for the time; but Theo reproached herself a little for this, when she heard all the young men talk of her so affectionately. "Old Mother Jackson" seemed to be their resource in every serious trouble. There were many stories of her generosity and her active benevolence; still Theo shrank from her, and did not wonder, somehow, that Mr. Stirling should have kept his own people sacred from the prying tongue of Mrs. Jackson.

The idea of getting away for a time into silence, and freedom, and the open air, was perfectly delightful to Gerald and Theo. All the arrangements were soon made, and one glorious night they and Bob Stirling started away from the camp in a Kafir ox-waggon, which had been hired in the square, having come in a day or two before with a load of wood. It was a very smart waggon, painted green, with red wheels and pole, and a good, strong canvas top. The long team of oxen were in good condition; their Kafir driver was a sturdy fellow, and Bob Stirling had known him before, having hired him and his waggon last Christmas for a hunting expedition with two or three of his friends. It is the habit among Kimberley people to go off in waggons in the summer-time, but generally just after Christmas, when the heat is greatest, and they have a right to a holiday.

The long, pleasant picnic began that night by passing through the Kafir location outside the camp, where fires were burning, and black figures dancing and singing round them. The three friends were riding, for, of course, they took their horses with them. They had two black boys belonging to the expedition, to look after the horses, cook, and make themselves useful, and in the waggon they had provisions enough for a fortnight. They rode on in advance of the waggon, which came winding slowly after them along the dusty road. The moon, low in the sky, shone softly over the great wide veldt, which was covered with a bush like juniper; there was a dim line of mountains far away, just as Gerald and Theo used to see them on their journey up. She looked away at them a little sadly now. Kimberley was soon left behind; even Kafir huts were left behind, and there was a great stillness round them. Once or twice they passed a mud farm in the veldt, with higher bush about it, and sometimes a few trees; sometimes these farms were ruined or deserted. Here and there a slight hill, roundly sweeping up from the plain, looked away to the other greater hills; here and there they scrambled down into a sluit and up again; but these were the only breaks in the wild, boundless plain.

There was not much likeness in this to the cart-travelling of a few weeks before. Now there was no crowd, no hurry, no early horn to wake the weary from their sleep, which was much pleasanter in the waggon than in a horrid little room of some wayside farm or canteen. Gerald thought the oxen dreadfully slow as they dawdled along, doing under twenty miles a day; but Theo was not at all impatient, even of the meals of oxen and darkies. At every outspan—and they were frequent—the black boys searched about leisurely for fuel, and made a large fire, and boiled their kettle, and made their tea—tea which Theo tried once to drink, but she did not repeat the experiment.

They were all very happy, though Gerald grumbled, and the other two laughed at him. Bob Stirling was enjoying himself thoroughly, constantly finding queer subjects for Theo to draw, which reminded them oddly, afterwards, of various little adventures on that journey. And he had a wonderful way of taking himself off when he was not wanted, of riding off alone at a tearing pace for long stretches across the veldt, when the sun

was too hot for these unseasoned English people. They had soon found out, of course, that it would have been better to have nobody, but they agreed that Bob was the best companion they could have had, for he was never in the way.

In the great sunshine of noon, Theo would lie half asleep in the back of the waggon, and gaze dimly through her eyelashes at the endless, burning plain. Here she first saw a mirage—trees, the high bush about a farm, trembling on the horizon; the narrow bright line between showing what it was.

The pleasantest part of their time was spent by the Vaal, the wide, calm river, with its red banks, and fringe of soft mimosa-bushes. Here they loitered for several days, camping out, bathing, sketching. Early in the morning they would go out hunting springbok, little graceful creatures, with curly horns, and wild, soft eyes. Bob's horse would not stand fire, so he jumped off to have a shot at the game, and sprang into the saddle again and flew after them like the wind. Sometimes they went out for long rides by moonlight, and once or twice they lost their way, and had a very long round before they reached their camp again.

One evening they paid a visit to a Boer farm, which Bob knew already, about an hour's ride from where they had encamped themselves. It stood out in the plain, with purple hills not far off, beyond the stretch of glowing sand. There were a few trees, and some bush, and some Kafir huts, grouped about the long, low buildings; they were white, with dark thatch, and the farm animals walked in and out as they pleased. Here they rode up just at sundown, the hour when it is most dangerous to be out, and were received kindly and hospitably by the good Boer folk. The master of the farm himself was away, but his wife, and a row of sons and daughters, all stood with outstretched hands to greet the strangers, and presently made them sit down to a supper of salt mutton. Bob Stirling, who had visited them before, chattered Dutch to them, and perhaps told them a few romances about the other guests he had brought them, for after a time the Boer wife, who was walking about with a long whip, driving out the pigs and turkeys, turned to Theo, and said:

"I understand. You are the daughter of the Queen of England."

Theo laughed and shook her head, but all the sons and daughters nodded, and

stared at her in stolid solemnity; and Bob nodded too, laughing; and Gerald Fane looked smilingly at his wife, who was evidently the centre of immense admiration. So that Theo's dignity was established in these good Dutch minds, and they all treated her and Gerald quite like a prince and princess, standing round and watching all their proceedings with grave eyes.

They had intended to ride back to their waggon in the moonlight, but when Bob and Gerald went out to see after the horses, great clouds were coming up in the dark sky, and by-and-by a tremendous thunderstorm broke over the veldt. The great cracks of thunder were like a battle of artillery close by; the vivid flashes that flew from the sky ran in many colours along the ground; and then the rain came down, pelting, dashing, tearing sheets of rain. The horses stood trembling and frightened in their stable; animals and people crowded under any shelter they could find. Gerald came back to Theo, where she sat in the kitchen, trying to talk to the brightest-looking of the tall, square daughters of the house.

"No getting back to our camp to-night, Stirling says. You will have to stay where you are."

She looked up at him with a little shiver. Even her love of adventure, which was very real, could hardly reconcile her to the ways and the odours of a Boer farm. After the freedom of the veldt, with its roof of stars, or the familiar shelter of their own waggon, she could not bear this close room, the smell from its mud floor, the heavy thickness of everything in it, beginning with its inhabitants. And then the good Boer wife, whip still in hand, came back from the outer door, where she had been looking at the storm, and holding a short conversation with Mr. Stirling. As she came she stumbled among pigs, and dogs, and poultry.

"Foot sack!" she said. "Get along with you!" and she shut the heavy door, with the torrent of rain pouring outside, and all her creatures within, and came to Theo, and taking her kindly by the hand, led her into the guest-chamber at the end of the living-room, which was very dark and very grimy, and had a mud floor like the rest, with an ancient smell hanging about it, suggesting the heavy snoring alumburs of the present Boer, his father, and his grandfather.

Gerald had followed them to the door,

and as soon as their hostess had retreated, Theo turned to him in consternation.

"My dear Gerald, I shall be stifled. You don't imagine that I am going to sleep here?"

"I suppose you must; there is no help for it," said Gerald.

"But the heat, the stuffiness! No, I won't. What would you and Mr. Stirling do if you were alone?"

"We shouldn't stay, of course," said Gerald. "But Bob says it might not be safe for you to ride back now. It is so damp, you might get a chill, and get fever. So I think you must content yourself here for the night. It was a lucky thing that storm did not catch us in the open veldt."

"My dear boy, I mean what I say," said Theo calmly. "I am not in the least afraid of fever, or anything else, and I like these nights away from Kimberley, and I am not going to waste one of them here. Now I believe the rain has stopped, and the moon is beginning to shine. Go and tell Mr. Stirling that I want the horses to be saddled at once. Oh no; indeed I am not going to stay here. Now, for once, Gerald, you must let me have my own way."

"Is that anything new?" said Gerald, laughing. "Well, look here, these people will think you a capricious sort of princess; and I hope they won't be offended, but Bob must manage that. I'll go and tell him."

Half an hour later, as they rode away through the warm, wet air, over the wide, moonlighted plain, all a pale, steaming mist after the rain, Theo laughed very gaily and triumphantly over her escape from that "gast-kammer."

Gerald agreed that it was almost nastier than anything they had met in Africa; only Bob was a little grave, and pressed the horses on.

"Nothing hurts me, you know," he said; "I'm not afraid for myself, and Gerald seems pretty tough; but this atmosphere is awfully unwholesome for you, Mrs. Fane."

Bob had spoken a good deal more strongly before they left the farm, and had looked at Gerald with surprise, mixed with a touch of pity; perhaps he thought that when he was married, his wife should run no foolish risks to please herself. His advice was wasted, but not forgotten. It was connected in Theo's mind, sadly enough, with her last day of real health and happiness in Africa—that day when the ride to the Boer farm had seemed such a pleasant variety.

Two or three nights later, the waggon

rumbled back again into the town, past the Kafir fires outside, where the rhythmic dance was going on as if it had never ceased, gay, yet melancholy, to a dreamy song, with clapping of hands and graceful moving in time. The oxen made their way along the dusty, uneven street, and Gerald lifted his wife out of the waggon and carried her into the house. She was burning with fever now, and talking rather excitedly; most of the day she had been shivering under that tropical sun. Combe met them at the door; she was as white as a sheet, and seemed hardly able to drag herself along.

"Why, you are ill too!" Mr. Stirling said to her in a low voice; for Gerald could see nothing but Theo.

"A touch of fever, sir," said Combe; and then she looked up into the young man's face and smiled bravely. "I shall be well now," she said.

"You're a brick!" said Bob, still aside.

Theo's fever lingered on for many days; she was so weak that she could hardly move, and through the long days and hours she would lie gazing vacantly out at the blue gum-trees in the compound, with Toby at her feet. She never knew then of Combe's illness, for the good woman kept her word and got well, though she was terribly pulled down; but when Gerald was out of the house she never left Theo. Bob Stirling one day brought an addition to the household in the shape of a tall Zulu, called Adam, who was to act as cook and housemaid, and sleep with his head in the kitchen-fire. At first, Combe regarded him with disgust and dread, but she soon found out that he was a faithful dog, with many human talents added to his dog virtues; so Adam established himself.

The weeks till Christmas passed slowly away. Mrs. Jackson, Mrs. Lee, all the kind women who were Theo's neighbours, and all the young men who were her and Gerald's friends, came constantly to see her, or to ask for her, or to bring her some offering or other. Mrs. Jackson's jellies were only rivalled by her next-door neighbour's soup. Theo found then what she might have guessed before—that Kimberley, with all its wildness, and rowdiness, and vulgarity, holds some of the kindest hearts in the world. She had hardly ever been ill in her life, and did not understand it, but she bore it very patiently; her eyes used to brighten, and her cheeks flush, when she heard Gerald's step outside.

On Christmas Day he carried her into

the drawing-room, to the funny old sofa there. She lay wearily watching the eddies of red dust that whirled about the camp, the Coolie women in their white veils going to church, the Malays in their gorgeous turbans—all the varied figures of the strange place where she lived. Gerald came and sat down beside her, and she stroked his forehead and his hair with a very thin, white hand.

"Well," she said, "how is your claim getting on? Have you had good luck?"

It was the first time that she had alluded to his new occupation. Just before their expedition, by Bob Stirling's advice, he had bought a half claim from a man who was going home to England. All the arrangements, the machinery, the setting his Kafirs to work, the sorting, the paying, had been horrible bores while Theo was so ill, but Bob had helped him through everything. However, not a single large stone had turned up yet. He brought out some small ones to amuse her, but she just glanced at them, and let them fall back into their little box again. He looked at her, and there were tears in his eyes in spite of himself; he took her hand and kissed it, and looked at it curiously, it was so thin.

"I am very sorry, dear; you must forgive me; it was all my own doing," she said. "Grandmamma always used to say that I should bring myself to a bad end by obstinacy. Do you know, Gerald, I have had such odd dreams all this time. Grandmamma has been with me a great deal, and so very kind. I wonder whether she ever thinks of me?"

"Of course she does," said Gerald half indignantly.

"Yes, I know she does. Last Christmas I was with her in the square, and certainly never expected that you would have brought me here, you cruel boy! And the Christmas before was rather sad, too—Uncle Henry so ill. He has been very dear in my dreams lately, and he and grandmamma did not seem to hate each other so very much, after all. And Nell and Hugh——"

She shut her eyes for a minute, and Gerald was half frightened, but she soon looked up again, speaking very gently:

"Will you do something to please me, as it is Christmas Day?"

"Anything in the world."

"Go and dine with Mr. Stirling and the others, then. You didn't know, but I heard him talking about it last night. Combe and

Toby will take care of me. I want you to go, dear."

"I would much rather stay with you," said Gerald.

"I want you to go," she repeated. "And it is not good for me to have you here always; you make me a little feverish, Combe says; it is ridiculous, but I believe she is right. And it will be so nice to watch for you coming home again."

That was indeed a strange Christmas Day; but Theo was not so alone as she felt; the spirits of her friends who loved her were not very far off. The mail, a few days before, had brought her a long letter from Nell, and she had cried so sadly over it that Combe, coming in, had taken it away in a rage.

OUR SHINING RIVER.

X.

AS we push out from the landing-place at Wargrave, we find that the wind has risen, and is blowing gustily along the river, raising mimic waves that curl and break into white foaming crests after the fashion, on a small scale, of the great waves of ocean; the sky, too, is overcast, and great moist-looking clouds are racing overhead. Still, the sun shines at intervals, and the wind is in our favour, for by the compass we are steering almost due north, the river making a wide bend to get round the stiff chalk buttress which stretches across from Wargrave to Maidenhead, whose steep white escarpment we shall presently see gleaming among the wooded heights of Park Place. And so, with occasional driving showers, we sail before the wind till we reach Marsh Lock, a labyrinth of ancient piles and weirs that suggests a monstrous trap set by some ogre for insignificant human creatures and their miserable boats. And with the favouring gale we are soon in sight of the handsome arches of Henley Bridge. How quiet looks the old-fashioned red town after the fitful fever of the regatta week! A few empty house-boats moored to the Oxfordshire side of the river are all that remain of the great aquatic street that eclipsed all the water thoroughfares in the world in its crowds of pleasure-boats. Just now we have the river to ourselves, and the tow-path is deserted where crowds were swarming the other day; while those trim lawns that were pied with pretty girls as thickly as with daisies are now deserted. Even the wooden temple on Regatta Island

seems in process of being pulled to pieces, as if to be put away till next regatta. But we don't much like that long reach from Henley; if it is not straight enough for a racecourse, it is too straight for ordinary boating.

Half-way up the reach we are reminded by the sight of Fawley Court in its dignified seclusion, that we have taken leave of Oxfordshire, along whose borders we have been coasting all this time. For all the way from Lechlade the left bank of the river has been land of Oxford county, and now that we have Buckingham instead, there is a reminder in the fact that we are now among the home counties, and that our voyage must soon come to an end. It is an end that I should like to defer as long as possible, and I fancy Claudia shares my feelings on the point. Still, we have some of the best parts of the river yet before us, and who knows what may happen before we finally part company?

From this point of view the weather assumes an overwhelming importance, and now as the willows whiten with a sudden gust of wind, and a whirling shower dashes over the water, obscuring the landscape round, and driving us to water-proofs and wraps, we feel a sharp presentiment that the summer has broken up for good and all, and that a chilly long-continued downpour will put a sudden end to our boating.

Just now a joyous party passed us in a huge Noah's ark of a house-boat, drawn by a river-tug—a summer excursion of some hundreds of people from Reading. Fiddles and harps were sounding merrily, and something like a dance was going on upon the thickly-crowded deck. But the shower has damped off these enjoyments; fiddles and harps give up with a dolorous whine, and the festive young people crowd under shelter, so that there is nothing to be seen but the captain of the craft in a waterproof standing gloomily by the tiller. And thus as we enter Hambleton Lock it seems the dampest, dreariest spot that can be imagined; and the man who opens the lock can give us no comfort in the way of promised shelter. It seemed to be just the worst place in the world to be caught in bad weather; half-way between Henley and Medmenham, with not a house of entertainment on the banks between. Had we known of the place, indeed, we might have taken shelter at that snug little inn, The Flower-pot, which is not more than a quarter of a mile from the river; but

nobody told us that, and we pulled doggedly on, while the rain came down in bucketsful, and we grew wetter and wetter every minute. And as the water accumulated in the bottom of the boat, it began to slop out through the floor-boards, and this overwhelming attack both from above and below filled poor mademoiselle with despair.

"Put us ashore near to some station," she demanded.

But there was no station either within a reasonable distance, and, indeed, if there had been we should have concealed the fact, for we had still faith, Claudia and I, that things would take a turn for the better. As it was, we should have hailed even a bridge with thankfulness, as affording something in the way of shelter, while we baled out the boat. But there was not even a bridge in that inhospitable reach of water.

And then suddenly everything changed for the better: the clouds broke asunder, the sun came out warm and jovial, the steaming meadows were revealed, the trees glittering with rain-drops, harp and fiddles struck up an enlivening melody, and silvery swans with their brown cygnets came forth in graceful procession, attracted by the music, or associating harp and fiddle with cake and biscuits, and yet with an air of disdainful pride, as if they felt themselves indeed royal birds more fitted to follow the gilded barges of royalty and to be fed by the dainty fingers of maids of honour.

The swans indeed were a novel feature in the scene, for we had met with none above Henley, and with the white water-lilies that were now opening out their blossom, seemed to give a special brightness and distinction to this part of the river, a part that is not wanting in placid beauty of its own when seen under favourable circumstances, and culminating in the green lawns and pleasant slopes of Medmenham.

At Medmenham we landed to get our boat mopped out, and to look at the Abbey, which is something of a sham ruin, and yet has a pleasing effect, in its mixture of artificial cloisters and solid, real old brick chimney, with the old-fashioned porch, over which is the well-known Rabelaisian motto of the Abbey of Thelème: "Fay ce que voudras!"

And then we row on under the hills that are terraced with ancient earthworks, which bear the popular name of Danesfield, with a modern mansion occupying the site of the ancient stronghold. And then we lay up beneath a new wooden bridge on

the right, that spans the navigable stream, here rather insignificant, the greater part of the river going down the big weir just above, and dividing itself among islands and eyots till it joins the working stream, that passes quietly through the lock, like the good boy that gets over the stile while his rollicking companions go swarming over hedges and ditches.

There is not a soul to be seen anywhere about to take charge of our boat, but we have confidence in the old-fashioned honesty of the neighbourhood, and making fast to the bank, we leave our boat and its belongings, and walk across to the village which is close by—the village of Hurley, where we expect to meet the elders. A strange old place is Hurley, with old walls and foundations running in all directions. This strip of fertile meadowland, indeed, stretching between the river and the chalk hills at the back, a strip not much more than half a mile wide, and barely four miles in length, to where it is cut off by the river bend below Great Marlow, is the ancient terra sancta of the Thames Valley, with the priory of Our Lady here at Hurley, and the grand Augustine Abbey of Bisham lower down the river. And this little strip of land still abounds in ancient houses and historic associations which the passing centuries have hardly disturbed. And at Hurley we have a pleasant little village planted among the ruins of earlier buildings. The church is the old priory church, a little altered, and massive remnants of the refectory and the cloisters are still in existence. But the great house that was the seat of the Lovelaces, the once famous Lady Place, built out of the ruins and upon the site of the old priory, has almost disappeared, while the vaults where the Benedictines stored their dead, and the Lovelaces their ale and canary, are still in existence beneath the grassy bank that conceals them. In these vaults, according to popular tradition, met the conspirators who were concerned in bringing in the Protestant champion and ousting the Stuarts.

From the primitive appearance of the village and its extreme tranquillity, we were anticipating the simple fare of a village inn of the present day, and were surprised to be welcomed by a host in the regulation apparel of a man-cook, who promised and performed a very satisfactory luncheon, in which ducks and peas played a prominent part. Evidently Hurley is not quite so secluded as it appears from the river, but enjoys a pretty constant stream

of visitors—fishermen and artists mostly, who have made themselves at home in this pleasant resort. It is a place one vows to visit more at length at some future time. Such vows are rarely kept, as new scenes dissipate the remembrance of the old; but the memory of the sunny village, with its homes of cheerful modern life, intermingled with old walls and ruinous foundations, will long linger upon the mind.

We pass through Hurley Lock, where something in the way of public works are going on, as if the conservators of the river had awoke, like Rip Van Winkle, from their lengthy slumbers, and resolved to make a big hole somewhere; and then along a broad, pleasant, sunshiny reach to Temple Lock on the other side, a pleasant, shady lock, among beech-trees, barely half a mile from Hurley. And now we are in one of the nicest nooks of the river, full of the pleasant quietude and goodly savour of ancient days. Here Queen Bess might pace the sequestered walks, and find little change from when in her early youth she lived here with the Hobys: A fine old type of the Tudor farmhouse is Bisham Grange, with its mullioned windows and their characteristic hood mouldings; while a little lower down, in full view from the boat, is Bisham Abbey itself, the most interesting and unique of all the old mansions on the river.

There is nothing to equal Bisham in all these parts, nothing for antiquity or originality to compare with it, with its grey, quaint frontage and deep, cool shades, a veritable mansion of the Tudor period, with all the picturesque irregularity of the times. Something of the old dwelling of the monks still remains embedded in the later work. The hall, with its handsome roof of carved timber, and the ancient porch, recall the monks of old; but its chief associations are of the family that raised this stately dwelling upon the bare ruined choirs. Many an ancient tomb was levelled and destroyed to make room for the new habitation, for the abbey had been a favourite burial-place of the great Norman nobles. Knights Templars slept about the altar of their ancient temple with their successors, a long line of Augustine priors, and with them mighty warriors, who trusted to profit by the flavour of their sanctity in the last awful day. Here, after the fatal fight of Barnet, was borne the disfigured corpse of the great Kingmaker. Over the levelled tombs of the mighty dead the Hobys built their

pleasant home; and here came the Princess Elizabeth under tutelage to the Lady Hoby of the period; and the alleys and arbours of the ancient pleasure-maist often have echoed to the laughter of Anne Boleyn's daughter and her attendant maidens. But popular tradition concerns itself chiefly with a certain cruel Lady Hoby, whose figure, it is said, still haunts one particular chamber—a figure that stalks restlessly to and fro, ever washing her hands in an impalpable basin, and crying, like Lady Macbeth, "There's the smell of the blood still! All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand!" For the blood upon her hand is that of her innocent little boy, whom she beat to death—so the story goes—because he blotted his copy-book. There is something characteristic of the times in this ghastly little story—of that stern discipline of youth which produced brave soldiers and keen statesmen, but crushed, no doubt, many of a less resolute spirit. The copy-book, blotched and blurred with tears as well as ink, the delicate frame that quivered under the stern maternal blows, the warm and sensitive heart that ceased to beat under the shame and torture of it all, with the deathless remorse that followed—all this seems too true to nature, too terrible, and yet too trivial, to have been invented.

A little lower down the river we come to Bisham Church, with its ancient Norman tower, the most river-side of all churches, with the green turf of its graveyard sloping down nearly to the water's edge, and even steps, conveniently placed for landing, that seemed to invite the passing boat's crew to land and pay their orisons. The exterior of the church, indeed, is modern, but the ancient monuments of the Hobys have been preserved—a range of splendid tombs standing in the south aisle of the church, among which is pointed out the kneeling figure which in the popular view represents the cruel Lady Hoby, with a small figure at her feet, reputed to be the unfortunate imp who spoils his copy.

The next turn in the river brings us in sight of Marlow Bridge, a trim suspension bridge, that harmonises very well with the neat quiet town. Nothing more pleasant can be imagined than the river terrace above the bridge, with its neat houses and gay flower-beds, and the white road running between green lawns, and the loungers by the river, of the boating and fishing order, and the gentle stir of life in the pushing off and landing from boats and punts. A.

capital place this to stay for a week or a month, for the fishing in the neighbourhood is of a high order, and the walks about the sunny woods and round Bisham, with the whole of the terra sancta within exploring distance; but too townified as a stopping-place for a night, and so we determine to push on to Cookham.

There is something exciting in the navigation just below Marlow, with an enormous weir to coast along on the right hand, and a strongly rushing mill-stream on the left, it is Scylla and Charybdis over again, and we hang on to the posts at the entrance of the narrow channel to the lock with considerable satisfaction, when we have effected the passage. Mademoiselle, by this time, has learnt to steer pretty well, but in moments of difficulty she generally pulls the wrong string, and then abuses us for bringing her into danger. Under these circumstances it is difficult to be always ready with the retort courteous, and Claudia is the only one who keeps her temper, as she laughs merrily at our altercation. But when Claudia takes the lines everything goes well. I am not obliged to be craning round every moment to see that we are keeping our course. And then I have the pleasure of looking at Claudia all the time, which, if she takes the sculls behind me, of course I cannot do. Claudia has proposed that she and mademoiselle shall do the work while I sit and steer; indeed, in this amazonian realm, it is rather the fashion for the women to work, while the men idle and smoka. But mademoiselle cannot be trained to the business. She barks her knuckles, and drops her sculls into the water, and nearly upsets the boat in trying to recover them; and so we are obliged to give up the idea of making her work, and so we revert to former ways of progression.

The reach of river below Marlow, when once the eyots are passed and the wooded bank stretches before us, in its length and straightness, is rather monotonous for those in the pursuit of pleasure. We envy those centre-boarders that are running to and fro in a series of zigzags, up or down the river—for our extempore leg-of-mutton sail is only good for running before the wind. But as we round the point, where the river sweeps round towards the south, we cease to wish for a sail, as we encounter quite a gale blowing up the reach. The wind is mild and pleasant, but it is parious strong; and, presently, tired of pulling against it, we agree, Claudia and

I, to have a turn at towing. Mademoiselle is quite willing to be towed; she fancies that we are going to work tandem-fashion, half-a-dozen yards apart; but we find it much pleasanter to work as a pair, with a paddle as extempore splinter-bar in front of us. Mademoiselle sails along majestically alone, like Robinson Crusoe when he made the tour of his island.

Across our paddle we talk—we draught-animals—in a quiet, confidential strain. Our journey is nearly at an end; spin it out as we may, it can hardly last beyond to-morrow, and then—how and when shall we meet again? Claudia says honestly that she does not know. Her father has talked, she owns, of asking me to return with them to Charlwood Hall, but her mother has, so far, successfully vetoed this plan. Why this should be so seemed strange enough; it is not from any dislike on her mother's part; but—

“In fact, as people say, your mother has other views. But, Claudia, do you share those views? Do you care for your cousin Charlwood?”

“No, indeed,” replies Claudia with a curl of the lip. “I used to like him very well—indeed, I once fancied that I was a little bit in love with him. But now I know that I never was, and the very thought of what mamma is planning makes me shudder.”

And then I told Claudia plainly how I loved a girl, and always carried her portrait next my heart. And Claudia regarded me for a moment with indignant, reproachful eyes, till I drew her own photograph from my pocket and she looked at it, strangely moved and agitated.

“And how long have you had this foolish photograph?” she asked.

And I told her how I had stolen it from Charlwood, long before I had seen her.

“And you have thought about me ever since?” asked Claudia shyly. “Well, do you know, I had a kind of presentiment about you. I heard about you as you travelled down to Henley with Charlwood, for you met one of my great friends, Clara Boothby—she is a cousin of these other Boothbys—and from her description, I thought you were nice.”

Clearly it was kismet, and we had nothing to do but to submit to the decrees of fate.

A slight shock at this moment recalled us to the scenes of every-day life. Mademoiselle had managed to run into a boat, the occupants of which were steering

across the stream. Our tow-rope had caught a man's hat, and knocked it into the water, and the owner of the hat was making loud complaints of our maladroitness.

I recognised the voice, however, at once.

"Why, Charlwood," I cried, "what brings you here?"

Charlwood—for he it was in truth, who, with a lady, formed the boat's crew—had picked up his hat by this time, and came hastily ashore. And then we saw that his companion was Rebecca.

"And Miss Thomas!" exclaimed Claudia, colouring a little as she remembered their former antagonism.

"No, not Miss Thomas," interposed Charlwood gravely—"Mrs. Charlwood Pycroft, if you please. We were married this morning at a church in the Strand, and now we are cruising about to find the governor, and obtain his forgiveness, and something else that I am still more in need of," added Charley in a tone meant only for my ear.

Claudia embraced her new cousin warmly. There was no jealousy left in her mind now. She had always admired Rebecca with a quite honest admiration of her decided charms and accomplishments.

"Come, get into the boat, you young women," said Charlwood, "and Arthur and I will tow you down."

And so the young girls hooked on to mademoiselle, much to her amazement, and we started off to Cookham at a good pace.

"Yes, I think I've done the right thing," said Charlwood confidentially, as we walked along the towpath. "The old chap wanted to make all sorts of conditions; but, as Rebecca came of age yesterday, we got a special license, and cut the Gordian knot—that is, we tied it; anyhow, if the metaphor is mixed, you know what I mean. Luckily, I had money enough to pay for the special license."

"And what are you going to do?" I asked doubtfully, for the prospects of the young couple, apart from Mr. Thomas's liberality, seemed rather doubtful.

"Well, Rebecca has got a little money of her own, it seems, and we are going to emigrate—sheep-farming, Australia, and so on, and coming home in a dozen years to buy all you home-sitting fogies up. And we shall go as soon as we can touch the money, which I hope to goodness won't be long. In fact, Rebecca and I have only about a sovereign between us; and, if the old boy doesn't relent, we shall be up a tree."

"And do you think Mr. Thomas will let you have a supply of money without making his conditions?"

"Well, upon my word," replied Charlwood, "that consideration is making me a little uneasy. He offered me a couple of hundred the other day, for some reversionary rights I am supposed to have in Claudia's fortune. But I suspected that he meant to make mischief, and I refused to do it, right off; by the way, I have the deed he had got all ready for me to sign, in my pocket."

"And now, if he will only part with his coin on a similar condition?"

Charlwood whistled doubtfully.

"Well, you know the proverb!" he said at last.

I did not know exactly the proverb he meant, but concluded that it was "necessity has no laws," or something equally desperate in tone.

"Well, look here," I replied after a moment's thought, "you need not go back to old Thomas on your knees. I'll lend you the two hundred, to be repaid when you come back to buy us all up."

"What, without conditions?" asked Charlwood, looking wonderfully surprised and relieved.

"With only the condition as to repayment I have just mentioned."

"My dear boy," said Charlie, "you are the best trump in the pack. That is a sum that will carry us on till we make a start for the Antipodes, and I shall approach papa-in-law with a quite different attitude; erect, that is, and independent. And, in return," continued Charlie, "I'll do for you what I wouldn't do for old Thomas. I've got this deed all ready to be signed, and I'll stick your name in instead of his, and we'll have it signed, sealed, and delivered, when we come to the inn."

And then I suggested to Charlwood, that it would be a more graceful act if he assigned his interest to his uncle Pycroft instead of to me, who had no wish to meddle prematurely in their family affairs.

"Not a bit of it," said Charlwood; "I have seen for some time that you were after Claudia, and I wish you good luck, and good luck it will be if you get her, for she is a staunch little thing, and will stick to you like old boots. But do you think if my aunt has everything her own way, that she will let you have the girl? No; she will look out for some powerful swell and make poor Claudia marry him. Now,

with this deed at your back, you will be able to put the screw on. Threaten her with the Court of Chancery, and she'll fall on her knees before you."

I tell Charlwood that he is the most unprincipled young fellow I know, and I do not think I do him any injustice. But there is something about him, after all, that endears him to his friends, and we shall feel, when he quits this hemisphere, that we could better spare a better man. Anyhow, we walked together in complete fellowship, till the ivy-covered towers of Cookham Church appeared among the trees. And as the bend of the river here sheltered the stream from the wind, we took to our respective boats, and rowed on till, passing under the lanky iron bridge, we came upon the bright, lake-like reach of water that lies before Cookham Ferry.

The elder Pyecrofts had not yet arrived, having turned aside to make a call by the way; and Charlwood, who was not anxious to meet them, hastened to transact his business with me, and then started down the river for Maidenhead, where he had determined to spend the first few days of his honeymoon.

A ROYAL VISITOR IN SEVENTEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-TWO.

WE, who live in this enlightened end of the nineteenth century, may almost be said to enjoy a surfeit of royal visitors, but a hundred and twenty years ago it was a different matter, as kings were then rarer spectacles, they having to succumb, with the baser ranks of mankind, to the difficulties of travelling, it being but seldom they could be spared from the cares of state for the long periods then required for visiting their fellow-monarchs. No wonder, then, that the illustrious visitors, whose sojourn amongst us is here chronicled, should have caused the immense sensation they did; the "noble redskin" being then comparatively little known, and his vices not yet having been so ruthlessly exposed as in these latter days.

Three Cherokee chiefs arrived on our shores, in June, 1762, having been brought to Plymouth by the *Epreuve*, man-of-war, sixteen guns, from South Carolina. One chief was called "Outacite," or, the man-killer, on account of his prowess in the wars, and he was attended by two others, likewise chiefs, but inferior to him in rank. The object of their visit was to settle on a firm foundation the peace concluded with

their nation and the English in April of the same year, which, though negotiated with much calumet-smoking, wampum-displaying, plenty of talk, and a distribution of two hundred pounds among them in presents, was thought to be more likely to last if they could see the power of England, and the countenance of their fellow-ruler, King George, for whom they professed great veneration.

After landing in England, they at once set forth for London, whither their fame had preceded them, and where they were destined to share, with the queen's zebra and the Venetian ambassador, the doubtful honour of popular curiosity. Their appearance could hardly fail to win admiration from the astonished Britons, for they are described as well-made men, nearly six feet high, their faces and necks coarsely painted of a copper colour, their necks being streaked with blue paint, somewhat resembling veins in a fair skin. They were apparently hairless, but their countenances on the whole were deemed satisfactory, as, we read, they seemed to be a mixture of dignity and sternness. Their attire was simple, and consisted of a shirt, trousers, and mantle, their heads covered with skull-caps, and adorned with shells, feathers, earrings, and other native ornaments. This bravery was deemed inconsistent with our superior civilisation, and, on arrival in London, where a house had been taken for them in Suffolk Street, they were habited more in accordance with English notions.

At the outset of their career a difficulty presented itself, for the interpreter, who was to accompany them on their tour, died on the voyage, and no one could be found for some time who could understand their language. In the face of this unfortunate contretemps, conversation with their hosts must have been limited to the unsatisfactory medium of gestures, which is to be regretted, as their expressions of satisfaction, or otherwise, have been left unrecorded. Their first public appearance seems to have been in Kensington Gardens, where they were taken for a walk, soberly attired in English fashion; and they were afterwards introduced to all the delights that were concentrated in Vauxhall Gardens, where they were entertained in a sumptuous manner. The wines first set before them were Burgundy and claret, which, however, we are informed, they did not seem greatly to relish. Others were then placed on the table, when they fixed

upon Frontinac, the sweetness of which suited their palates, and they drank of it very freely. As a counterpoise, it would seem, to this dissipation, these gentle savages were taken to have a look at one of the homes of our national religion—viz., Westminster Abbey, to view the monuments and other curiosities, and to be, doubtless, much impressed by the awe-inspiring wax images, then a common sight shown to visitors.

At length, fortunately, two officers were found who had served in America, and had learned their language, and these accompanied the visitors as interpreters, a want of which had hitherto rendered the crowning object of their visit—the presentation to King George—an impossibility. On the 8th of July this meeting of the royal representatives of the two nations took place, the red men being introduced by Mr. Eglinton, and led into the royal presence by Sir Clement Cotterell, the master of the ceremonies. They were upwards of an hour and a half with his majesty, who, says *The Annual Register*, “received them with great goodness,” a condescension which they, on their part, reciprocated, as “they behaved with remarkable decency and mildness,” for which, no doubt, all concerned were truly thankful. The conversation must, however, have been carried on in an embarrassing manner, for the gentleman who officiated in the capacity of interpreter seems to have lost his head, probably at the sight of so much royalty all at once, and was so confused that the King could ask but few questions. Their costumes were worthy of the occasion, and seem to have been barbaric in their splendour, for the head chief was attired in a blue mantle, covered with lace, and had his head richly ornamented. On his breast hung a silver gorget, with his majesty’s arms engraved. The two other chiefs were in scarlet, richly adorned with gold lace, and silver gorgets on their breasts.

It will be, perhaps, somewhat instructive to see what sort of entertainment we were able to afford our guests in an age when the Crystal Palace was not, and Madame Tussaud’s and South Kensington were unborn. The same night as their presentation to the King, they appeared again at Vauxhall, still clad in their gala habiliments before described, and were greatly pleased with the entertainment and the beauty of the gardens; but the penalty they paid for their presence there was

severe, for we read, “They shook hands with some hundreds of the gentlemen who crowded to see them.” The Tower, Greenwich, Deptford, and Woolwich Dockyards, were all duly visited, and every day they were conducted to one or other place of amusement, where they drew immense crowds, who feasted their eyes on the rare strangers. Even the theatres took advantage of their sojourn amongst us to turn an extra penny, the Haymarket advertising, for instance, that “By desire of the Cherokee King and Chiefs, Mr. Foot’s Oratorical Course would be continued each evening,” etc., etc. And again, at the same theatre, it was announced: “By Authority, for the entertainment of the Cherokee King and Chiefs, this day, July 28, will be performed a Scots Musical Pastoral, called *The Gentle Shepherd*, with entertainments of dancing, as will be expressed in the day’s bill. Boxes, five shillings; pit, three shillings; gallery, two shillings. Care will be taken to keep the house cool.”

The next day the Indians were introduced to yet another fashionable delight of the time, viz., Marybone Gardens, which advertised that “the Cherokee King and the two Chiefs will dine in public this day, at three o’clock, where a grand open box is prepared for their reception. To prevent improper company, each person to pay sixpence admittance.”

As a contrast to all this feasting, and to give them a sample of our simplicity (and medicinal waters), they were invited and went to Bagnigge Wells to drink the waters, and afterwards breakfasted there. Sadler’s Wells Theatre was also visited, and the entertainment seems to have been what would now be called a variety one. A Miss Wilkinson performed on the musical-glasses, and there was a vast quantity of dancing; but what seems to have been most attractive to our savage guests were the feats of activity performed by Mr. Mathews, the wire-dancer, to whom they were so very partial that they expressed a great desire to have him return home with them. As their stay extended, so the character of their amusements seems to have deteriorated, and private speculators marked them for their own advantage. The two lesser chiefs, at all events, were frequently to be seen at various taverns, the proprietors of which advertised them as a show. Thus a firework entertainment at *The Star and Garter*, Chelsea, was given by an enterprising

Italian, nominally for the "entertainment of the Cherokee King and his Chiefs," but really served only as an excellent opportunity of gathering in a harvest of shillings from the curious public; and a good lady advertised, as an exhilarating amusement for them, that "To-morrow, at twelve o'clock in the forenoon, the Cherokee King and his two Chiefs will be at the great room in Spring Gardens to hear Miss Davies perform on the armonica, and sing several favourite songs, particularly some out of the opera of Artaxerxes. She is likewise to play on the German flute and harpsichord." The admission in this case was two shillings and sixpence; so, at least, an audience more worthy of royalty than the last, was probably secured.

Surely, after such a severe infliction of British amusement as this, they must have the less regretted the return to their own land, which was shortly to take place; but before they left, it is almost needless to say that the ever-flowing hospitality at the Mansion House was extended to them, and they seemed greatly pleased by the sensation they caused in the City, and the great concourse of ladies and gentlemen who crowded to the windows to see them pass.

It was, of course, deemed politic to impress them with our military grandeur, and, with a view to their education in this respect, they were conducted to the parade of the Guards at St. James's Park, but whether their nerves had been shaken by their unwonted dissipation, or whether they could not altogether lay aside the suspicious nature of the savage, they do not appear to have been happy on this occasion, for we read in the St. James's Chronicle, that "they happened to enter at the guard-room just as the Grenadiers were fixing their bayonets, in order to troop their colours. The formidable appearance of the men, and the business they accidentally were engaged in, threw them into such an agitation, that it was with the utmost difficulty they were persuaded to advance a step on the parade. They had a suspicion of treachery, were extremely impatient to be gone, and, when they got home, desired to see no more of those warriors with caps."

A desire on somebody's part to possess their portraits, led to a commission being given to Sir Joshua Reynolds to paint them, but who this enthusiast was, is not stated.

But the time was drawing near when they came to be regarded almost as a nuisance, not through any fault of their

own, but through the 'mistaken excess of hospitality and bad taste of their hosts. The scene that took place on the occasion of their visit to Vauxhall, on the 29th of July, was an additional reason to "speed the parting guest," and we cannot do better than hear what the St. James's Chronicle has to say on this humiliating subject: "The intemperance of his Cherokee majesty and his chiefs, and the selfish views of the proprietors of our public gardens in so plentifully treating them to strong liquors, give occasion to the considerate sincerely to wish them safely shipped off for their own country. At Vauxhall, on Thursday last, it is supposed not less than ten thousand persons crowded thither to obtain a sight of these Indians . . . between two and three in the morning their Cherokeeships began to think of departing, and being duly supported, made shift to reach their coach for that purpose. The chief who was in the best plight stepped in first with his friend, but the garment of his majesty unluckily falling foul of a gentleman's sword-hilt in the crowd, a sort of scuffle mistakenly ensued; the sword, by some accident, was drawn and broken, and the Indian's hands, in a pretty bloody condition, were exposed to the spectators with much seeming remonstrance and complaint. He then threw himself, in a fit of sullenness or intoxication, or both, on the ground, and obstinately remained there for a considerable time. Force, however, effected what persuasion could not, for he was neck and heels lifted in, and laid along the bottom of the coach. Soon after, his legs, which had obstructed the shutting the door, being carefully packed up with the rest, the coachman, by driving away, put an end to this wretched scene of British curiosity and savage debauchery."

It is satisfactory to know, from a letter from Captain Timberlake, that his Indian majesty was not at Vauxhall at all that night, but the two inferior chiefs certainly were, and, moreover, were in the inebriated condition above related.

This sad deflection from good manners on both sides disgusted all thinking men, and many letters appeared in the newspapers protesting against their being made an exhibition of, so that we are not surprised to find that orders were sent to prevent them being taken to any more places of public entertainment, as it had been productive of so much rioting and mischief. Accordingly, their departure was arranged,

and the customary presents made to them, of warlike instruments, and such other things as they seemed to place the greatest value upon. On August 20th, 1762, they commenced their homeward journey, setting out from London to Portsmouth, in truly regal style, in a coach-and-six, in company of two officers who were to proceed with them to America. On their arrival at Winchester, they visited the camp, at the appearance of which they seemed greatly surprised, and, as a spirit-raising and cheerful exhibition, they were conducted to the French prison, which they observed with much curiosity, at the same time venting their spleen upon the unfortunate inmates, as belonging to a nation which had treated them so cruelly; and the day wound up with a visit to Winchester College. The next morning they saw the Wiltshire militia regiment go through a variety of evolutions for nearly two hours—a spectacle which seemed to catch their fancy, for we read, “they beheld it with remarkable attention and satisfaction.” They arrived at Portsmouth on Monday, August 22, in the evening, and, as if to give them a final taste of mild dissipation, they were taken immediately to the theatre. The next morning they were conducted over the fortifications, dockyard, and ships—a reminder of Britannia’s power which seems to have rendered them speechless with astonishment, for they failed to find words to express it, beyond observing “that their English brethren can do everything.”

They embarked on board the *Epreuve* and sailed on August 25, 1762, after a sojourn with us of about two months. Thus came to an end a visit which, we trust, was productive of all the good it was intended to accomplish, and we sincerely hope that their return to their own land was signalised in as happy a fashion as foreshadowed in a pantomime produced at that time, called *Harlequin Cherokee*—viz., a complicated dance of welcome of the Cherokees, male and female, with the English sailors who brought them back.

As if the supply of the real article were insufficient, we read that spurious chiefs arose in London, and that three men, in imitation of the Cherokee chiefs, and having their faces painted like them, were shown at many of the public places for the real Indians, and we must fain hope that these were the real delinquents in some of

the scenes credited to Outacite and his friends, and that the latter were not so black (or red) as they were painted.

A CHEAP HOLIDAY.

IN these days many arguments are urged on unwilling ears in favour of “thrift” (compulsory or other)—in favour, that is, of the painful hoarding away of daily halfpence or shillings towards the providing of a sufficiency of butter to bespread the bread of our latter years, on which, it may be, the very honey of Hymettos itself will lack all savour, or towards the rearing of a little roof-tree to shelter our grey heads, which, lacking kind faces, passed away into the silence, may, after all, gloom over us sad and chilly as a workhouse.

With no disparagement to the many preachers of this wise if somewhat dismal doctrine, I would fain inaugurate a movement in favour of quite another form of economy. I would urge upon all who are inclined to heed me, the desirability of hoarding up pleasant memories, happy impressions, cheap joys, sunny experiences.

Why are we not thrifty of great, wide sunsets, which for us might be spreading their good-night splendours over furzy hills? of the red, solemn moons standing over the wide harvest-fields, with the summer lightning shimmering round? Why do we not save up the sense of fern or honeysuckle tangled in the hedge-side growth, the sharp, warm taste of blackberries on the lonely hillside? I would fain be an apostle of this new thrift, and as my earliest manifesto I propose now to record in the minutest manner the everyday detail of a week spent by me this year in the heart of the country, with such special and particular notes of the expenditure involved as shall tempt the most impetuous lover of country life to follow in my steps, for whose behoof I am further ready (an he or she require it) to divulge the real name and position of my retreat, which for the present I veil under a feigned name.

It is not necessary to mention where or how I heard that in the village of Winfer, four miles from the manufacturing town of Stourcome, cheap lodgings were to be found in the midst of lovely scenery; nor shall I describe my preliminary visit when I secured lodgings—two bedrooms and one sitting-room for

myself, with a son and daughter, neither of whom, happily, was of an age or character to be scornful of cheap joys, or to fret at narrow quarters. It will suffice to say that I agreed to pay for our accommodation seven shillings and sixpence a week, and that the pleasant-looking country woman who negotiated the matter with me, seemed to consider that the charge she was making was rather excessive.

I shall begin my narrative from the sunny August morning when I drove to the station of the great town of Bourton, and paying one shilling each for our tickets to Stourcome, felt that we were really en route.

From Stourcome to Winfer the distance is, as I have said, four miles. I might with ease have walked the distance with my son and daughter, or indeed, as far as that goes, paid for a conveyance; but, being the apostle of a new thrift, I was bound to feel my way for others, and some poor delicate girl or overworked clerk might, I felt, be quite unable to manage either the expense of a private vehicle or a long tramp on the dusty road; so, for their shadowy sakes, I determined to drive, as they would have to drive, with the luggage in the carrier's covered cart.

I must own that when Grace and Arthur disappeared along the white road, and I found myself hanging about the stable-yard of The Traver's Arms at Stourcome (it being against my principles to enter the hotel and order tea like an ordinary being), I felt very low.

I tried to look as if I was not actuated by any motive in particular, but was straying about the yard as a sort of pleasure; but I grew to feel a positive aversion to that stolid Winfer cart piled up to its low tilt with boxes and parcels, with its narrow board for the driver's seat, and its yet narrower ledge for occasional passengers.

For more than an hour I wandered desolately about among horses hanging their patient heads over troughs—horses backing mechanically into shafts—horses very quiet and enduring—doing in a resigned sort of way all they ought to do, and ostlers in a fitful, uncertain manner whooping, gee-uping, and jerking at them, till I began feebly to wonder whether horses were ostlers in a higher state of development, or whether ostlers had been horses, and were now making futile efforts at free will.

At last—oh, Heavens, it seemed such a long last!—a slouching driver forced a

black horse—so huge, that it might have been a pre-Adamite variety of the race—into the unwilling shafts, and I climbed into the narrow ledge, and took my seat beside an amiable pupil-teacher-looking girl, with my back against a basket of garden produce, which attracted an infinite number of wasps, and we jolted on till, on the outskirts of the town, we drew up before a small inn, where the driver, shambling off, told us he had another fare, and presently returned with three! The tilt was constructed to carry four—and there were already myself, the girl beside me, and a stolid-looking farmer, who gazed dreamily at the prospect, and avoided all participation in the clamour raised by two women—a sobbing young mother holding a little frail child, with thin, flaxen hair, against her breast, and a brown-faced, vociferous peasant, declaiming, entreating, protesting that wholesale destruction must follow if the three were not conveyed swiftly and surely in the already crowded van to Winfer.

"The child—the little child, had had an operation performed—it must go—they must all go!"

After a flood of ejaculation, they were with difficulty hoisted in, the brown-faced one on the ledge, the mother and child between the farmer and the driver.

Heavens! how that brown-faced one talked.

"She had held the baby—the chloroform had struck to her stummick, and the doctor had said—he said, 'Now will you 'old him, or are you going off?' and I says—says I, 'Oh, I'll 'old him fast enough,' not to let her, you know."

This with admonitory pointings at the mother. The brown-faced one was mighty at pantomime, conveying darkly to us by that method a delineation of the operation just performed, while the sorrowful mother, with the little flaxen head cuddled to her neck, took little heed to the vagaries of her companion, only lifting pleading eyes to me, who could know nothing.

"Will it cure him? I sha'n't mind if it will cure him."

When we drew up at the outskirts of Winfer to distribute our earliest parcels, the farmer-like man, speaking for the first time since our start, asked me over his shoulder, "Be you kin to Mr. Jones's son-in-law?" and on my disclaiming the relationship, sunk once more into silence. I have wondered since whether the question was meant to

convey compliment or contumely, and on what the stolid one, who from his position had never beheld my face, founded his impressions.

As the business of distributing luggage appeared likely to be lengthy, and I felt that I had now dree'd my weird, I got down, paid one shilling and sixpence for self and luggage, and sauntered through the village, leaving the boxes to follow at the carrier's good pleasure.

Grace and Arthur awaited me with impatience. Our dwelling was at the end of a rather unprepossessing row of cottages, from which it rose superior in virtue of a little enclosure of grass in front all to itself; of very clean, bright paint on doors, gates, and shutters; as also on certain arrangements of woodwork over the windows, which looked like surprised eyebrows; and, best of all, in virtue of a perfect luxuriance of fragrant flowers growing haphazard under its windows. The house was very, very small; you felt almost inclined to take it for a missionary-box and drop a penny down the chimney; but it was exquisitely clean—paint, paper, beds, tea-equipage, and, most important of all, the tall, benevolent-looking landlady, with simple, kindly face and complexion like a winter apple—all were as clean as soap-and-water could make them. Grace and Arthur thought it lovely. What matter if the twelve stairs were as steep as a ship's ladder! They led to two wholesome sleeping-rooms in which the plenishing showed a curious mixture of ancient respectability—old oak and curious fragments of china, with some of the most barbarous samples the taste of forty years ago ever beheld. White poodles and crockery Highlanders with a dash of the Calabrian brigand added to their national kilt, blended with old Worcester teacups and samplers representing in their complex stitching half the childhood of the workers.

After tea a discussion followed, as to household matters, with my pleasant landlady. She showed me an old-fashioned kitchen-garden, in which samples of all the vegetables of the country seemed to have matted and tangled themselves under the old, gnarled apple-boughs.

"A pleasant place for walking of an evening," the dear old woman suggested, but it must have been in single file, for the paths—if paths they could be called—were only about eight inches from side to side; and a sort of bower at the far end, constructed of the rusty sides of an old boiler,

seemed almost as ill-suited "to set in with your book," as she put it.

I, while mentally excusing myself from these proffered conveniences, offered "to buy such vegetables as we might need from her garden."

"Should I think sixpence each too much for the week?" she asked; "that was how she generally managed. She couldn't tell how to charge for things separately."

And so matters were arranged to our mutual satisfaction, and here I take the opportunity of saying that with moderate precautions Winfer is very fairly off in the matter of provisions.

We arrived on Friday. My first survey of the local butcher's was, therefore, on Saturday, and I confess I was astounded at the perfect carnival of flesh meat in which so insignificant a place was prepared to indulge. I ascertained, however, with longer experience, that the flood-tide of the commissariat only lasted over the close of the week, to provide, in short, for the Sunday dinners of the inhabitants. Towards Wednesday, and still worse on Thursday, the tiny slabs of the numerous small vendors appeared black and lonely, save, perhaps, for two or three dark, grisly chops, or a gory fragment of steak, left there by the ebbing tide of produce, which on Saturday would once more come in with a flood.

Still, its condition is no worse than that of many a Welsh watering-place, where I have often seen seven stout matrons contending for a stringy quarter of lamb; and much may be done by laying in a store in the days of plenty and issuing timely orders for poultry for those of dearth.

Perhaps the weakest points in our household arrangements at Winfer were those connected with the night-watches. The tiny house, despite open windows, used to get terribly hot, and seemed at first to be all clock. I believe ours struck thirteen several times during our first night's experiences; but nothing worse befell us, and in the early morning the breeze swept with a fresh sense of life under the low canopy of my bed, luring us forth into the wide, free fields.

After breakfast (fresh laid eggs and water-cresses were among the household resources), we walked across a corn-field with the whitening sheaves lying loose and crisp across the furrows, out on a short stretch of sandy road, and then we climbed a range of low hills to look down at once on, oh, what a range of dewy

undulating country! A wide expanse of common, covered with furze and heather, broken up at intervals with great boulders of red sandstone, and with thick pine-woods running up the shoulders of the sunny hills and bathing half their slopes in shadow, pine-woods holding their indescribable fragrance and flinging it out to mingle with the crisp sweetness of the withering bracken. The common swept off into a deep valley, to rise again in further low hills, covered as far as the eye could reach with yellow harvest-fields, lined out with elm-rows, intersected with pine-woods, with the bloom on their soft crests, and bounded at last with soft grey heights of distant hills. The whole scene very sparsely dotted with dwellings, rather indicated than declared by faint wreaths of smoke winding up through the shadow of tree-boughs.

On the eastern side of the range the prospect was less wild; great tracts of arable or pasture land there lay mapped out between thick masses of woodland, but these were bounded in the distance by the grey smoke of large towns, and nearer lay the humble red roofs of Winfer, and a general sense of human life, from which we might have been miles and miles away on the wild sweep of common we saw from the western side of the range.

For us, tired as we were with life and work in a large town, to wander on this breezy hill, or to saunter over the wide common, afforded more than aught else of interest and pleasure. Not here, as in certain Welsh wanderings in other days, were our footsteps continually arrested by grim walls of loose stone or vituperative Welsh farmers; once and once only did a faded board, announcing that "Trespassers would be prosecuted," mar our delights. The long sandy lanes, the wide pasture-fields, lay open to our careless steps. We could thread the hills, on and on, in all directions, and, guided by the abrupt ridges of Winfer Hill, lead ourselves home again by all pleasant diversities of sun and shade.

Perhaps nothing was more exquisite than the evening hour, as we tramped through the soft, sandy lanes, the sun setting in dense clouds over the pine-woods, and the monotonous coo of the wood-pigeon the only sound heard.

On Sunday we climbed Winfer Hill to the parish church, placed there, we felt certain when we started, by satanic agency; we modified our opinion, however,

while looking over the grey churchyard-wall at the sweep of country which the old red church appeared to hold under its peaceful rule. The clergyman, too, won our hearts with his kind, courteous bow to us as strangers. We almost felt as if we really lived in a Christian land—as if the great modern gods, "expediency" and "main chance," were buried out of sight.

More quiet rambles through long, tangled lanes, more quiet mornings with books and work among the bracken and blackberries of the common, and then one day, by way of a new sensation, we determined to walk two miles to see some famous gardens which the owner throws open to the public twice a week. Now this expedition was a failure. Surely, the spirit of restlessness must have possessed us, to lead us where, under no conceivable circumstances, could we find any sort of pleasure.

We started very early, but the white road was all ablaze with sun, and our two mile walk seemed like twenty. The village, which was but an appendage to the great house and gardens of which we were in quest, was red and staring, and looked as if the prince of this world had it utterly in thrall. A dreadful hotel just outside the park-gates was already (before twelve o'clock) surrounded with black-country folk standing about in groups, and drinking thick-looking cider out of smeared glasses. A group of factory-girls were crawling through the dreariest game I ever beheld. I don't know whether I was most dissatisfied with the loose, vague ways of these pleasure-seekers, or with the solemn air of routine which mounted guard over the gardens they had come to see.

The moment the tall, bronze gates were unfolded to us by a discontented gardener, we entered a region of repression where everybody and everything seemed to be bound by the most solemn vows to do nothing that they could by any possibility take the least pleasure in. There were long lines of flowers in contrasted belts of colour, in which each looked so like its neighbour, so clipped, so confined to one dead level as to cease to be alive at all, but to become a sort of dreary upholstery. There were flowers by the ton; flowers by the hundred pounds' worth; flower-beds arranged in concentric rings till they looked like millinery; flower-beds made to simulate French tarts, the jam represented by a mass of red bloom, the pastry by yellow calceolaria. The great glass pagoda pleased

me hardly better, though the flowers there were rather freer than in the beds; they were drooping in the intense shadeless glare of the glass domes, and I felt no real joy in them.

I have got more pleasure over one Gloire de Dijon rose on a cottage-window, or a root of violets under a hedge, than in all these geometric splendours. I am not sure that the black-country folk enjoyed it very much more than I did. If they did, their enjoyment seemed to necessitate a good deal of vituperation from the women: "Come here, you William! Don't touch that flower, you naughty girl—you!" While with the men the day's pleasuring seemed to induce a spirit of defiance, a tendency to fling off coats and carry them across their arms, in a manner little suited to the trim glories of the shaven lawns, they were obviously inclined to snort indignantly at the numerous boards marked "Private," which protected the nearer precincts to the mansion, and to take the white placards, which marked every turn of the path, conjuring you "not to walk on the grass," as a personal affront, while the vials of wrath invariably overflowed on the perusal of a larger placard, somewhat obscurely worded, which seemed to set forth that if any person requested entrance at the bronze gates, save and except on Mondays and Fridays only, the gardens would be for evermore closed to the public.

I am conscious that I have been, in all I have written about these show gardens, betrayed into an ungracious looking of gift-horses in the mouth. Nothing could, after all, destroy the infinite charm of hill and woodland, which held them as in a cool green cup. I dare say the country-folk did enjoy it all in a way; they really seemed to like the brass band which blared away in every conceivable discord near the red hotel, past which we hurried, buying, to keep up the spirit of the thing, sixpennyworth of gooseberries from an itinerant vendor with which to refresh ourselves as we walked slowly home. It was not till we returned from these uncongenial scenes that I think we entirely realized the joys of our little home, almost hidden away under its scrambling vine, and thoroughly appreciated our genial landlady so sympathetic about our sultry walk, so ready with her appetising little dinner. We felt almost as if we had been somewhere very far off (say India), and had returned to tell our adventures to an aged grandmother.

As day followed day at Winfer, one peculiarity in our surroundings began to prey upon us a little: with the exception of our smiling landlady, we felt ourselves to be without human interests of any sort. Our landlady, too, was very far from being communicative. Her whole thought was given up to her household cares. The quarter of acre of garden-ground, which contained her pig and her poultry; a civil, but absolutely silent husband; with the six-roomed house she kept so neat and trim, constituted her world. In vain we questioned her concerning the neighbouring villages, or the local magnates. "I may have heard the name, but I don't rightly remember it," in her slow, gentle speech, is the almost invariable reply.

We began to have a burning desire to know something about the place through which we wandered like shadows.

Passing along Winfer's one street, over which hangs a sense of gloom and failure, we drop in to one of the chief shops, and are quite relieved to find a really chatty draper. He is ready to deluge us with information about Winfer, its past glories, before the works stopped. "It really was a pleasant little place then," he said, but words failed him to describe its present emptiness and impecuniosity. He paid only sixteen pounds a year for his "block o' building," "making up," as he says, "seventeen beds, with coach-house and stabling." It seems a small rental, but probably the capacity of Winfer to purchase drapery on any extensive scale is at least as moderate, so that it is likely that our chatty draper, with all his advantages, makes but a modest competence out of his trade. It may be well here to explain the reference made by him to "the works."

While from the breezy hill above Winfer we look westward on a region of ferny down, heathery common, or harvest-fields whitening in the autumn sun, we have but to walk through the village, and taking an easterly direction, cross three water-meadows, through which a black, sullen stream drags its way between pollard-willows, to find quite a different scene.

The name of the local genius of Winfer seems to have been in its prosperous days conveyed by a noun of multitude, "the works." In a loop of the sluggish, silent stream they still stand—tall chimneys, iron-roofed sheds, vast wheels, gaunt pipes, all dead, silent, rust-devoured. Never have I seen a place so fully deserving the appellation cut-throat.

A grey old church or baronial castle may fall into decay with a dignity that is only gently mournful; but these ruined works seemed to me to be the very epitome of despair. Whether they were haunted by the ghosts of potential energy, or whether the two hundred houses said to be standing vacant in Winfer on account of their grim silence cast their shadow over them, I know not; but I do know that the sombre plash of the dark water through the broken flood-gates, the heaps of cinder, the empty furnace with masses of pink willow-herb and mullein rioting over it, all filled me with more sorrowfulness than I ever felt in the presence of any outward sign of ruin.

A curious, weird old man, with naked chest showing under his old flannel jacket, wandered desolately among the silent wheels. He was civil and conversable, but very deaf.

"Ah yes; it was all going to pieces—they had used to have a man from Borton to oil it, but he never come now. Oh no, bless you! he wasn't ruined—not the owner wasn't."

Now this was most unsatisfactory, because we had woven many fond imaginings about the owner, whom we believed to have lived in a delicious old Tudor house falling into decay within a stone's-throw of the ruined works, and yet so sheltered within its immemorial elms as to be utterly unconscious of their grimy proximity.

Yes, we had decided all about the owner; we had conceived him as pacing restlessly up and down the broad gravel walk leading between grey-stone vases to the windows of the old ballroom. We had even decided that in one particular room with the window for ever open, and the blind still flapping to and fro, he put his poor head down on the ledger, and finally gave up the struggle.

We even disputed with warmth as to the probable words with which he gave up hope.

Arthur favoured the idea that he went rather out of his mind, and said (of the figures): "They won't come right!" But I was disinclined to take this view—probably because it would take so very much less than bankruptcy to cause me to come into that condition with respect to figures. So I leant to the belief that he said, "All over! all over!" or words to that effect. And now we found that all our sentiment had been wasted, and after pushing our enquiries further, our Winfer

authorities (being slow of speech) so confused us between two successive managers of entirely distinct attribute, and the real owner, a person of vast wealth to whom the silent works were of no special importance, that we found it quite impossible to devise a suitable occupant for the ruined mansion, and transferred our sympathy to the owners of those little Winfer tenements, who, falling under the shadow of these ghastly works, were forced to wander forth, "grieving so," as the draper told us, "for their little bits of gardens."

This dismal place had, for a time, quite a fascination for us, but we felt it to be a morbid taste, and we soon exhausted it, and turned our steps daily in an easterly direction, over the open common, or else made our way amid the balmy pine-woods to the more distant hills beyond. On and on we wandered, the soft-eyed cows looking on as we passed with placid, unsurprised gaze, and an occasional peasant, lifting his head to look after us with much the same expression, but allowing us to "gang our own gait" without let or hindrance.

It was to the end just the merest suspicion of a failing that no man, or woman either, at Winfer, showed much inclination to say anything at all to us. They took everything, their labour, their pleasure, their visitors, with a curious quietude, quite unlike the vociferous restlessness of a town. I noticed this specially on one glorious evening, as we walked home through a wide harvest-field. The labourers were heaving the sheaves from the piled waggon to the rick; hardly a word was spoken, you heard only the dry swish of the straw as it was flung upwards, and its whispering rustle as the labourer on the rick tossed it in order with his fork. There were quite a number of workers; it was the last load of a rich, splendid crop, but the labourers worked on and on in silence.

I feel that I have said enough now of the many graces of Winfer, and must hasten on to what is intended to be the cream and essence of the matter, the expense of the expedition.

On the sorrowful day of our departure our landlady produced her bill. Rooms, seven shillings and sixpence; milk, one shilling and fourpence; lights, sixpence; two apple-pies, eightpence; eggs, two shillings; vegetables, one shilling and sixpence. Besides these items, we owed our grocer six shillings and sixpence for bread, butter, jam, sugar, tea, etc., etc.

For the rest, some excellent mutton had cost us three shillings and ninepence, and a fragment of pork one shilling and fourpence, while on one occasion we had rushed into the extravagance of a fowl, which, to our despair, our landlady brought in alive, and clucking softly, with its bright black eyes and soft feathers. It was as much as we could do not to repudiate the bargain; or to sacrifice the two shillings rather than avail ourselves of such a dreadfully lively dinner.

Our expenses altogether reached the following total: Landlady's bill, thirteen shillings and sixpence; meat, fowl, etc., seven shillings and a penny; grocer, six shillings and sixpence; travelling expenses, eight shillings and sixpence, or a total of one pound fifteen shillings and sevenpence, which is not an extravagant amount to represent the entire expenses of three hungry souls for a week.

I have little more to tell. We determined on leaving Winfer to walk the four miles to the Stourcome Station, entrusting our boxes to the carrier, who vowed that we should find them ready to take with us to Bourton by the 1.25 train.

"Put not your trust in carriers!" The walk along the dusty road was shadeless and arid, and Stourcome itself seemed to brood beneath a general sense of smoke and sulphur, under the influence of which our spirits fell to zero. We were all in readiness to start by the 1.25 train, but vainly did we strain our eyes across the station-yard for that lumbering, tilted vehicle with its sleepy brown horse. The train glided off without us, and once more the heavy airs of Stourcome loomed over us like a spell, and the burning pavement scorched our tired feet.

In about half an hour, crawling sadly down the High Street, came the familiar vehicle. The driver saw us from afar, and deprecated our just wrath with an energy quite foreign to Winfer habits.

Calling Heaven to witness as to his innocence, he appealed with burning words to a young female, who occupied in solitary state the narrow ledge beneath the tilt.

She was a very dreadful young person—from the cheap lace on her tawdry parasol to the curly toe of her brown boot she was dreadful, and yet, I think, she regarded us, dusty and travel-stained as we doubtless were, with some scorn.

She sat with her crinollette somewhat involved in a hamper of garden-produce, and several live fowls clucking at her ankles,

but there was a dignity about her, and she would only respond to the driver's asseverations with a frigid bow.

"Did he not wait 'arf an hour—better nor 'arf an hour—for a Miss Smith? She'd booked her place and was to come from The Woodlands; he sent his boy to look after her, better nor a mile, and she never come, and he never saw such a start—never! The young lady, she'll tell you it's all true, mum!"

To all this, the frigid one motioned a chill assent, and then, frantically protesting that our luggage should be at the station by two, the carrier jolted on his way.

This time he did not fail us; the cart, with the Roman-nosed horse, drove into the station on the stroke of two—a specially timely arrival, as the Bourton train did not leave till three. But if the excitement of the driver had astonished me in the High Street, at the station he seemed almost beside himself.

Clutching me wildly by the arm, he cried:

"Now, see here; did you ever know of such a start! You just look 'ere!"

And, having arrested my attention, he pointed to the crinolleted one, now calmly surveying her luggage, and exclaimed:

"She's Miss Smith! She as heard me a calling, and a sending, and a fussing, setting up under the tilt, and never saying no mortal word for over 'arf an hour! She's Miss Smith! and never did she own to her name till I got her down this moment agin the station-gates! Yah!" His contempt was beyond words, and as he lumbered down the stony yard, I heard him declaiming faintly to the last, that "never—no, never, had he known of such a start!"

I was but feebly irritated, and not at all interested. Perhaps the iron (Stourcome's chief industry) had entered into my soul, or my residence in Winfer had given me the bovine introspective ways of its inhabitants; at any rate I found myself capable of a prolonged contemplation of one particular panel in one particular door to an extent that I believe would have driven me frantic a week before, but which now shortened the hour's delay amazingly, and gave me quite a softened feeling towards Miss Smith, who might, I thought, have taken a more extended holiday than I had done, which might have caused a still more complete suspension of the intellectual faculties.

The whole experiment of our trip we

decided to be a most entire success. It certainly proves that impecunious persons may still find happy hunting-grounds even in overcrowded England if they will strike out an original line, and not insist on following the multitude to Welsh coast-towns, or Yorkshire boarding-houses.

There are still in the unfrequented nooks of rural England many pleasant places to be found undemoralised by summer visitors, and with too much simplicity to know how to attract them.

In these, the wife of the clergyman can, if energetic and kindly, do much towards inciting the inhabitants to deck their little rooms in a sufficiently comfortable style to attract homely visitors.

It was thus that the first impetus had been given towards lodging-letting on at all an extended scale at Winfer.

The gains, however small they may appear to be, will furnish to the peasant householders many comforts for winter days, some security against bad times. Indeed, it has struck me very forcibly that a more legitimate line for the exercise of charity could hardly be devised than to assist the cottagers of a place like Winfer—fallen, suddenly and undeservedly, under the shade of failure and distress—to furnish a room or two for the entertainment of summer visitors. The charity would reflect almost as warmly on the fortunes of tired workers from towns, who, for a few shillings a week, might, at least once in the summer, breathe for a space real country air.

And it is absolutely certain that the circulation of new thought between the restless intelligence of the town, and the stolid gentleness of the country, could hardly fail to be beneficial to both.

"MY LADY DAFFODIL."

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

A STREAM, fringed by tall grasses and daffodils, ran along the centre of the narrow valley.

A tiny stream, as far as width was concerned, for at this part it was but a step to cross it, but gifted by the rapid incline of its bed with a strength and activity sufficient to turn the wheel of a mill at the farther end of the valley. Even here its mimic roar could be heard as it rumbled into the mill-race, shut out from view by the trees that surrounded the mill. The ripple and rush of the water was the only sound in the valley, in which the

daylight, this spring evening, was still lingering, as if in acknowledgment of the fact that it could alight on no fairer things than the golden flowers, the thick carpet of fern-mosses, the trees, already nearly clothed in their summer raiment.

The day had been perfect, warm as summer, and the still evening air was sweet with all the spring scents that their great lord, the sun, had freed from mosses, and flowers, and rich brown earth.

Two young men who had entered the valley half an hour before, scrambling down the steep hill-side with considerable difficulty, owing to the thickness and tallness of brambles and gorse, and carrying away, as a remembrance of this new way of entering the valley, several unpleasant scratches, appreciated the beauty in their different ways.

One, after a characteristic exclamation, "By Jove!" drew out a sketch-book, and began making a rather indifferent sketch of the whole, from his point of view, as he sat on the trunk of a fallen tree close to the stream. His companion, sitting by him, his face turned the other way, towards the stream itself, had gathered one of the daffodils, from the profusion of which flower the valley had gained its name, and after looking round him for a few minutes, without a word, sat down, gazing at the golden-cupped flower as if he acknowledged the mystery of its existence, and was trying to solve it.

But he gained no help from the flower itself, and suddenly, with a slight gesture rather at variance with a certain quiet coldness that was the usual expression of his face, he tossed the daffodil into the rushing stream.

The other man, absorbed as he was in his work, was aroused by the incongruity of the movement with his friend's ordinary manner.

"What's up?" he asked, half turning round to look. "Tired of being here? Why don't you take advantage of your opportunities? It often surprises me that you aren't more bored than you are. Whenever we get to any decent sort of a place, you just sit down for half an hour, without taking any interest in anything, and then get up and want to go on farther. Why don't you try and make a few sketches? Did you ever see anything more perfect than the valley to-night?"

The young man made a sweeping gesture with his brush, and then, with a certain air of self-satisfaction, so alight that

only a person most intimately acquainted with his life and habits of thought could have detected it, touched up a tree in his sketch.

His friend was, apparently, one of those privileged people, for there was a faint smile in his eyes as he replied :

"It's just because it is so beautiful that I don't——"

"Make a mess of it like myself," finished the other, in no ways offended by the implied sarcasm. "But surely it is better to do your best to carry away some recollection of such a jolly place, than to tear up those unfortunate flowers by the roots. You can study botany at home."

"Certainly it is better—if you can't remember such perfect beauty without a bad drawing to recall it to you."

"You shut up, Arnot! Ill-natured sarcasm is out of place in the peace and quiet of an evening like this. I am not sure if it isn't too still even to work. It is the end of the day, and we ought to be resting." And the young man let his sketch-book fall, and, raising his arms to the back of his head, gazed before him with a dreamy look in his eyes. Arnot made no reply, but his friend's remark about the flower seemed to set him thinking again. He turned back to the stream, and looked down its current.

The daffodil had been caught by some of the stones in its bed, and was now stirring backwards and forwards in the eddy, sometimes striking against the hard stones, sometimes freeing itself, only to be re-caught and carried back again to be beaten on the mimic reef.

A curious look came into Arnot's eyes as he watched it. After a moment he rose, and strolling down to the imprisoned flower, he freed it with an odd kind of gentleness, and dropping it again into clear water, he stood for another second looking after it, as, borne by the stream, it was swept on towards the mill-race. As he joined his friend again, something of the shadow that had come into his own eyes seemed reflected in the face of the other.

"She is late to-night. It is a shame how people take advantage of the poor. I suppose some old curmudgeon has made her stay to put an extra frill on her gown, thinking that the miserable pittance of eightpence is ample payment for the use of a fellow-creature's body, soul, and spirit. Just imagine, she only gets eightpence for working from seven in

the morning to seven in the evening, Miss Green told me. They employ her, too, for the same shameless sum, I suppose."

"One shilling and sixpence! In this part of the world, I suppose, that is the usual pay for a sempstress!"

"A sempstress! I wish to goodness, Arnot, you wouldn't use that ugly name," exclaimed the other irritably; "you spoil the romance of everything—you know we agreed not to use so prosaic a title."

He laughed as if amused at his own impatience, but there was a faint note of consciousness in the laugh.

"I'm not sure but that we don't do better by keeping to the plain facts. She is a sempstress, and not——"

"My Lady Daffodil!" The name fell with an odd lingering of tones, and the dreamy light came back into the young man's eyes. "My Lady Daffodil; it is a lovely name, and suits her perfectly."

"It is a foolish name. We had better take it away from her at once. We will call her Miss Dorey—I believe that is her name, is not it?—not my Lady Daffodil."

The other young man moved restlessly, then he laughed a short, constrained laugh.

"What on earth's the matter with you, Arnot? You are so cynical to-day. Do the editors want you back at once, and you are giving vent to your rage in this fashion?"

"No; they weren't in a hurry—at least, not more than usual. Didn't you get a letter from home this morning? Does not your mother wonder what you are doing here so long?"

"My mother does not interfere with my plans," said the other with a faint touch of haughtiness which the apparent simplicity of the question scarcely seemed to justify; "I——" But the sentence was interrupted. "Here she comes—look!"

Both men turned their faces towards a little wicker-gate that opened into the valley, at the opposite side to that of the mill. A girl was just coming through it. Without waiting to finish his sentence the young man went forward, rather quickly, to meet her.

Arnot did not move from the spot where he stood.

CHAPTER II

A MONTH before Eric Weldon had arrived at Les Vaux with his friend, Wilfred Arnot. The former was a young man possessed of three hundred pounds a year of his own, and therefore was not compelled to take any kind of employment that

offered itself, unless it suited him. He was now twenty-five, and had not yet succeeded in finding an appointment suitable in every way to his tastes and habits, and could take a holiday when he wished. In fact, up till now, his life had been one continual holiday, a state of affairs that one or two people who had his welfare honestly to heart scarcely thought beneficial to his nature. His friend was differently situated, his lot not being cast in places where food and raiment were to be had without the working for them. He was obliged to take his holidays when he could get them. Weldon generally managed to accompany his friend during the short time he was free from his work, and always considered these trips together as the most genuine pleasures in his own holiday life. They had left London together—where Eric Weldon lived at home with his mother and sister, who had much to answer for with regard to his idleness, and Arnot in lodgings by himself—and had made their way south. They had wandered about the island for some days, Weldon sketching, Arnot silently gathering up in his mind glimpses of sunny blue seas, of great tumbled masses of rock and flashes of white foam, of breaths of salt, sweet breezes, all to be unconsciously reproduced later in his dingy London rooms for the benefit of the papers on which he gained his living, whether in fresh, strong articles, or sweet song, tinged with quaint pathos and tender longings.

One evening, three weeks ago, they were returning from one of these rambles, when a sharp turn of a valley brought them suddenly to a mill.

Grey and still, with not a sign of life about it, there was something curiously weird about the building, and Weldon's sensitive nature was affected immediately by it. The sound of the water as it tumbled over the mill-race, and the silent whirl of the great wheel, added to the strangeness of the effect. It seemed as if, at one time—long ago—the miller had been at work; and then, one day, some spell had fallen on the place, and, while his life had been forced into silence, the great wheel had been allowed to continue its work, as if in mockery of man's boasted mastership and power.

After a moment's inspection, Eric, as usual, rapidly made a sketch of the place, but before he finished it, the door of the mill opened. It was not totally given over to greyness and desolation.

Both young men looked up quickly, and when they looked they could not again withdraw their eyes.

A girl, about eighteen or nineteen, stood in the doorway. The yellow light of the sun fell full on her face and hair, changing the latter into a kind of halo of red-gold. A blue cotton dress, fitting perfectly to her figure, fell just to her ankles, which, with the little feet in neat leather shoes, left nothing to be desired in size and form. She held her hat in one hand, and in the other a large canoe-shaped basket full of daffodils.

"By Jove!" muttered Weldon under his breath.

For some unaccountable reason, the familiar exclamation jarred upon Arnot, and an impatient shadow crossed his face. Strangely enough it was the first time his friend's nature, so keenly sensitive to all that was beautiful, had irritated him. Before, this impressionable temperament had only amused him—at least, when it had not occasionally raised a little fear that one day or another it would bring trouble upon the man he held his friend.

The girl flushed as she caught sight of the two men, and the slight sign of confusion awakened the latter to the fact that they were behaving in anything but a polite and intelligent fashion.

They immediately withdrew their eyes. Weldon's fixing themselves on his boots, and Arnot's on the tall-stick of a cabbage-stump, peering over the grey wall of a small enclosure to the right of the mill.

The girl had apparently recovered herself, for she came on towards them, walking with a light, quick step. But just as she stepped out into the lane, the sound of a dog's joyous barking made itself heard, and the next second, a huge mastiff leaped over the grey-stone wall, and bounded towards the girl.

In its excitement and delight at meeting her, it paid no attention to the half-laughing commands, but bounded and leaped round her, making springs at the basket, which she had raised over her head.

The next second, the basket was on the ground, with all its golden wealth of flowers scattered round her feet. The dog, in one of its bounds, had struck her upraised arm.

"Oh, Rolf, you naughty dog! See what you have done!" exclaimed the girl, in pretended dismay, as she bent to gather them up again.

Weldon, thrusting his paper and pencil

into his pocket, dashed to her aid, and in a minute or two the flowers were gathered up, and the girl, with a shy "Thank you," half blushing, half smiling, had disappeared round the curve of the lane, the dog that had caused the mischief rushing wildly about her.

"That's a fine dog," said Weldon, returning to Arnot, who had not assisted with the flowers. "I wonder if it belongs to the mill."

"You might have asked," said the other meditatively. But there was such a total absence of sarcastic meaning in his face that Weldon, who had looked at him quickly, with a half-amused, half-shamefaced expression, checked the retort on his lips.

"Fancy, that lovely apparition coming out of such a dreary place!" he said instead.

"It was not to be expected—certainly. What do you think she looked most like, with those flowers scattered at her feet?"

At another time, Weldon would have been quick to discover the change of tone—faint though it was—in his friend's voice, softening its abrupt matter-of-factness into something gentler and more dreamy. But he was much too occupied himself at this moment with this new acquaintance.

"I can't say. Something awfully jolly."

"She looked like the lady of the flowers herself."

"My Lady Daffodil!" laughed the other.

"It suits her perfectly."

"And I dare say her name is Jane, or Ann, or perhaps Eliza. I think we had better be going; it is nearly dinner-time, and we have some distance to go."

Arnot had quite recovered from his poetical attack, and the two started off to return to the inn at which they were staying. But the next day Weldon expressed a desire to make some more sketches of the place they had visited the day before, and after a little discussion they decided upon making it their headquarters for a week. The week glided into two, then into three, and still the two friends stayed on at the inn situated about a mile distant from the mill.

Weldon made a great many sketches of the mill itself; a great many more than even Arnot suspected—at least, the latter never betrayed any knowledge of the number. The former had grown into a habit of wandering off alone, and after being absent an hour or two, on his return would be only able to give a vague account of his rambles.

Sometimes he had seen "My Lady Daffodil," and spoken a little to her. So he would tell Arnot, occasionally, without the latter asking the question; but as Arnot rarely did ask it, and as, after that first day, he had apparently lost all interest in the fair apparition of the mill, Weldon grew gradually into the habit of not mentioning her either.

Sometimes the two men met her together as she returned from her work in the town, or walked in the valley, and even then, in the short conversations they would have together, it was always Weldon who held the chief part.

After that informal introduction over the scattered basket of flowers, Estelle Dorey permitted the slight acquaintance to continue between them, with the frank, simple acceptance of her class and education. She apparently saw nothing incongruous nor to offend in exchanging a few simple phrases with the men, of whom she certainly knew nothing, save that they were always courteous and well-bred, treating her with the most perfect respect. She led a very lonely life out there in the valley, they discovered, with her old grandfather, who, for some unexplained reason, had never allowed her to make friends with anyone of her own class. Her hard day's work, when she could get employment at some lady's house, was a relief to her from the silence and monotony of her life at the mill, where her grandfather scarcely spoke to her from morning till night. He was very good to her, and was the only relation she had ever known, but he had brought her up under so strict a surveillance—almost suspicious at times, it seemed to her—that the comparative freedom of a day's work was hailed with a sense of pleasure which the two young men, Weldon particularly, who had taken so singular a dislike to this, her legitimate way of earning her bread as a daughter of the working-classes, could not understand.

"Why can't that old curmudgeon of a grandfather keep her at home? They are all such a miserly, grasping lot here," he would exclaim sometimes to his friend, after some unconscious disclosure on the part of Estelle of her laborious life, of which the girl herself never complained. Indeed, she was evidently so perfectly free from the feeling that prompted Weldon to look upon her honest labour as a degradation, that it made even him ashamed of giving vent to his ideas to her, herself.

Estelle did not stay to say much to him

this evening in the daffodil valley. She wished them good-night rather hurriedly, and, with an evident wish to be alone, walked on towards the mill. Weldon was intensely disappointed, and showed it. He thought he must have said something to offend her, and discussed the matter all the way back to their inn. But Arnot, whose quiet eyes seemed always watching, had noticed a certain shyness and want of ease in her manner as she came up to them. It was not anything that Weldon had said during the brief interview that had disturbed her; it was something that had gone before; and as he thought silently over that something, his eyes grew darker and heavier. Several times, as they sat smoking together that night after dinner, he glanced across at his friend, whose knitted brows and moody expression showed that he, too, was not in his usual light-hearted mood.

Suddenly Arnot rose to his feet, and tossed away the end of his cigar.

"I'm going to bed, Weldon, but I'd like to say something before I go. We must leave this place to-morrow. It is not fair to yourself—nor to Miss Dorey."

If he had struck the young man a blow, he could not have brought the hot blood quicker and redder into his face.

"What do you mean?" he asked in short, sharp tones, looking up at Arnot as he stood near the door, his hand on the handle.

"Don't be a fool! You can see. We needn't be villains, if we have acted like idiots."

The door fell to with a sharp sound, as Arnot stepped out from the room into the passage beyond.

For a long time the other sat there without stirring, unless for an occasional restless movement, as if pained or harassed by the thoughts that occupied his mind.

"He's right. We must go. Good Heavens! fancy it coming to this!" he said as he rose at last, his face pale, and he shivered as if the chill of the spring night had touched him. "I'll just see her to-morrow, to say good-bye. It won't matter. What he meant about her was madness, of course. There is no fear for her. I have never said a word to make her think of me. Thank Heaven for that!"

Weldon did not see Arnot next morning. He found when he came down, having slept late, after a troubled, restless night, that the latter had already breakfasted and gone out.

For the first time in his life Eric Weldon was glad not to meet the eyes of his friend.

He knew, as if he saw them looking at him now, how utterly they would condemn what he was going to do. Yet he must see her once again. It would not hurt her—only him. Had not he already submitted to sacrifice himself as he had never done before, in all his careless, pleasure-loving life? Had not he come through this temptation scathless, when a word would have betrayed his love, and gained some recognition from her, for, in spite of all his arguments, some faint inner consciousness echoed the significant meaning of Arnot's words? Yet he had still always been true to herself—to him.

Of course, he could not marry her—a plain, working girl. The very thought of the aristocratic scorn of his mother and sisters, if he presented her to them as their new relative, made him turn cold in sympathy for the girl as well as for himself. He knew quite well how little her beauty would weigh against her want of training in the manners and graces of the world they lived in. It would not suffice that she was fairly well educated, that she was intelligent above the average, appreciative and sympathetic—a slip of grammar, a solecism, would make all this of no account. The very fact of their acquaintance having been made in so irregular a fashion would suffice to raise a prejudice, almost impossible to remove, in the mind of his mother, who made her gods of "appearances."

He could see the folly of ever expecting her to countenance the madness of a marriage in that letter of hers alluded to by Arnot. Someone had written to her—Miss Green, he suspected, she being a friend of his mother's—and raised her alarm, by mentioning the presence of a rustic beauty near the point of his present headquarters.

Why, he could not even afford to gratify his heart's desire. The obstacles to the union were as prosaic as that. His income was barely sufficient for his own wants, living at home as he did, and he knew by experience how hard it was to find any employment by which he would like to add to it. No, it was all folly—all madness. He would see her once more. He must—human self-sacrifice had its bounds—but it should be to say good-bye.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXXV. FAMILY COUNCILS.

"It is such a stiff letter; it tells one nothing," said Helen Goodall sorrowfully. "Only just saying that she is very weak, and the baby is delicate. And in my last letter I begged her so to tell me more about herself! All her letters since Christmas have been short and shakily written—she has been ill, and Combe has been ill, and they have had a great deal of anxiety. And then for several mails nothing at all; and then this scrap from Gerald Fane, just to announce the baby. John says she has brought it all on herself, and that I think about her too much," said Helen with tears in her eyes. "Of course she behaved like a dear beautiful old goose, as she always was; but you and I can't forget our old Theo because of that, Hugh. I am sure I was cross enough at first to please anybody."

Hugh North sighed.

"She has not written to me for months," he said, "except once, in the spring, about selling out some money. I know how it is. All her money has been poured into that diamond-mine. No one had any control over it but herself, and there were no settlements. So nobody is to be blamed, I suppose."

"People sometimes make great fortunes out there, don't they?" said Helen.

"Gerald Fane won't," said her cousin. "Of course, though, we don't know. People are silent for different reasons. They may be getting so rich that they can afford to cut their relations."

"Is that like Theo?" said Helen, shaking her head.

"It is not like either of them, I believe," said Hugh.

He had arrived from Scotland that September day, on his way back from a month's shooting with his friend Harry Campbell. He and Helen were now strolling about the Woodcote garden before dinner, waiting for John to come in. A small nursery cavalcade was to be seen in the distance—Master Goodall, fat and sleepy, in his perambulator; his little sister of two months old in her nurse's arms.

Helen herself was not changed at all; she looked as soft and pretty as ever, and was, perhaps, rather more lazy in her movements.

Hugh looked thin and worn, and much older; he was burnt by the long, hot summer, and his hair had a tinge of grey at the temples.

The second post that day had brought Gerald's short, cool letter, telling Mrs. Goodall of the birth of his son. His wife wished them to hear of it, he said; she would write herself when she was stronger.

All that evening Helen could talk of nothing but Theo. Hugh was in perfect sympathy with her. John was rather dry at first; he had been very angry last summer with what he thought Theo's heartless ingratitude, as well as madness; but even he could not help listening with interest to the talk of the cousins.

Theo had never said much in her letters about her life at Kimberley, yet Hugh was perfectly informed on the subject; he had read everything, had picked up every scrap of information about South Africa in general and the Diamond Fields in particular. All this was solely for his own satisfaction; but now he became suddenly quite a talkative man, and told Nell a hundred things that she wanted to know.

"Poor old fellow! it's quite touching, isn't it?" said Mrs. Goodall that night to her husband.

"I am uncommonly amused by the way he tries to make the best of it all," said John. "He won't even let me say that Theo did a foolish thing."

"He always thought her perfection, and he always will," said Helen. "He and I and Uncle Henry were the only people who ever understood Theo."

"What about her husband?"

"I know nothing about him."

"Well, you are very contemptuous; but I always rather liked poor Fane," said John thoughtfully. "Mind you, he was the last man to be weighed down with the anxiety of a wife and children."

"I wish he was a bachelor again with all my heart," said Helen.

Hugh North went back to London, and, having written a short letter of congratulation to Theo, tried to find some interest in his daily life and work; but the effort was a failure. He felt misanthropic; he was both mentally and physically unwell, and suspected that he had overwalked himself in Scotland. The thought of Theo haunted him in a way that was becoming almost terrible to this calm, strong man.

If Helen was anxious and unhappy about her, what was he? If Helen suspected that things were going wrong, that illness and trouble had come to Theo, of which she told them little or nothing; and if he in his heart agreed with Helen, if his fears went even beyond hers, what could he do, what was his duty as Theo's most faithful friend? She had not kept her promise of writing to him, and telling him everything, but perhaps he ought not to wonder at that.

Then sometimes he told himself that he was a morbid fool, and that most likely Theo was too happy to remember him at all. Why should she want him? She had her husband, who, of course, was enough for her. From her earliest days, if Theo had one creature she loved, she wanted nothing more. Hugh tried to think of her faults; he wished to convince himself that she was fickle, and selfish, and indifferent, and forgetful; then he gave up the absurd attempt suddenly, and his anxiety about her became more feverish than ever. It was too horrid to hear nothing, to be in this deep ignorance of anything but the bare facts of her life.

And then one day, walking in London, he found himself near Lady Redcliff's house, and it struck him as possible that

Theo might have written to her grandmother.

He disliked Lady Redcliff heartily, but Theo, he knew, had always been strangely fond of her; and though they had quarrelled, he thought it not unlikely that they might write to each other now. The chance was not to be thrown away.

He went to the house, and as he stood at the door, he remembered the last time he had been there—that day when Theo sent him away. He bore her no malice for that, as she knew very well; but the recollection added a little extra stiffness and gravity to his manner when the butler took him upstairs, and he found himself walking into the old drawing-room. He could not help giving a glance at the window where Theo used to sit, where she got up to receive him with her faint, weary, absent smile.

Some girl was there now; he did not at first see who it was, but not Theo—never again. Theo, he thought, with a cold weight at his heart, and then he gravely shook hands with Lady Redcliff.

"This is funny! Who told you to come?" she said, looking at him sharply.

There she sat in her great chair, black cap and all, her eyes as bright as ever; the year and a half—or ten years, was it?—had not altered her in the least. Hugh, with all his coolness, was slightly confused by his reception. But as Lady Redcliff did not look savage, he smiled a little, and answered:

"I ought to have called long ago, but I have been out of town lately, and——"

"Don't apologise; I did not expect to see you," said Lady Redcliff. "Why have you come now? To enquire after Theo?"

"Well, I thought it possible that you might have heard from her. I suppose you know——"

"Miss Fane has been telling me that she has a nephew, and that I am a great-grandmother. She expected me to be pleased," said Lady Redcliff. "Do you know Miss Fane?"

"I beg your pardon—the room is dark, and I never thought of finding you here," said Hugh, turning to Ada, who rose up smiling from Theo's corner, though her eyes were full of tears.

On the table, between her and Lady Redcliff, some sheets of a foreign letter were lying. Hugh's eyes fell on them, and then he looked quickly again at Ada.

"News from Africa?" he said, half under his breath.

"This bold child has ventured into the witch's cave," said Lady Redcliff in her most cheerful tones, "to bring a ridiculous rigmarole of a letter that came from her brother yesterday. What she did it for, I can't conceive, as she knows that Theo and I quarrelled mortally. I was just telling her that she ought to have gone to you."

"Please, Captain North, will you read the letter," said Ada, pushing it towards him, "and tell me if there is anything I can do?"

"Read it to us," said Lady Redcliff. "This girl does nothing but choke, and I can't pretend to read Mr. Fane's writing on that detestable paper."

Hugh struggled through the letter as clearly as he could. It did not read well; Gerald had written it in great trouble of mind, and under circumstances, poor fellow, that must have been very confusing. All the first part was a story of money difficulties; nearly all their capital was gone, thrown away in working that claim of his, which in all these months had never even begun to pay its expenses. Ill-luck had been with him from first to last; his Kafirs, no doubt, had robbed him, though nothing could be proved. Bills were tremendous, and could only be paid by sacrificing more capital. Doctor's bills were the most trying. Theo had been miserably out of health ever since the winter, with constant returns of fever; she had been away to the Vaal River, but the change had done her very little good. She was always nursing other people and fussing after them. Combe had been ill, too; he had been ill himself, and, if his friend Stirling had not helped him, his affairs would quite have gone to smash. He believed that Theo ought to go home to England, but if there was no other reason against it, he did not see how they could possibly afford the journey. And now there was the baby, too.

"Everybody is awfully kind," wrote Gerald, "and Combe has worked herself to death. At first I know they all thought Theo would not get over it, but she told me she would, and really it would be too awful to die here. This is the most dreadful place on the surface of the earth, and I think I should have gone mad long ago, if it had not been for Theo. If she dies, she knows what will be the end of it. And all the time luck may change any day, and one may find a big stone or two that will set everything right. It seems foolish to sell the claim when that may happen to-morrow. We must try to

hold on a little longer. The clergyman here is a nice fellow. We had the baby baptised at once, because he was so small, and called him after me—at least, his name is Gerald Hugh, according to Theo's wish. He is such a funny little chap, red all over. I am holding him at this moment, while Combe attends to Theo. He clenches his little fist, and looks very grave over it all. They say he is weakly; no wonder, I'm sure; and he thinks he might have come into a pleasanter world, I know, for he spends most of his time crying. I wrote to tell Mrs. Goodall of his birth, as Theo thought her people ought to know, and I believe by-and-by she means to write to Lady Redcliff, whom she always seems to have tremendous faith in——"

Here Hugh broke off suddenly, and Lady Redcliff laughed. Ada held out her hand eagerly, and took the letter; there were only a few words more. For a minute or two nobody spoke; then the girl looked at Hugh, colouring scarlet, and said, with a quiver in her voice:

"Of course you know I am perfectly helpless, and poor Gerald sent me some money in this letter. I have asked Mrs. Keene, where I live, to find me something to do. I would have done it long ago, but Gerald never told me of any difficulties. I can do nothing for him—but can't you do something for Theo? Can't we get them home to England?"

"We will," said Hugh very quietly.

"Oh, thank you—thank you!" cried Ada, and she hid her face, and burst into tears.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Lady Redcliff, with a sharp slap on the arm of her chair. "This is unbearable. If you can't control yourself, go into the next room at once. It is quite enough to hear of a squalling baby in Africa."

Ada quieted herself suddenly, her blue eyes fixed on the old lady in open astonishment. Hugh could hardly help smiling.

"Yes; sit in the corner and be quiet," said Lady Redcliff. "As to you, Captain North, you are as foolish as this girl. What do you mean by saying that you will bring these fools home to England? They must take the consequences of their folly."

"I don't think so," said Hugh in his gravest manner.

"But I do. Is it not very true, what the idiot says in his letter, that luck may turn any day, and he may be a rich man? What an amusing sort of trade it must be! Gambling, and nothing else." ogle

"Theo can't stay there," said Hugh. "Her health will be entirely ruined."

"Don't you suppose she knew that before she went? I warned her of everything that would happen to her. She didn't care. She gave up health, position, prospects, everything in the world, even to her grandmother and her cousins, unnatural creature, for the sake of that man, simply, as I told her, because he had handsome eyes. Yes, Miss Fane—you need not mind my saying so. Yours are not at all like them."

"She may have given up her relations," said Hugh; "but they have not given up her. Something must be done."

"Speak for yourself, please," said Lady Redcliff. "What are you going to do? You can't take Theo away from her husband. She wouldn't come."

"I must think," said Hugh, looking down. He feared and hated Lady Redcliff; he was very unhappy, deeply in earnest, and her sharpness did not amuse him. He felt that the next moment she might tell his dearest secret, if she knew it, to Ada Fane and all the world; and he had a suspicion that she did know it, from the mischievous tone of her last words, and the flash of her eyes that accompanied them. "If we could find something for Mr. Fane to do in England," he said presently, looking across at Ada, with a consciousness that Lady Redcliff was laughing at him.

"He thought it was impossible to find anything," sighed Ada. "But perhaps you could——"

Hugh looked down at his hat, frowning dismally. It struck him that he had better go away and think it over. This heartless old woman only made everything seem more dreadful, and the poor girl could not possibly be any help. He was just going to get up and say good-bye to them both for the present, when Lady Redcliff asked suddenly:

"Are you ill, Captain North?"

"Perfectly well, thank you," Hugh answered stiffly.

"That's a pity," said Lady Redcliff. "If you were as ill as you look, you might get sick-leave, and make a little tour on the continent of Africa, by way of going to a healthy place."

Hugh lifted his eyes and looked Lady Redcliff straight in the face. She always had a mocking air, of course, but somehow just then she did not look quite so disagreeable as usual.

"What good could I do?" he said. "I

am not well. I believe I could get an extension of leave if I asked for it. But should I be of any use to Theo if I went out now?"

"You would like to see her!" said Lady Redcliff, with another flash of mischief; but before he had time to make any answer, she looked at Ada and said: "My dear, I think you had better go away now. Leave your letter with me, if you don't mind. I will send for you when I want you again—to-morrow or next day. Now I want to talk to Captain North alone."

She spoke quite kindly and civilly, and Ada, of course, at once obeyed. When she was gone Lady Redcliff began to talk to Hugh in earnest.

"You and I have never been friends," she said. "I always disliked your family; you are good people, most of you, and I detest good people. Theo and I used to quarrel about you. What a temper she had, to be sure! I wonder if there is any of it left now."

"I hope so," said Hugh drearily; he did not much care whether Lady Redcliff liked him or not.

"Yes, she used to stand up for you," the grandmother went on, "and her eyes used to be all on fire when I called you names. Well, my poor Theo! Cousins are dangerous people, Captain North, and even now, in spite of all these misfortunes, I would rather she had married Gerald Fane."

"Do you know, Lady Redcliff, you are saying rather extraordinary things?" said Hugh, starting up. "I may as well go. This African matter wants thinking about."

"Don't be angry, my friend," said Lady Redcliff. "I was not blind if Theo was, and you may be sure she never told me anything."

Hugh turned white, and walked across to the window.

"Don't go back to that old story now," he said hastily. "Let me do something now. What shall I do? What were you going to say? I thought you had some plan in your head."

"We will come to that by-and-by," said Lady Redcliff. "The first question is, will you go to this dreadful place? Somebody must go, and I suppose I am rather too old."

"Of course I'll go," said Hugh eagerly; "there is not much doubt of my managing that, I think."

"Very well, only don't get the fever," said Lady Redcliff; "and understand

this, you are going as a messenger from me."

"I don't quite understand."

"Why, you foolish man," she said very impatiently, "what right have you to go out there and interfere in the affairs of these Fanes, and insist on putting an end to all that diamond-digging rubbish, and bringing them home in spite of themselves—what right have you? Less than none, I think, and so will Theo. Will she take money from you for her journey, for instance?"

"That is a detail," said Hugh.

"Rather an important one, you will find. No; you must go from me, and the sooner the better—next week."

"I will try what I can do," said Hugh quietly.

"Very well. Sit down; don't make me nervous; and read the early part of Gerald's letter again—not all that stuff about the baby."

At last, after a long consultation, and after telling him several old stories, among them that of her own early interest in the Fanes, Lady Redcliff allowed her ambassador to go. He walked away from the house with new life and spirit; a strange unreasoning happiness had taken possession of his mind. Theo could not forbid him to go to her; and then he remembered how she had asked him to go, and how he had answered like a fool that he preferred civilisation. Where was the desert now, the wilderness, where life was not worth living—in Africa, or in England?

STEPPERS.

AMONG the poorest of the "poor but honest" classes, Stepper is a household word—is familiar in their mouths, not as slang, but as a technical term. To those, however, who have no special acquaintance with the life of the poor, or knowledge of the infinite variety of means by which they eke out an existence on poor but honest lines, the word may sound vague, not to say meaningless. It might mean high-stepping horses, or step-dancers; or some particular type of pedestrians; or, again, it might be a generic term for those who, in slang phrase, "step it," for the all-sufficient reason (to them) that they are "wanted" by the police. The word might be used in any or all of these senses, but as a matter of fact it is not—

in the present connection, that is. The steppers of whose habits and customs we here propose to give some account, are door-step cleaners—known among themselves and their own class as steppers, and to their employers and others cognisant of their existence as step-girls. They are a humble folk, belonging to what it has become the fashion to speak of as the "outcast" classes. Though it is their misfortune and not their fault that such is the case, they are coarse and vulgar, while their occupation touches about the lowest point of the commonplace and the drudgical. Nevertheless, they constitute an interesting and characteristic, if not picturesque or romantic social study, seeing that their way of life not only affords a specific illustration of how the poor live, but may also be cited as among the curiosities of modern inter-social relations.

There can be good and bad work even in step-cleaning. Some steppers are known for their style and finish, for the manner in which they go with the grain, and bring up a smooth, regular, and unclouded surface. Others, though they expend as much labour and hearthstone, are noted for a streakiness and patchiness of handling that justly leads to their style being classed as slap-dashing.

But, at best, stepping cannot be ranked as one of the fine arts of domestic labour. It is cold, sloppy, tiresome work, such as most housewives would rather avoid; but it is less upon these material grounds than upon social considerations that the calling of the stepper is founded. As already intimated, the typical stepper is a vulgar personage, but professionally she is associated with gentility in its most acute form—the form which its admirers style the "poor but proud," and others, the "let us be genteel or die." With the genteel of this type, the question of step-cleaning is a crucial test of character. Once in a way, and under extraordinary circumstances, a lady of the class might clean her own doorsteps without suffering ostracism, but were she to make a regular practice of it, she would certainly lose caste. True, there will occasionally be found a housewife living in a neighbourhood claiming to be highly genteel, and of about the same social standing as the bulk of its inhabitants, who will habitually do her own stepping, sublimely regardless of what Mrs. Grundy may say; in which case it is generally to be remarked that the offender sets about her task in such coquettish

working attire, and with such a dainty touch, as to lend at least a comparative grace even to step-cleaning. Such a defier of conventionality is not one that can be accused of lack of spirit. The thing usually laid to her charge by Grundian critics is a want of proper pride, and on that ground she is tabooed by the genteel school. Some of the latter can afford to keep—when they can get them to stay with them—maids-of-all-work. With these, while they have servants, the great step question does not arise as a personal matter, but they are the sternest censors of any less fortunately situated sister in gentility, who but for what she regards as public opinion, might be disposed to dispense with the service of the professional steppers. In the direction of step-cleaning, the unwritten laws of gentility draw the line at polishing up the handle of the big front door. If done in gloves, and with a mincing, amateurish air, that much is passed as matter of taste. But from the door-handle to the door-step is held to be a step into the social deep of vulgarity.

Such is the situation that gives rise to the demand for steppers; and the demand is met by an ample supply. From the rookery district, which is generally to be found in the more densely populated suburban quarters of the metropolis, there issues forth about eight o'clock each weekday morning a little army of freelance steppers, which rapidly spreads itself over the poor but genteel neighbourhoods which usually lie at no great distance from the rookeries, though socially there is, and especially in the minds of the genteel folk, a great gulf fixed between them. The regiments of steppers are emphatically ragged ones. A few among the privates, who may by comparison be called methodical, carry coarse aprons with them, and mount them when they are "on the job." Beyond this there is no attempt at anything in the shape of a working uniform. On the contrary, their dress is fearfully and wonderfully un-uniform. So much so, indeed, that a stranger meeting them might well ask of them, as of the witches in *Macbeth*, "What are these, so wild in their attire, that look not like the inhabitants o' the earth, and yet are on't?" They are generally clad in a miscellaneous collection of cast-off finery, bestowed upon them by their genteel patrons, when the articles have become so dilapidated that the "ole clo'" merchants will not have them at any price. Whether these garments are a "tight squeeze," or "fit too much,"

is as much a matter of chance, as is their particular fashion, or the special extent of, or variations in, their loop'd and window'd raggedness. When to this it is added that the steppers are, during business hours, besmirched from head to heel with mud and hearthstone, it will easily be understood that they present a decidedly scarecrowish appearance. These, like worse things, however, would seem to be "nothing when you are used to them." The steppers are ragged, but not ashamed. They carry themselves with a defiant jauntiness and abandon that goes very well with the outré character of their dress. With their tatters fluttering free at every movement, they are, if not picturesque, at any rate unconventional figures, and to an artistic eye afford something of relief to the monotonous gentility with which they are brought into contact. To prosaic observers, their appearance, as persons to be employed about a household, would probably be suggestive of the adoption of a "counting the spoons" policy in dealing with them, especially as they are known to hail from doubtful districts. Such a notion, however, though excusable, and even natural under the circumstances, does the steppers less than justice. Though they live in neighbourhoods in which they must perforce mingle with shady characters, it is the poverty and not the will of their class which consents to their doing so. They are themselves passing honest, and that under conditions involving temptation. That in the long run honesty is their best policy, from a professional point of view, there is no doubt; but it is due to them to believe that their honesty has a better and deeper root than policy. It can be said, to their credit, that the better they are known the more they are trusted. Like many of their betters, they have a keen eye to the main chance, and it must be admitted that they have a Silas Wegg-like style and assurance in suggesting that gifts in kind will be acceptable. If they spot a "weal and hammer," say, they will intimate with ecstatic tone and look, that of all things else edible a "weal and ham" pie is the one in which they most delight—when they can get it; which is only when some kind-arted lady offers them a bit. They will pointedly inform you that "pore" mother is in desperate straits for these, "pore" father at a standstill for those, old things which—by a mere coincidence, of course—happen to be lying about your place. They incidentally mention that the

School Board is threatening to summon father because he ain't got no clothes for Johnny and Polly, and that Johnny is "the exact size" of your little boy, and Polly the very same age as your little girl. Lastly, though not leastly, they will boldly and plainly "spell" for presents of clothing for themselves. All this, however, is merely the stepper's form of opportunism. If their "spelling" fails to have the desired effect, they may—when out of hearing of the strong-minded or hard-fisted employers concerned—relieve their minds by indulging in a few curses, which, however, will be more loud than deep. That is the most and worst that happens even in an extreme case, and nobody seems a penny the worse. A sternly uneuphemistic critic might, of course, describe such "spelling" as is here spoken of as sturdy beggary, but if, in that sense, steppers will beg, they may be trusted not to steal. Their general honesty is testified to by the fact that numbers of their regular employers—including some of those who are not to be "had" by spelling—habitually entrust them with money to "go errands." In even the lowest callings there are probably touches of the romantic or dramatic, if we only knew of them, and in this errand-going connection the steppers are wont to hint that they could strange tales unfold—tales illustrative of the weaknesses of gentility, and its Spartan struggles to conceal the fact that it is struggling with the pinch of poverty. The steppers speak of the skeletons in the cupboards of gentility in no pharisaical or rejoicing spirit, and they generally stop short of mentioning names, or betraying the confidence impliedly if not expressly reposed in them by individuals. There is, therefore, no reason to suppose that their statements are more strange than true when they tell you that it is part of their professional experience to be sometimes employed to smuggle in spirits for ladies, who, though highly genteel, are privately addicted to "alcoholic stimulation;" or that they occasionally act as agents in pawnbroking transactions, or are sent to order hundredweights or even half-hundredweights of coals to be delivered "on the quiet," at back gates, and after dark. Or again, that they "step" for houses that are practically in a state of siege; to which admission can only be gained by signal knocks, the besieged residents being strictly on guard against attempted incursions upon the part of dunning rent or tax collectors, tradesmen,

and men who are anxious to be "in possession." Or once more, that they "know of" ladies who, though always "dressed up to the nines," and holding their heads up with the proudest of their neighbours, go dinnerless at home in order that their husbands may not have to go lunchless in the City, and who are sometimes in such pecuniary straits that they—the steppers—have to give them credit for the few pence which constitute the price of their daily labour. The steppers discourse of these things rather in a philosophical than a scandal-mongering strain—as proofs of the truth of the saying that all that glitters is not gold, and evidence that even the poorest have—negatively—something to be thankful for; that all the bitterness of poverty does not fall to the lot of the avowedly poor—the people, that is, who have no "appearance to keep up," who can afford to be poor but not ashamed.

The steppers, as a body, range from thirteen to eighteen years of age, and they are of necessity robust girls, for only those who are strong can stand the work for any length of time. The pursuit of their calling involves being out in the streets in all weather for hours at a stretch, while the actual work is, perhaps, the most trying in the whole range of household labour. Throughout the winter months the hands and arms of the steppers are chapped from finger-ends to elbows; and during the same period their having colds is more the rule than the exception, so that, in every way, their money is hardly earned. With regard to manners, it can scarcely be said of the steppers that they have none at all, but those they have are certainly more pronounced than desirable. Many people would be disposed to esteem robust as too mild a word whereby to characterise steppers, and it must be confessed that their style is decidedly masculine. They assume a manly gait and bearing, address each other as "mate," and by way of friendly greeting exchange, not good-day, but "What cheer!" They are habitually slangy in their discourse, and are not altogether guiltless of the use of the big, big D. They may be seen unabashedly performing break-down dances in the streets, partly on the plea of keeping themselves warm, but more from love of the thing; from fancying themselves steppers in the dancing sense of the word. Though there are those among them who can and do whistle, it can scarcely be said of them, as a body, that they whistle as

they go for want of thought, but they do frequently enliven their way by trolling out snatches of the popular music-hall songs of the day. As a trade, the steppers, though not formally organised, are, in practice, strongly unionist. Should a "labour dispute" run very high among them, they are wont to resort to ordeal by battle against those whom they hold to be "knobsticks," and certainly it is not a pretty spectacle to see two girls—even step-girls—toss off their hats and jackets, and "go" for each other in pugilistic fashion. This, however, though not an unknown occurrence in steppers' circles, is a comparatively rare one, as they generally manage to settle their differences by means of a slanging-match. In short, the steppers are of the streets streety. It would be unfeeling to say that this is as it should be, or not to wish that it were otherwise. Still, under all the circumstances of the case, it is only what might naturally be expected, and, with the exception of the disposition to fisticuffs, there is, after all, nothing in the manners of the steppers that need greatly shock any, save the hypercritical or ultragenteel.

When out on their trade expeditions, the steppers hunt in couples—not from any practical need for such an arrangement, or with any view to sub-division of labour, but simply, as it would appear, on grounds of sociability. The two who "work mates" each take their own regular places, and go upon sharing terms as to "chance" jobs, performing them turn and turn about. When not engaged simultaneously, the one who is "standing off" lounges over the railings gossiping with the one who is working, after the fashion of the idlers who are always to be found gathered around any workmen who may happen to have outdoor jobs on hand. To outsiders this method would appear to involve waste of time and opportunity, but the steppers say not. Of them, as of other people, it may be assumed that they know their own business best, and they assert that they can earn quite as much working mates as they would do single-handed, while they have the advantage, as they consider it, of company. As remuneration for the lower-paid kinds of female labour goes, the earnings of the steppers are relatively good. They have a regular tariff of charges arranged on the sliding scale system. For washing and hearth-stoning an ordinary front-door flight of two or three steps the charge is a penny, and, if required, the stone window-sill will

be taken in for an additional halfpenny. Area steps and passages are charged at from a penny or twopence, or it may be higher according to quantity, and flagged or tiled pathways are in the same way priced according to length. From a house favourably constructed from a stepper's interest point of view—that is to say, with steepish area and front steps, stone window-sill, and paved outer entrance, the steppers will realise as much as fourpence for a single full clean-down. Twopence per job all round would probably, however, represent their average takings, while the average time per job is about a quarter of an hour. If they go indoors, as they sometimes do, to clean windows, scrub floors, or perform other domestic odd jobs, their payment becomes matter of special contract, though, as a general rule, within a maximum limit of sixpence, with, in some instances, a "snack" of bread-and-cheese and a glass of ale thrown in.

Saturday is the grand field-day of the steppers. On that day a stepper, with a fairly good connection, and fairly good luck in the way of chance engagements, will earn from half-a-crown to three shillings, and the total weekly earnings of such an one may be safely set down at from seven to eight shillings. Then there are their pickings. As already mentioned, they come in for cast-off clothing, sometimes to an extent that leaves them with surplus quantities to dispose of. They fall heirs, either by voluntary gift, or as a result of their own pointed suggestion, to empty bottles, and jam-pots, and other the like small household lumber, their aggregations of which usually bring them in, from the marine-store dealers, at least another sixpence per week. They are recognised recipients of broken victuals, and these, too, they can sell if they are so disposed. In such "out-cast" quarters as those in which steppers usually reside there are always poor families anxious to purchase the cheap "lots" offered for sale by the professional beggars frequenting the common lodging-houses, or other collectors of "scrap" food. As a rule, however, the steppers, if living with their parents, generously reserve their edible benefactions for home consumption, and are consequently regarded as guests who specially well-become the household table. It is mostly upon Saturdays that the established steppers are called upon to assist in the indoor work of some of their regular places. Moreover, some house-

wives, remembering that the steppers are not available for Sundays, prefer having their Saturday step-cleaning done in the afternoon or evening, after the greengrocers, milkmen, butchers, bakers, errand-boys, and other heavy-booted and step-dirtying callers have made their visits. From these causes Saturday, though a half-holiday to most other manual labourers, is the long day of the steppers. On other days stepping is virtually half-time work, the most fully engaged of the steppers having finished their rounds by one o'clock. Numbers of them turn their afternoon to account to add to their incomes. A favourite method of doing this is to take an afternoon-round as hawkers of such tea "relishes" as watercress or shrimps. Or if they do not care to risk capital, they may engage as assistants to peripatetic dealers in such wares upon a larger scale. Some devote afternoons to taking to the residences of patrons in the stepping line plants or flowers, "all a-blowing and a-growing," or firewood, or some of the household small wares, the production of which is among the home industries of the poor. For such goods steppers with an eye to business, and to the wants of particular households, or the weaknesses of particular housewives, frequently obtain orders on commission at—alleged—bargain prices, and on the strength of the representation—likely enough to be true—that they have relatives in the trade concerned. Of the steppers who do not go in for "foreign" engagements in the afternoon, some help at home. Perhaps they assist a mother who takes in washing, or they may lend a hand to a father or brother who works at home as a single-handed manufacturer of tin ware or wire goods, or follows the calling of a chair-caner or umbrella-mender—occupations in which female assistance is of material value. Finally there is a contingent of the steppers who being after their fashion philosophers of the lotus-eating school, spend their leisure time in such idleness and dreamful ease as they have the power to command. On fine afternoons numbers of these are to be seen sauntering about the leading business thoroughfares of their home district enjoying what in their own vernacular is styled a "shop-window fuddle." Others of them will take afternoon strolls with their young men, if it happens—as it frequently does—that the said young men are out of work, or, being budding loafers, have never been in work. In their degree the steppers are

good matches, and need not lack young men. In the classes to which they and their suitors belong, wife labour for hire is matter of course. On that point there is no need for express understanding. It goes without saying that the wife is not only to manage, but to help to maintain the household, and she is fortunate if her earnings are regarded by her husband as being only secondary and supplementary to his own. The wife is often the chief, and not unfrequently the sole, supporter of the home, her "master" contenting himself with seeing that she works while he loafs. Fellows of this—the "corner-man"—type think it matter for pride rather than shame to have wives who "can keep them without work." Any of them who undertake to "scratch" for their own tobacco and drink are disposed to look upon themselves as being weakly, not to say recklessly virtuous. In the days of their youth they deliberately lay themselves out for being provided for as husbands. Pending that noble consummation, their greatest boast is to have a "gal" who can "lush" them—that is to say, pay for drink for them. This the stepper who sets up a "regular" young man of this type is generally able and willing to do, and though it is a perversion of the ordinary relation of the sexes in this connection, she is as proud of being able to "stand" as her loafing lover is willing to receive "treats." She will pay for his 'arf pints of beer or 'arf ounces of tobacco, or his admission to such places of amusement as they may frequent, and she makes him presents of the cheap but "ikey" caps and neckties that he is wont to affect. Moreover, while such steppers are "good" for treats in the days of love's young dream, they are girls of promise for the future. To have succeeded as steppers, they must have been strong and hard-working, and when the days of their stepping are over, they commonly prove capable and desirable hands in some other of the harder forms of female labour.

Though stepping, like the brook, goes on for ever, individual steppers come and go with all the rapidity incidental to a short service system, stepping being but an episode in a career. The age at which a girl may enter the ranks of the steppers is a point upon which the "trade" places no restrictions. Formerly its settlement rested solely between the juvenile aspirants and those who choose to employ them. Weird little creatures of nine or ten, standing

scarcely higher than the house-pails they had to lift about, might be seen eagerly competing for a share of the "wage fund" devoted to payment for stepping. In these latter days, however, the School Board has constituted itself a party to the question, with the result that for five days of the week, at any rate, no girl under thirteen can practise as a stepper. On the sixth day—Saturday—the beautiful canons of political economy have full and free play, the liberty of the subject, freedom of contract, and the operations of the law of supply and demand are left untrammelled. Therefore, on that day, the baby competitors still come forward, though, happily for themselves, in diminished and continuously diminishing numbers, for the use and wont of the other five days is gradually putting them out of court. But at whatever age steppers join the calling they must not remain in it beyond the age of eighteen at the latest. Chief of the unwritten laws governing the trade is that which regulates retirement, and decrees that stepping is an employment for girls only, not for women. If need be, this law is enforced by the very effective method of "small-ganging." Gangs of the trade go on the war-path against any offender who may have been impeached and found guilty of the high crime and misdemeanour of "acting contrary to the interests of the trade." They boycott her socially, and "picket" her professionally. They chivey her in the streets, and create such scenes around the dwellings at which she is engaged, that employers are fain to dispense with her services. Fortunately it is rarely that any excuse for such extreme measures arises. As they approach the proscribed limit of age, the steppers seem naturally to get "above their business." They begin to regard themselves as women, and to consider it due to the dignity of womanhood that they seek some less streety and wandering calling.

As they have graduated in the lower and more laborious kinds of household work, it might be thought that they would be desirous of going into domestic service; but, of all things else, they avoid that. Some of them set up as charwomen "by the day." Others go into laundries, or fire-wood yards, or rag-sorting sheds. A bright particular few, who may have had genteel proclivities latent in them, or have caught the complaint while stepping at the cottages of gentility, qualify themselves as sewing machinists—a profession accounted

highly genteel in comparison with the other occupations named above. But to whatever calling they may betake them, they are careful to be assured that it is one the pursuit of which will permit of their having "their evenings to themselves." That stepping does this fully, is held to be the chief of the compensating advantages of that, on the whole, not very desirable calling. That domestic service does not give its votaries their evenings is, to the mind of the stepper—as at present constituted and trained—an insuperable objection. The stepper of the period, even when not an afternoon idler, is the daughter of (evening) liberty. After six o'clock, by which time her father, brothers, or lover, if she have one, will have knocked off work, if they have any, she becomes, according to the ideas of her class, quite a "swagger" personage. She assumes evening-costume, though not in the society sense of the term, by "stripping for dinner," as the Irish footman put it. On the contrary, she empties her box upon herself, to use her own metaphorical phrase. She mounts all the finery she possesses, or as much as she can well carry, if her possessions go beyond that point, though that is a very exceptional case. Her dress is, perforce, of the cheapest materials, but in point of colour it is as rich, if not as rare, as money can buy, and its fashion is generally striking, though certainly not "invested with artistic merit." Arrayed in all her glory of colour and bedizenment, and revelling in her liberty, the stepper in summer-time roams at large about some evening stroll "beat," favoured of the set to which she belongs. If she has a "regular" young man, he will be the companion of her walk, if not she usually "pals in" with two or three other young-men-less girls, in which latter case she is always ready for chaff or horseplay with other promenaders of either sex. In winter evenings the stepper is to be found among the frequenters of the cheaper music-halls, or of the harmonic meetings held in public-houses. At the latter she is occasionally to be found figuring among those who "oblige the company." Her voice is neither low nor sweet, but she "fancies herself," has "the nerve" necessary for such appearances in public, and her taste in song being towards the modern comic and patter line, her lack of a musical quality of voice is of no consequence.

Taking into account all the circumstances of the stepper's life; her generally

miserable and over-crowded home, her premature self-dependence, her evenings to herself, and her methods of spending them, her uncultured mind and sordid surroundings—taking into consideration all these things, it is much more matter for pity than wonder that the stepper should sometimes be led astray. Such an incident is, however, rarer than even those who judge charitably might suppose. As a rule the stepper marries early and settles down to the life of a wife and mother of the poverty-stricken classes—a life of ceaseless drudgery, and endurance, and intermittent starvation; a life which calls for infinite self-resource, and self-sacrifice, and than which, as a normal condition, there is no life more hard or more weary.

Whether or not Stepper Brigades could be organised by which the steppers would be immediately benefited, and, perhaps, ultimately trained for domestic service, is a question which must be left to practical philanthropists. Nevertheless, the present writer ventures to think that the brigade experiment would be worth making. That the material to be worked upon does not appear very promising in the rough is true, but there are possibilities of good in it. The mere attempt here would be honourable; defeat in it—if it befell—would certainly not be disgrace, while success would be its own exceeding great reward.

FROM LOVE'S ASHES.

LONE in a far-off land,
With empty heart and treasure lost,
Poor, championless, and fortune-crost,
She stretches out her hand
Across the wide, unfathomed sea,
To one, who sware in other days
Amid love's tumult and amaze
A changeless fealty.

Lo! there the letter lies,
A poor, tear-blotted, flimsy thing,
Yet hath it subtle power to bring
The dew unto mine eyes;
And through a silver mist I see
The pretty face I used to kiss
In youth's unquestioning fond bliss,
When love was new to me.

The pretty childlike face,
Untroubled by a touch of care,
Set round about with golden hair;
The gay and girlish grace,
The peal of laughter gushing free,
Like music of a summer brook,
The winsome way, the sunshine look,
The pure and joyous glee—

I call them all to mind,
But with each bright imagining
Come darker memories that sting,
For I was fool, and blind;
I thought she gave her love to me,
But while I watered well the root
Of hope's fair vine, and looked for fruit,
Another robbed the tree.

Robbed, said I? Nay, I err,
He did but take the thing she gave—
While I, to baffled love a slave,
Made bitter coil and stir,
They twain made haste to put the sea
Betwixt their lives and mine. So past
The wave of my first love—and last—
And left me scarred, but free.

Now here her letter lies:
Her widowed cry from that far land,
That I should take her by the hand,
And dry her streaming eyes.
"I have no friend, but only thee;
I wronged thee, slaying love and truth,
Yet let the memory of our youth
Plead with thine heart for me."

The memory of our youth!
Ah, sometime love! that spell is vain,
If you should seek to make again
The trial of my truth.
Not wider is the sounding sea,
That parts us land from land to-day,
Than time's wide gulf that bars the way
Of love to you and me.

Can you give back the glow
That warmed the spring-time of our love?
The faith that placed you far above
All things God's stars below?
Spread honey for last year's dead bee:
Will he arise to sip the store?
I trow not. So for evermore
Love's honey tempts not me.

Yet gentlest feelings blend,
And tender memories gather near;
I take a sacred charge and dear,
Of sister and of friend;
Not vainly o'er the wide, wild sea
Her letter comes. A brother's right,
In place of dead-and-gone delight,
The future offers me.

Lone in a far-off land,
With empty heart and treasure lost,
Poor, championless, and fortune-crost,
She stretches out her hand
Across the wide unfathomed sea,
And one, forsaken in far days,
Gives from the ashes of love's blaze,
His changeless fealty.

OUR SHINING RIVER.

XI.

THERE is a fine tropical heat and glow this glorious summer's evening, the air all transfused with sunset glow, and a vista of many channels of shining waters that are lost to sight in arcades of overhanging foliage. Boats are shooting to and fro, making golden ripples on the mirror-like surface. Groves, and gardens, and grassy lawns all intermingled with the placid stream, give us the notion that we have descended unawares upon the Fortunate Isles—a region of amaranthine bowers, where perpetual youth and sunshine hold their sway; and beyond rise heights of still more glow and colour, clothed with grand masses of trees which are touched with the first glory of autumnal hues.

And we, too, are of Arcadia, sitting by the very margin of the river in calm and

blissful indolence. All the trouble and worry of things are over. There are no more explanations to be made, and all the arrangements that may be necessary are of a pleasant and cheerful nature. First of all it was evident that Mrs. Pycroft's scheme had utterly and entirely collapsed. As Charlwood had married Rebecca, it was quite evident that he could not, as society is at present constituted, marry anybody else. But the collapse of her scheme seemed to threaten the collapse of Mrs. Pycroft herself. She was near fainting when she heard of Charlwood's marriage.

"And what will become of my poor husband?" she asked of me in a hoarse whisper. "With Charlwood in their hands, these dreadful people will work poor Ernest's ruin."

And then, when the poor woman found that by my instrumentality Mr. Thomas had been placed out of the reach of the temptation of doing any mischief, in the revulsion of feeling, and in the thankfulness of her heart, she threw herself upon my neck and kissed me.

"I promised you Claudia," she said, when she could command her voice; "I promised you Claudia if you would save my husband. Well, take her, dear Arthur, and may you be happy."

And so we sit by the margin of the river, Claudia and I, in this happy twilight hour, while a convenient corner of her wrap affords shelter to a little hand that is clasped in mine.

The glow of sunset which has vanished from the river, leaving only a gleam here and there reflected from the clouds, still rests upon the hills beyond the river, upon the old castle perched on the height, with its suggestions of Rhineland; the castle happens to be a sham, but it is just as effective at this moment as if it dated from the Plantagenets; upon the wooded heights of Cliveden, where each tree stands out in individual distinctness, while still the sentiment is preserved of massive forest growth.

Then, as the glow of light fades away, and soft silvern eventide holds full possession, we hear the launches hooting and tooting in the distance, like so many owls, and now and then we see a pair of eyes, red and green, stealing out from the wooded channel and stealthily approach, throwing before them strange, lurid reflections in the tranquil waters.

And yet in this soft, pleasant scene we have certain reminders that we are within easy distance of the great metropolis.

People drop in from the station, who have come down by the last train, with the flavour of the Law Courts, and the Strand, and the theatres about them. We have just lost an M.P., who has hurried off to take part in an expected division; and before that a quiet, observant pair took their departure to appear presently on the boards of a London theatre. Fancy the dressing and "making-up," the footlights, and the hot glare, in contrast with this pleasant lawn and sweet, shining river! And then there is that undefinable tone about some nice-looking young women and their attendant masters or vassals, as if they received so many impressions that they were all hopelessly blurred and confused, that seems to characterise the more cultivated of London's denizens. Here is a clever, good-looking fellow with a charming wife, and a kind, sensible-looking mother-in-law, and a light detachment of brothers, sisters, cousins, or what not, coming and going about them.

"Ah, what is that game, you know, where you have all kinds of things, you know? A game with—ah—you know!"

Thus far Benedick, to whom Beatrice softly replies:

"Quite so; yes, I know, but I forget. You mean—ah yes, that game—at that place."

The pair look hopelessly at each other, when the brisker mother, who seems really concerned that they should not have everything they want, suggests, in a hopeful tone:

"Perhaps Alfred knows?"

Then there is soft cooing over the water, and Alfred, obedient to the summons, paddles gently to the bank, a youth in white flannels, lounging in a birch-bark canoe.

"Dear Alfred," says Beatrice, leaning confidentially on the railing, "we are in such perplexity! There is a game—with things."

"And other things, you know," interposes Benedick; "things you call—ah, you know."

"Surely you know what they mean, Alfred?" cries the mother in a stimulating tone.

Alfred muses as he lights a cigarette deliberately with a wax-match. The air is so calm that the flame is not stirred, while a sudden light is thrown upon the faces that are waiting anxiously for his dictum.

"Yes, I think I know," replies Alfred at last, "but I can't quite recall it. It isn't something where you have two things!"

"Oh no, not that at all," interposes Benedick fretfully. "It's something where there are all kinds of things, and other things besides."

"Yes, I quite know what you mean, but——" And Alfred wags his head gravely, and, with a stroke of the paddle, shoots out into the stream.

Beatrice and Benedick looked at each other hopelessly, and it will never be known what that thing was they were seeking to discover, for at that moment mademoiselle appeared upon the scene, and in the slight confusion caused by her appearance, involving a hasty withdrawal of Claudia's hand from its place of rest, we lost sight of the seekers after knowledge.

Mademoiselle had not yet been told of the new arrangement or order of things, and looked at us sharply, as if there was something not quite proper in our sitting thus together, without the restraining influence of a chaperon.

"I thought your mother was out here, Claudia," she said rather severely. And then I told her how henceforth Claudia would be mine, and that, as she had been the pleasant companion of our voyage so far, we hoped that she would continue to sit in our boat—in other words, that, as Claudia was fondly attached to her, we hoped she would come and live part of the year, anyhow, with us in our new home, while she might pass the rest of her time at the Hall.

"Yes, I like that very well; it will be very good," said mademoiselle warmly, while the tears stood in her eyes. "But, monsieur, I call you to testify that to the very end I fill my charge. There has not been, not all the way, one word of lof."

We were quite ready to satisfy the conscience of mademoiselle upon this point, and explained to her that, if the feeling itself had arisen during the voyage, without the medium of spoken words, that was not due to any want of vigilance on her part, but to the all-pervading influence of the passion, which reveals itself in a thousand ways, not to be suppressed or turned aside. Mademoiselle, as an old practitioner, shook her head knowingly, and spread out her hands with a gesture that seemed to embrace all things known and unknown.

"You may thank me, monsieur," she whispered confidentially, "that I have kept Claudia for you, else there would have been lovers—mon Dieu!—without end."

If this is to be our last night upon the

river, it is, at any rate, the brightest and pleasantest. And the morrow opens bright and clear, with a deep-blue sky, and tall clouds sailing majestically across—not a day for fishing or painting, for everything is too crisp and bright, but pre-eminently a day for boating, when the soft, soppy tone that artists and fishermen love can be dispensed with.

The long, sylvan passage to the lock is one of the pleasantest things imaginable this bright summer morning, and our boat forms part of a watery procession that passes to and fro incessantly. A couple of launches and a dozen or so of pleasure-boats are an ordinary charge for this lock, which is the porch or antechamber to the very loveliest reach of the river. To drift lazily along in the shade of the woods beneath

Cliveden's proud alcove,

The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and love,

is all that is delicious in the far niente line. The quotation, by the way, is incumbent upon all who pass this way. And now mademoiselle smiles encouragingly, and hailing the once tabooed word, exclaims:

"Ah, but monsieur is galant."

After all, the link of association between the present proud mansion of Cliveden—which may not be sold, it seems, to any mere millionaire, but must ever remain one of the residences of a high aristocracy—between the now existing Cliveden and the dissolute Buckingham and wanton Shrewsbury of Pope's lines, is but a slight one. The present modern house is the second built upon the site, as Buckingham's proud alcove and the one that succeeded it were burnt down. And the whole crew of the Restoration times, and, later on, of the early Georgian period, when Prince Fred was in possession of it, were not such dainty and savoury spirits that we should worship the ground which was trodden by their foot-steps.

Indeed, the lovely scene suggests rather the thought of the thousands, in times recent and remote, who have taken honest, wholesome pleasure in river and woods, and never so much as now, when the whole reach is alive with all kinds of floating objects, from the Noah's Ark of a house-boat, to the fragile Indian canoe. Under the wooded banks lie a whole row of the gayest of house-boats, and among the craft that shoot past appears the Venetian gondola, that made its first appearance at Henley. There are two of these craft, by the way, on the river, and they are certainly

more picturesque than the steam-launches, but scarcely as useful.

But the whole scene is like a vision, in which you do not expect any particular consistency. It is all a vision of lodges and cool summer-houses, and bubbling waters, of marble steps and balustraded terraces, with boats everywhere, and lovely children, and fair women; of swans, too, and troops of cygnets, that take their part in this general water-party; of dogs that bark at the swans, and retreat from the long, hissing neck and then bark more fiercely; dogs of all kinds, from the proud St. Bernard to the insignificant toy. Then there are pleasant paths lurking among the woods, and winding roads among the ferns, with still more sweet children and fair women in T-carts and donkey-chaises, and a general stir of life that is still languid and lotus-eating, but not without the thrill of repressed emotion.

A traveller last night suggested that the Thames just above reminded him of the Congo on a smaller scale; but in these reaches our river might be appropriately called the Contango, so thickly are its banks peopled with the race of stock-brokers and their families. While the magnates of the peerage have pitched their tents upon the hills, the tabernacles of the children of Capel Court are in every pretty valley and fairy dell. And while the men go up every day to fight their battle with Fate, and pluck wealth and safety from the lion's mouth, the women and children are afloat all day long among the swans and water-lilies. Not that the womenkind are altogether deserted; there are plenty of youths among the tribe, and if there are three brothers in a family, one will be on scout watching the markets in the City, while the other two loll at ease in their wigwams, or dart out and fro in the light canoe. In the very centre of this district is Boulter's Lock, the very centre of the great pleasure-traffic on the river. Mr. Pycroft is preparing a historic work on the navigation of the Thames, and I believe that he has traced to their sources the various names of the locks, and that he will settle the vexed question of who Boulter was, and why the lock was called after him; and I will leave him his copy-right in the story, which ought to interest the great mass of boating-people on the Thames, for most of them, at one time or other, may remember a press of boats at Boulter's Lock.

Boulter's Lock seems to glory in its

popularity, and we have seen photographs of the place on a Bank Holiday, in which you can't see the water for the boats, and you wonder that they did not all join together and form a permanent roof or crust to the lock. It is a great place, too, for meeting people you don't expect to see, and more than one novelist, I fancy, has depicted an awkward rencontre in which the scene has been Boulter's Lock. And our case was no exception, for there, in the middle of the lock, was Mr. Thomas's house-boat, The Crab, in tow of a villainous-looking tug; the pair of them taking up nearly all the room, and threatening the lighter craft with a possibly awkward nip in descending. One or two prudent crews gave up their turn to enter the lock, not relishing such company; but looking at Claudia I saw that her eyes said "Go on," and in we went.

Mr. Thomas soon espied us, and began an harangue from the top of his house-boat. He had been drinking evidently betimes that morning, and his sense of wrong was, no doubt, heightened by a maddening whirl of drink-phantoms in his brain. His first thesis was that the Pycrofts were a set of beggarly scoundrels, and he illustrated rather than established this by a series of examples drawn from the recent, as well as the more ancient, family annals. And yet was he aware of his daughter's marriage, and that he was performing the office of the proverbial ill bird in thus holding forth? Oh yes, Mr. Thomas knew all about that, and thence his indignation. As for the daughter who had robbed him, he would serve her out; she should be in custody before the day was over, and her husband as her accomplice.

"Why, what has she robbed you of, you wretch!" cried Mrs. Thomas, who had evidently been taking her daughter's part, and was wringing her hands, tearful and dishevelled, below.

"Why, her clothes and jewels!" roared Thomas. "I paid for 'em all."

"Don't be a fool, father," urged Albert. "Everybody's laughing at you."

Mr. Thomas glared around in his fury. Perhaps he discovered a smile lurking about the corner of my mouth; anyhow he fastened upon me.

"Why, I'll job a hole in the bottom of your boat!" he cried, almost out of his senses with rage; and, suiting the action to the word, he ran to the stem of his craft with a heavy boat-hook in his hand to carry out his threat.

Naturally I grasped the other end, and we glared at each other across the narrow slip of water between the boats. Albert ran to his father's assistance with another boat-hook, when, giving the old man a vigorous push which sent him into the middle of his parlour, I grappled with the fresh assailant, who tackled me with jealous fury.

Our craft had locked together, and then, seeing that there was danger of the smaller boat being upset in the struggle, I gave a spring, and fairly boarded The Crab, the impetus of my assault knocking poor Albert off his balance, who, waving his arms frantically, tumbled over the side, and disappeared in the dark waters, the last to be seen of him being a hand that clutched desperately at the empty air.

All that followed is deeply graven upon my brain: the rush of people to and fro, the shouting, and getting in each other's way—everyone calling to somebody else to do something—the sickening suspense; while, at last, hooks and drags were got to work, and the lock, slowly emptying, revealed some white object waving to and fro in a sickly and ghastly way. The still more agonising half-hour, while doctors were at work, and zealous amateur assistants were striving to bring life into that flaccid frame. The final verdict of the doctor, "Life is fled;" and then the remorseful days that followed, my life engrossed in that one thought—with the feeling that every eye was turned from me with aversion, as if the mark of Cain was on my brow; the close and stuffy room where the inquest was held, from which I issued in the custody of the law—there was no getting over the patent fact that I was an aggressor on board the house-boat; the more solemn trial, and the verdict, and sentence that cut me off from all the rosy hopes of life. I go through all this in my dreams, and wake up bathed in a cold perspiration, hardly able to persuade myself that it is not real.

For what actually happened was quite different and not nearly so sensational. For I simply jumped overboard, and caught the stiffened hand in mine, and we were dragged out together, and laid upon the sloping deck to drain and fight for the breath that had so nearly gone. Claudia was bending over me, the tears dropping from her dear brown eyes; but mastering her emotion as she wiped my face and lips, and drew the wet weed tangle from my hair.

There was no more fight left in anybody. Thomas was sobered and penitent. Albert, cowed and shivering, with an envious glance at Claudia, retired from the scene. His mother alternately tried to assault me for throwing her son into the water, and kiss me for pulling him out. And then we came to a truce. I changed my wet things in Thomas's state-cabin, and resumed my place in our own boat.

And once through the lock we came upon a nice piece of quiet, primitive river, a prim, quakerlike scene contrasted with what we had just passed through; the river, of neat and moderate dimensions, running between green banks, with a white road on one side, and trim villas and their gardens, and all assuming an intimate domestic appearance that has a subtle charm about it. The road, too, a well-frequented highway, brings a new interest into the scene. Here are bicyclists whirling along, and carriages with jingling harness, and the harmless, necessary fly—even an omnibus from the station. It is something novel, this intimate union of road and river. Hitherto the latter has taken up all our thoughts. We have been, perhaps, too completely separated from the ordinary life of the district; we have taken the river face of everything, and forgotten there is a dry land side to the same. If we were up in a balloon, this little streak of river would seem insignificant enough—a mere thread of silver in the great panorama of hill and dale. But for us the river has been everything, we have lived in close friendship with it, and it has shared our joys and griefs, and sympathised with our emotions, in a way that nothing in the way of highways or byways could approach. That our river would also drown us without the least pity or remorse, does not affect our feelings towards it. There is sternness in its friendship, but it is a true friendship after all.

And then among eyots and shallows, where nimble girls in punts, poling through the weeds, have the best of us in point of speed, we come in sight of Maidenhead Bridge, one of the three satisfactory modern bridges of the Thames, the two others being Richmond and Henley. Upon the well-known lawn at Skindle's we catch sight of Charlwood and his bride, but we stay only for a moment to exchange greetings, and hurry on. There is not much to be seen of Maidenhead, which does not live by the river, so to speak, being a wayside and not a riverside town. A great

place for coaches when coaches there were, for all the coaches for the west trolled over Maidenhead Bridge, and changed horses in Maidenhead town. A few miles out of the town the roads diverged—the upper one for St. David's and the lower for Bristol. Not for the whole of the west country, by the way, for the Bath road crosses at Staines, lower down, and sees the river no more after that; but still, Maidenhead bore the palm for coaches, and before coaches came into existence it was still thronged with waggons and pack-horses. Not that there was always a bridge at Maidenhead, for there is a record of the building of the first bridge, which was of wood, in the reign of Edward the Third. Before this travellers crossed at Badham's End Ferry, two miles higher up the river.

And now instead of all this we have the enormous span of the Great Western arch, a few hundred yards below the graceful eighteenth century bridge of the Maidens. And here we come to a bare, open reach of the river, which is the bit most familiar to those who travel by the Great Western line, with its one red house, the beginning of a new settlement, and the open river running with an easy, graceful bend, as it appears from the high railway arch, sometimes like a silver ribbon among the green fields, and at others dark and wind-flurried, and swept by blinding showers. We are happy enough to find the river in its former mood, placid and well-thronged with boats, and it is pleasant to see how youth and age can mingle in this universal pastime. For a pretty sight is the old, white-headed warrior, who has hung up his sword in some riverside cottage, pulled along at a good slapping pace by a couple of dainty grandchildren, hardly yet in their teens, while he coaches them as to reach and swing, and as to time and feather, with all the exactitude of an old commander. And, indeed, it may be said of the pleasures of the river, that they do not leave one in the lurch either in middle life or even in old age, but run on even as life runs on, a pleasant, fascinating game that can be played with the very last half-inch of candle, up to the final "puff" that lands us all in darkness.

And now the river takes a sudden bend to the left, and we are at Bray, and we land to meet the others at our mid-day meal. And, as it happens, we plump at once upon the Vicar of Bray, or perhaps it is the curate, but anyhow, the clergy of the district in a state of great activity.

For there is a school-treat going on, and the vicar—he is surely the vicar from his versatility—in the very thick of all the fun. Now he is having his innings with the cricketers; now he is running races in the meadows with the little ones. Again he is labouring at the oar, and bringing a whole crew of raw hands through their troubles. Then there is the grand old church to be seen, and its curious monuments, and the quaint cottages opening into the churchyard, reminding one of the old days of feasting and merrymaking in the church-houses, and the church-ale—it is only ginger-beer now, but still, to get beer of any kind in a churchyard gives a fine old crusted feeling to the place. And then there is quaint old Jesus Hospital, a little way on the Windsor road, which is worth a visit, so that we vote Bray to be worth stopping at, and paddle off well contented with our stay.

We have Bray Lock all to ourselves, and the lock-keeper entrusts us with a letter for one of the dredgers who are at work by Monkey Island, in the middle of the stream, where there is no regular delivery. And we shoot down the river with the rapid stream, which is like the classic Avernus, very easy to descend, but what a fine piece of business to get back again!

But we manage to catch hold of Monkey Island before it slips past us, and land to see the monkeys which are painted on the dome-like hall of the hotel, once a fishing-lodge, built by a former Duke of Marlborough. There is a pavilion close by, which is reported to contain a curiously carved ceiling, but as it is all tumbling to pieces, and the stairs are rotten and unsafe, we leave the ceiling to its fate. But it is a pleasant experience, *crede experto*, to lie on Monkey Island on a midsummer night, and be lulled to sleep by the wash of the stream, and the rustling of the poplars, and the belling of the nightingales all round, with every now and then the splash of a big fish. And just below we find the dredgers, who think we are chaffing them about the letter, but who pick it up at last and grin their thanks.

After that we notice Down Place, with its big water-wheel and well-filled boat-house, and Water Oakley, luxuriant in lawns and shrubberies, and a little below is Surley Hall, the Eton rendezvous, with its meadows, surely noted for the celebration of the Fourth of June. Then, on the other hand, stands Dorney Church, solitary in the fields, with a protecting grove of trees all

to itself, as if to save its old shingled spire from being blown away. And then comes Boveney Lock, and a distant peep of Windsor Castle, its grand round tower rising in hoary majesty over the trees.

It is a pleasant sight, and yet gives a slight feeling of sadness, for here is the tail-piece of the volume, the finis of our pleasant watery pilgrimage. A worthy finis too, as the river widens out, and the massive bulk of the castle rises over the red-roofed town in feudal splendour. Here are walls for defence, and towers for dungeons, and sacred pinnacles over the tomb-houses of kings, and quaint quadrangles filled with guards and servitors, and palace gates, and gardens, and terraces, where Our Lord the King, or The Queen Our Lady, may survey a goodly morsel of their realm.

Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among,
Wanders the hoary Thames along
His silver-winding way.

Seen through half-shut eyes it seems a vision of old times, a wondrous picture that we almost fancy will vanish before a steadier gaze. The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, they are all raised before us as if by Prospero's magic wand. Is it all the baseless fabric of a vision?

I clasp Claudia closely as I help her out of the boat; let me be sure that I have secured something real and tangible, and not a mist maiden who will vanish in the stream. And so we cross the bridge, and up the steep height to the station, feeling as if we had walked out of a dream—a dream of murmuring waters and whispering reeds, and swans swimming out from beds of blue forget-me-nots, and pleasant reaches that reflect the heavens and are starred with white lilies.

But here is firm ground at last, and the solid world awaiting us within the railway-barriers. Adieu, Father Thames! "Thames, the most beloved of all the ocean's sons," which proves the ocean a grandfather, by the way; but if we could think of any title more complimentary than the poets have already dubbed thee with, that should be thy due for the pleasure we have had in thy domains.

A LAST DAY AT POMPEII.

AFTER spending a few happy days last spring amid the ruins of Old Rome,* by

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 34, p. 316. "A Roman Holiday."

way of climax I resolved to pass a last one at Pompeii.

To a tourist in Italy time flies on eagle wings, but trains are rather tortoise-like in their rate of progress. From Rome to Naples the distance is a hundred and eighty miles, and more than seven hours may be spent upon the transit. There is, however, some advantage in the slowness of the pace, for it enables you to see the pretty country through which you pass, and gives you plenty of time for talking with a pleasant fellow-traveller. I fell into chat with such a one just as we were getting within eye-shot of old Capua, which could hardly have looked lovelier when Hannibal and his army succumbed to its delights. In spite of his smart uniform, he—I don't mean Hannibal—looked vastly like an Englishman—many fair Italians do—and he quite won my heart by speaking in high praise of our poor island, even going to the length of saying he thought Manchester an interesting place. However one may grumble at one's country when at home, one feels grateful, when abroad, at hearing a good word for it. Indeed, when I have been a week or two away, I grow quite sentimental if I think of dear old England; though, when my holidays are over, I esteem it no great luxury that I have to live in it.

The kind word said for Manchester induced the saying on my part of some civil things of Rome. And so we bandied compliments and exchanged cigars; and there I rather fancy that he had the best of it. Among other things I learned from him that the Income Tax in Italy is now thirteen per cent, and that as much as three-and-thirty is payable for House Tax. I find no record in my memory of the taxes of the period of Hannibal's invasion; but if they at all approached the present rate of impost, they must sadly have detracted from the classical delights of a residence in Italy.

I had been told that Naples might be best seen from a distance, whence the eye-sight would be charmed and the nose not be assaulted. So after wasting a full hour in the noisy Naples station, where there were fifty bustling porters to do the work of five, while each discharged the talk of twenty, I took another tortoise-like fast train to Castellamare. Thence I was immediately jolted to Sorrento in a jingling one-horse shay and a choking cloud of dust, which did its best to blind me to the beauties of the scenery. Here I busily employed an idle week in doing nothing—

at least, nothing more laborious than bowing down my head to enter the blue grotto at Capri, or slowly marching by my wife when she careered over the hills, majestically mounted on a melancholy donkey. This ass was called the Baron, "being fabled to have sprung from a sire of noble breed." He had a famous voice for singing, so his owner proudly boasted, using the verb "cantare" to express the fact. Despite the mournful noise he made when he broke forth into song, the Baron was endowed with a remarkably good appetite; and as a whet between his meals he would munch a piece of orange-peel, or a bit of bread or biscuit, though he preferred to feel his palate tickled with a thistle when he could get the chance. He invariably sang when he approached the market-place, or noticed any audience of asinine descent within earshot on the road. The shortest way to stop him was by tickling his ears—a recipe I recommend to any fair equestrian (if the term may be permitted) who, being similarly mounted, may have to suffer from a similar cause.

Though not attacked by any brigands in our rambles on the mountains, we were frequently waylaid by troops of sturdy little mendicants, of whom many might have sat for the Cherubim of Raphael, and who were for ever uttering one continual cry: "Signor, da un' sol!" That was the one chorus from this little Beggar's Opera, which everywhere was constantly dinned into our ears. The song of the street-arab, "Chuck us a cop-per!" is hardly so melodious, but it is not more tiresome than the "Signor, da un' sol!" The cry is never-ceasing when a stranger shows his face. Indeed, all through Southern Italy, begging seems to come by natural descent. "Signor, da un' sol!" these are doubtless the first words a baby learns to lisp. I believe that infants here are born with an hereditary tendency to beg. The smallest children whom I met, if I offered to shake hands with them, put them forth invariably with the palms turned up.

While idling at Sorrento, I was busily engaged in engraving on my memory the lovely views around me. I have a choice collection of similar engravings, in latitude extending from the Lac de Gaube to Leksand, and reaching in their longitude from the Vale of Neath to Venice. I think the scenes about Sorrento must rank first in my collection, very highly as I cherish many Swiss views I have placed in it. But, majestic as they are, the Alps

are not volcanic, and though the Matterhorn be vastly grander than Vesuvius, the latter may be looked at, for a week or so at least, with perhaps the greater interest. In the nine days I spent near it, a huge volume of white vapour was for ever pouring forth, vapour daily varying in shape, as the wind might chance to fashion it. Now it rose like a tall pine-tree, a thousand feet in height, and spread in a vast canopy of cloud above the mountain; now it lay floating through blue sky in a long, straight, level line, that reached to the horizon more than twenty miles away. When Vulcan forged the bolts of Jove, I wonder if his furnace had a chimney of such altitude. And I wonder by what chemistry the combustion is maintained which emits this endless smoke in such immense profusion.

The mention of Vesuvius recalls me to Pompeii, which I had in my mind's eye when I began this paper. The reader may complain that I am rather slow in getting there, but somehow I got into a wrong train of thought at starting, and having travelled to Sorrento, I may fairly crave excuse for lingering a little in that delightful place. There was a wall of roses blooming in that Eden which surpassed even the roseate luxuriance of Rome. A score of yards in length, and a dozen feet in height, it was covered with thick clusters of flowers, varying in colour from the deepest hue of crimson to the softest shade of yellow, and the tenderest of pink. With the fragrance of their blooms the sweet scent of orange-blossoms was mingled by the breeze, reminding you that there were groves hard-by where you might wander at your will, and that in this charming paradise, so long as you had twopence in your pocket, there was no forbidden fruit.

Having recently been visiting the diggings of old Rome (if I may venture so profanely to describe the excavations), I expected that the access to Pompeii would be similar. But places rarely prove to be what one expected. Ancient Rome lies buried by the cumulus of ages to the depth of thirty feet or so below the modern city; and you reach the Via Sacra by going down a staircase of a score or so of steps. But Pompeii being built upon a rising bluff of land, stands higher than the road, whereby you reach it from the coast. The fertile plain, which lies around the buried city, lay all beneath the sea at the time of its interment; so that in the year of the

eruption, A.D. 79, Pompeii occupied a site somewhat similar to Margate. Here comparison must cease, or it may, perhaps, be odious—to the champion, at any rate, of modern seaside architecture.

Tourists should be careful how and where and when they talk about their travels. As a general rule, indeed, it certainly is wiser not to talk of them at all, no matter in what company. There is no such bore alive as your chattering travelled monkey. To this golden rule, however, it is difficult at times to keep a strict adherence. Especially at dinner-time obedience is difficult. When the weather is exhausted, and the sights of the season, and possibly its scandal, the remembrance of one's travels is a most enticing topic. It is so easy to talk glibly of the fine things one has seen, and so pleasant to detect that one's companion has missed seeing them. But it is wiser to avoid the subject altogether than to bring it in before one's appetite is satisfied. If introduced too early it is sadly out of place, and may lead to some affliction. I chanced the other night, as I was finishing my fish, to mention that I lately had been visiting Pompeii.

"Really? Oh, how nice!" exclaimed gushingly the lady whom I had "taken down," and whose eyes had certainly the advantage of her wits, in point, at least, of brilliancy.

Then, while my mind was reeling from the blow of her "How nice!" by way of further staggerer, she said:

"Well, and what did you think of it?"

Here was a pretty question for a hungry man to answer. I glanced at the bright eyes, to see if they were laughing at me. But, brilliant as they were, there beamed no ray of sarcasm. So I answered:

"Oh, a lot of things!" with all becoming gravity; and then seriously addressed myself to taste a bit of sweetbread, which, by a lucky accident, just happened to be served.

Think of it, indeed! Who can see Pompeii and say truly what he thinks of it? And who, with any sense in him, can entertain reflection on a matter such as this, amid the hubbub of a dinner-party? I wonder how Childe Harold, after rolling forth his rhymes upon "the Niobe of nations," contrived to answer the young ladies who asked what he thought of Italy and Rome.

I fancy one of my first thoughts, after passing through the gateway, was that

the museum was befittingly well placed. Being just within the entrance to the city, it forms a sort of prelude to the march one has to make. The sight of those black bodies, of Nature's own embalming, lying there as they lay living, and alive were slowly buried eighteen centuries ago, may set the mind a thinking ere yet a step is set upon the silent streets. Here they lie, just as they died, uncoffined and unshrouded, choked suddenly to death. This seems clear from their position; for the faces are turned downward, and the arms are folded under them, as though to keep a little breathing-space, while the stifling shower of ashes was fast suffocating all who came within its fatal reach. There are here seen but two exceptions: a woman who was found with upturned face, and a dog that was discovered lying on its side with open, gaping jaws, and limbs distorted and convulsed. If a man have any heart more human than the one which is contained within a cabbage, he may hardly see unmoved such mournful sights as these.

Nor can one fail to feel deep interest, as one glances at the articles of ancient use or ornament discovered near the bodies which have lately been unearthed. Pots and pans, hammers and nails, needles and pins, scissors and knives, pincers and saws, brushes and combs, bracelets and rings; here are all the usual goods and chattels of a household, as profuse in their variety as in any common, modern auction-catalogue of sale. Here are instruments of surgery which show that old practitioners were skilled in their profession; and implements of cookery, of highly appetising structure and most artistic shape. I noticed specially a sieve, or perforated copper vessel, doubtless used for making forcemeat and other dainty dishes, and I observed that all the holes were drilled to form a strictly symmetrical design. In another, the pattern of a peacock was displayed, possibly to gratify the taste of some classical aesthete. Indeed, the whole Pompeian household seemed pervaded by high art, from the frescoes in the bedrooms to the crockery in the kitchens, and the statues in the hall.

Nor was art adapted only to the uses of the rich. Even the butcher used a steel-yard with a handsome head of bronze to serve by way of weight, and the vintner poured his wine into a drinking-cup adorned with a bas-relief of Bacchus. Verily, there is nothing new under the sun. The bread

baked yesterday at Naples is of precisely the same shape as the loaves found at Pompeii, which were put into the oven near two thousand years ago. The coinage of that period differs little from our own, except that it surpasses ours in quality of workmanship. A gaming-table then was furnished with a pair of dice, and a lady's toilette-table with a mirror and a rouge-pot. Small boys scribbled on the walls, and played with balls, and knuckle-bones, and whipping-tops, and marbles in the streets of old Pompeii, as they do in modern Paris, Naples, London, or Berlin. The printing-press had not then been invented, it is true, and newspapers were wanting for the purpose of advertisement. But electors were appealed to very much as they are now, as is proved by many mural inscriptions in the place. By these, they were adjured to "Vote for Blobbius, the True Friend of the People," or to go and hear Bugginsius, the famous platform orator, who was noted for his pluck in pitching into the patricians, as speakers may be nowadays who abuse the House of Lords. Excepting books and newspapers, whose presence some may fancy a not wholly unmixed blessing, there are traces at Pompeii of all sorts of London-shop things, and ways and means of living. There even are the pass-checks which were current at the theatre, where the people were assembled at the time of the eruption, and the figs and other fruit which were prepared for their refreshment upon that fatal afternoon. One other exception, however, must be made. Among the myriad of articles preserved in the museum, I vainly strained my eyes to see a classic corkscrew. But a moment's thought explained the absence of this interesting instrument. There were no corks used when Horace, that delightful diner-out, begged his host to let him taste that famous four-year-old Falernian, the savour of which still sweetly lingered in his memory, while, to keep the wintry cold out, a few more logs were heaped upon the hospitable hearth.

Everybody knows what a Pompeian house is like. You may see one at the Crystal Palace, and this may serve you as a model to imagine half-a-score. Nearly all are built on this one single plan. There are hundreds now unearthed, and standing, as they stood, in straight and narrow little streets. Not a roof is to be seen, but the walls are strong and firm. Having neither doors nor window-frames, they look as though the place had been

destroyed by fire, save that the ruins show no trace of any smoke. Here, as in Old Rome, there are no chimneys to be seen; but there are fragments left of furnaces, as well as heating-flues. The streets are paved with lava, black in hue, and hard as granite, but worn into deep ruts by the wheels of ancient Roman chariots and carts. These could hardly have been numerous in this small seaside city, for, as the ruts show plainly, men could never drive abreast, nor, except at certain places, pass each other in the street. Here and there, huge stepping-stones are laid from side to side, to serve in case of flood. It seems pretty clear, indeed, from the aspect of the pavement, that the ladies of Pompeii mostly had pedestrian exercise when they ventured out of doors, for there could have been small pleasure in a drive about the place.

Pompeii lies about four miles from the crater of Vesuvius, although in that clear air the distance seems much less. The jagged edges of the summit stand out sharply in their outline, cutting into the blue sky. Indeed, the mouth of the crater is furnished with a number of most formidable teeth, which may be viewed as outward signs of the devouring force within. Rivers of lava, black as Styx, ran down the mountain-sides and flew over the green fields which lie fertile at its foot. The surface of these streams, death-dealing in their course, is rent into quaint chasms, and twisted into strange, fantastic semblances and shapes. Indeed, to a fanciful view, it might appear that the black current had flowed forth straight from Hades, and that its surface had been ruffled by the sighs of the lost spirits which had passed its fatal brink.

The better to enjoy the solemn silence of the streets, I left the company of my guide about mid-way in his course. While I strolled along in solitude, I came into the Forum, where the pillars still lie prostrate, as when shattered by the earthquake which Arbaces, the magician, the friend of my schoolboyhood, was powerless to escape. They evoked a mental glimpse of Glaucus and Ione, lying stunned amid the ruins, until sweet Nydia, the blind girl, bravely came to their relief. From this vision of romance I was suddenly recalled to the realities of life by the approach of a young man, who politely held his hand out, and in the whine I knew so well—the true whine of the country—said, "Signor, da un' sol." It quite took me by surprise to hear in such dead silence that old familiar

cry. It seemed as though I saw the ghost of Belisarius, and heard him begging for an obolus, as in the brave days of old. Indeed, the shock so staggered me that my command of the Italian language failed me for a moment, and all that I could muster was the single word, "Perchè?" But this sufficed as well as any lengthier reply, for the stranger blandly smiled and went upon his way without making any effort to respond to the unanswerable question I had put. He looked healthy and well fed, and his smart clothes quite took the shine out of my poor battered costume—for ease before elegance is my maxim when abroad, however stiffly I may strive to get my collars starched at home. But I suppose that there was a strain of begging in his blood, and he was subject on occasions to a fit of this incurable, hereditary vice.

The wide world is narrowed nowadays, since steam has conquered space. Swift ships and rapid trains can put a girdle round the earth at a fairy-footed pace, if not with the celerity of Mercury or Puck. Special pens and pencils have thus travelled through all lands, and have left but little to discover or describe. Nature has few secrets in this enquiring age, and the traveller must go afar to find out something new. But there still remains one half of old Pompeii underground, and who can tell what novelties may therein be unearthed, and what curious antiquities may anon be brought to light? Every month adds some fresh wonders to the myriad of marvels which are shown in the museum; while the galleries at Naples are continually enriched with freshly-found art-treasures, far surpassing in their excellence the most costly modern works. And all this wealth of art was stored within a watering-place not half so big as Brighton, and the frescoes are as fresh as when they first adorned its walls. If the Downs became volcanic and Brighton were entombed, what portion of its statuary could be deemed worth preservation for eighteen hundred years, and what vestige would remain of the countless chromo-lithographs which now decorate its walls?

Surely if there be anywhere sermons in stones, the ruins of Pompeii are a place to hear them preached. "Vanity of Vanities" may well be cited for a text, and there can be small doubt as to the drift of the discourse. Were these stones interred by accident, or, for a set purpose, ordained to be preserved? If the latter be

presumable (as they who put their faith in Providence must certainly believe), what surer means of keeping them could Nature have devised than covering them over with a thick coating of ashes, impervious to atmosphere and preservative from damp? Here is a whole city, once a fashionable watering-place, preserved by way of specimens, as a boy would pin a butterfly upon a bit of cardboard and keep it in a box. Here we may see plainly how the heathen world was wagging near two thousand years ago; and what were its amusements, its religion, and its art. Here were theatres for the many and temples for the few; and ways of life and luxury and filthiness unspeakable, preserved by way of confirmation strong of Holy Writ. He who doubts the truth of what St. Paul wrote to the Romans may find a visit to Pompeii incline him to believe.

Tourists often show themselves afflicted with strange tastes. Many like the shops of Paris better than the palaces of Rome; and some take the pains of climbing to the summit of St. Peter's for the purpose of thence dating a few postcards to their friends. There are travellers who can see no beauty in the Parthenon, and who look upon Niagara as simply a big water-force running foolishly to waste. For such as these Pompeii is not at all a place to spend a happy day. Nor should their comic friends select it as a spot by nature fitted for the cracking of old jokes. But the ruins teem with interest to more sober-minded folk. Not merely are there sermons in these old deserted stones, but books of wisdom to be read in the once running lava-brooks. And any man who may be seriously inclined will find no lack of things to think about in a visit to Vesuvius, and the heathen place it buried—only fifteen brief years after that St. Paul had died for Christ.

"MY LADY DAFFODIL."

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

ERIC WELDON walked with hurried steps in the direction of the mill. He took the road in which he generally met Estelle going to her work; but to-day he caught no sight of the well-known figure. He found himself, at last, facing the mill—at the spot where he had first seen her. For a moment he hesitated. He had never once been asked to enter the house. He had never even seen the grandfather whom he set down as a domestic tyrant, in spite

of the affection Estelle evidently bore him.

But the sharp pain of the fear that he might not see her again, made him forget all prudence. He went quickly up the narrow flagged way, without considering what he should do or say if he met the surly owner of the mill.

He knew the window of the room in which Estelle generally sat when at home.

Instead of knocking at the door, the same reckless disregard of consequences made him turn in the direction of the window. His heart gave one quick bound, and then seemed to stand still. She was sitting at the window, her head bent over her work. At the same moment she raised it, and her eyes met his. A startled flash of glad recognition lighted it up, while a hot flush dyed her face from brow to chin. The next second he was at the window, thinking only of the face looking out of the mill-window at him, not even troubling to assure himself of the fact that the room was empty, and that there was no stern guardian to break in upon their interview.

"Come out into the valley," he said, his voice just a little unsteady. "You ought not to be sitting working at home this lovely morning."

She had risen to her feet, her work lying on the ground, as it had fallen from her hands.

She looked down at it, then, without a word, went towards the door of the room. She was only a few minutes before she appeared at the house-door with her hat; but those few minutes gave Eric time to bring his feelings better under control.

She, too, was a little graver when she came out, and her face seemed to have paled as his had done. They walked along without saying much, making only commonplace remarks about the beauty of the spring morning, until they turned into the Daffodil Valley.

They wandered half-way through it, then suddenly stopped to look and listen.

The dew was still sparkling on the grasses and golden daffodil bells. The birds were singing their sweetest song. The warm softness of the air was fresh with the breath of morning, and they two, as they stood there with the daffodils and grasses springing up round their feet, seemed to have the whole world of glad delight and joyous love to themselves.

"Isn't it just jolly!" exclaimed Weldon, who, though intensely appreciative of outer influences, was not gifted with poetical

language to express his appreciation. "Aren't you glad that I made you come out? I think it is an awful shame for your grandfather to make you work. They say, at the inn, he is rich enough."

"I think he does not wish me to forget that I belong to the working-people. There is not much to be done at home, and he is afraid that I might take to wasting my time with fancies."

"Yes; but you might do other work." In spite of himself, his eyes fell on her hands as he spoke.

She saw the momentary glance, and her face flushed.

"Yes," she answered, looking down, too, at the offending hands. "They don't look like those of the young ladies for whom I work. Even needlework does not spoil them like scrubbing and dusting."

"I would rather see you scrub and dust in your own house than go out to sew for other people," he exclaimed, with angry, unreasonable resentment against fate, her grandfather, the people who employed her.

Again the same hot flush dyed her cheeks—a flush that seemed to have more of pain or pride in it than shame.

"Some women must do the work," she said.

Something in the words, rather than the tone—for they were spoken in a simple, matter-of-fact voice—went straight to the heart of the young man.

He forgot everything in the passion of tumultuous feeling that surged over him. Resolves, promises, mother, the social opinion, his so much valued ambition—even himself.

"I cannot bear it!" he exclaimed sharply. "It is too horrible to think of you, slaving and toiling, at the beck and call of all these people. Oh, Estelle, my darling, don't shrink away from me! Have not you guessed, all this time, how I love you? Will you be my wife, and I will take you away for ever from all this miserable life? Ah, now I have frightened you. Don't you believe—"

She drew her hands away from his.

"Your wife!" she echoed in slow, incredulous tones; "your wife! I, a common working-girl!"

"Common! You may have had to earn your living, but you are fit to stand in the presence of the Queen herself. Oh, Estelle—"

At that moment, when his love and passion had broken its barriers of prudence, she had never seemed so desirable

as she did now, the morning sunlight falling on her face, her colour coming and going, her lips trembling, her eyes shy, ashamed, doubting, all in one.

He did not even wait for her answer. He drew her suddenly to him.

She did not resist, for he had not given her time to think. A low, tremulous sigh broke from her, and then her face was hidden on his breast. Their conversation was only broken after that.

Eric Weldon, in the perfect happiness of a satisfied love, gave himself up wholly to the delight of the moment. He would not think; he would not look beyond.

Estelle stood close to him, her face flushing and paling beneath his looks, her lips, shy, and still half frightened, returning his kisses, and that was sufficient.

Strange to say, the one who brought all this strange, new content into his life was the first one to raise a shadow upon it.

She had moved a little away from him. She was not a girl who gave her caresses easily; and her very reserve, adding to the dignity of her girlhood, made the young man feel more than ever satisfied with his choice. And now, her eyes fixed on the flower with which she was toying, she said:

"You will tell my grandfather to-night. He will be out all day. I think he will be glad, though."

The question raised into dark, forbidding shapes all the ugly doubts, and suspicions, and pains of the past.

"I don't think he will be angry, though you are a gentleman," she said again, a little startled at his silence, and a shadow falling on her face as she caught sight of his. "He has always been against——"

Eric Weldon had recovered himself.

He must have time to think. He had been acting madly, but he had gone too far to turn. Besides, he could not give her up, this one love of his life. But she was such a child. How could he ever make her understand all the prejudices and differences of his class, without wounding her sensitive pride?

"Yes, dear, I will speak to your grandfather. But I shall not be able to see him to-day. We are going to leave this morning. I—I must go home immediately, but I will write; do you mind that very much?"

"You are going away to-day?"

"Yes, I must." He had taken one step, and now, hating and despising himself, he was driven on to others. "But I will write, the very moment that I can; you see, dear, there are a few difficulties——"

"Oh yes, I know," she said quickly, as he stopped for very shame. "Your people may object. It is only natural. Go back to them first; and if—if my being your wife will do you harm; if they are very angry, don't think of me——"

She could not finish. The tears sprang into her eyes, and with a low sob she let herself be drawn back into his arms.

He comforted her as he could best do, swearing that no obstacles should ever stand in the way of their love; but when the two parted at the mill, half an hour later, it was with the understanding that nothing should be said till he wrote himself to her grandfather. Then he went back to the inn to hurry their departure, longing now to be out of the place, so that he might face and think out the difficulties of his position.

Some of his doubt and troubled excitement seemed to have clouded the atmosphere of the mill. After he left, Estelle Dorey moved about restlessly—unable to settle down to any of her occupations with this strange wonder that had come into her life overpowering her. She could not think, she could not look forward nor back. She could only go over and over again the scene in the Daffodil Valley. That Eric Weldon, with his handsome face, with his winning ways and high-bred manner, should love her, was a fact that her mind refused to grasp, and she could only sit still, living through again the moments when his voice had spoken, his eyes had looked into hers. She could not tell which feeling predominated—fear, wonder, delight. It seemed more like some glimpse into a strange, wonderful land, so far away from the mill, with its monotonous life, its long days, its hard work, its loneliness, that she could scarcely believe, now that the glimpse was past, in the existence of so beautiful a world at all.

Yet all through the restless delight ran a vague trouble and regret. If only he would have told her grandfather at once! How could she meet the old man to-night with this secret upon her? If only Eric Weldon had not been her superior by birth! But her grandfather's prejudice was so strong against men of the upper class. What would he say to this? Yet was this the only fear that troubled her? Was there no other doubt, the shadow of which rested even upon her lover himself. Her troubled reflections, as she sat by the open window, at which Eric Weldon had seen her two hours before—it seemed weeks

now—were suddenly disturbed by someone else standing outside it.

“Miss Dorey!”

She started, and rose with a frightened look in her eyes, as they discovered the new comer.

It was Wilfred Arnot.

Her first thought was of Eric, and her own previous troubled reflections gave a colour to her thought.

She even fancied that Mr. Arnot looked pale.

“Is anything the matter?” she asked, bending forward to speak. “Mr. Weldon——”

“Did I frighten you?” he asked gently, though he smiled slightly as he saw her white face and startled eyes. “You were in such a deep day-dream. I only came to say good-bye. Do you mind coming round to the door? This casement was not made for farewells.”

He seemed anxious to give her time to recover herself, as evidently she was still too startled to speak quietly. She did as he told her, and after a moment's delay came round to the door.

He was standing with his back to it, but he turned immediately, though her footfall was so light that he could scarcely have heard it.

He looked at her, as she stood framed in the grey doorway, then his eyes fell for a second on the stone-slabs.

“You are going away, Mr. Arnot?” she asked, breaking the momentary pause, her voice sweet and steady as usual.

“Yes, I am going away. I thought I would run over and say good-bye. We mayn't meet again for some time. My friend has told me,” he went on in still the same quiet tone, as he saw the flushing of her face at the words “some time,” implying the future meeting, “and I am glad. His choice does him honour. I should like to say how much I think so. It can't matter now, because you belong to him, and—don't misjudge me—he is my friend, and I don't grudge him his happiness. But—well, as I said before, it does not matter, only—if I could have won the treasure without harm to him, I should have held it as the dearest thing heaven or earth could have given me. Don't think I am saying this to pain you. Do you not think that I have understood all along that my hope was foolish? You, like the true woman you are, have given your hand only where your heart could go. But

I am—I should just like to say this, because, you know, sometimes troubles come, and we want friends in this life, and if I could ever be of service I want you to think of me, and believe that no task you should ever ask would be anything but the dearest pleasure of my life.”

And all the time his voice was quiet and steady, as if he were merely discussing the most trivial topic. His lips were perhaps paler than usual, but his eyes looked down at her as the eyes of a brother.

She stood there silent, troubled, amazed. But that the words must mean something, she could scarcely believe that he was laying bare to her the secret of his own heart. He loved her, too, and what could she give him? Nothing. He saw that too, and he did not try to make her break the silence, but went on again:

“You will believe what I have said about the reason for my speaking? Only the desire to be of service to you if ever you should need me, made me give you this pain now. You do believe it—that I did not think of my own selfish gratification?”

“Yes.”

“That is right. I should not like you or Eric Weldon to imagine that I was untrue. Now, may I ask you just one more thing in token of your trust? Will you give me those flowers that you are wearing, and——” He stopped. Perhaps he could not continue.

She took the daffodils, which she had gathered that morning in the valley, from her dress, and held them out to him without a word.

“Thank you,” he said, and he touched them lightly with his lips. “You will forgive me; I did not——”

But her pity, her amazement, a strange pain stirring at her own heart, that the very love and wonder that had come into her life had itself raised, overcame her trouble and silence.

“Listen,” she said. “I believe you. I trust you as Mr. Weldon's friend. And to prove my trust to you, if ever I need a friend—if ever you can help me, and you alone, I will ask you to give me back those flowers, and if you have them——”

“I shall have them,” he said simply, taking the hand she held out to him:

“Good-bye!”

“Good-bye. Heaven bless you both,” he said, then turned away and went down the flagged path.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXXVI. DARKNESS IN SUNSHINE.

A KILLING climate, failing health, and increasing poverty; months of daily suspense, and daily disappointment; a future that begins to have no hope in it, no light to lead one on, but only a darkness from which human nature cannot help shrinking; this state of things makes young romance grow old, so that its bright flame dies down into ashes and weariness.

Theo was not superhuman, and the chief thought in her mind that summer was, How is it to end? Not that she had lost courage, for she would never let Gerald despair, and when she was most ill, mind and body both worn out with fever, some new strength had come to her, and made it impossible to give in and die. She could not leave Gerald alone there; she could not let him leave her behind, when some day the time came for him to go back to England, to that dear home-country of which she could hardly think now without tears. One can easily understand why she wrote such short letters to Helen and Hugh; she could not bear them to know what sort of life she was leading. Sometimes she thought that some day, when she felt stronger, she would write a letter to her grandmother, and tell her everything; but that day did not come. And when she was a little better, Gerald always wanted her, or Combe was ill and must be nursed, or some sick neighbour must be visited.

And now the baby had opened his eyes on this dry, dusty, dazzling world; and he did not like it, as Gerald told Ada in

that letter, which would have vexed Theo if she had read it. He was the smallest, weakest, saddest baby that ever cried his first hours away; but he made his mother strangely happy; he was never out of her sight for a moment, and almost always in her arms. She thought he cried less when she was holding him, and bending her face over him; his dark, melancholy eyes looked up into hers, and she thought he could understand all the mysterious fancies that were in her mind about him, and feel all the love that was in her heart.

She did not see or know that the doctor and all the good women shook their heads over him, and was only a little amused at the extreme gravity with which Bob Stirling regarded him when he saw him for the first time. She looked up smiling, puzzled by Bob's unusual solemnity.

"Do you think he is like anybody? Is he like Gerald?" she said.

"I don't know, Mrs. Fane. I suppose he is like a little angel," said Bob. "I'm awfully afraid Kimberley won't agree with him."

"But that is just what I think," she said, answering the first part of his speech. "He will be like Gerald by-and-by, but now he has only that solemn angel-look; as if he saw such wonderful things that we can't see. He will come down to us presently, and forget them, I am afraid."

"Trailing clouds of glory," Bob muttered, and then he coloured very much, and went away as soon as he could into the dust and the sun-blaze.

He walked off gravely to his sorting, thinking of something the doctor had said to him the day before.

He was very sorry for his friends. He could have afforded quite well to go home to England, any time this year, but somehow he could not bear to go, leaving them

to sink deeper and deeper in misfortune; and he reproached himself now for having advised Gerald to have anything to do with diamonds. The poor fellow was unlucky—that was plain; even his wife's sorting brought no good fortune to him; he was known throughout the camp as an unlucky man, and he knew it himself, and was becoming a little desperate. Bob Stirling sympathised very strongly with Mrs. Fane, when she wished they were all away from Kimberley; he thought he knew, even better than she did, how almost necessary it was for Gerald to get away; but to Gerald himself that seemed impossible. Theo was too weak, and too much devoted to her baby, to argue with him much; yet sometimes there were arguments, in which, of course, neither of them convinced the other. Then Gerald was very irritable, and then penitent; and Theo, perhaps, would make things worse by being a little proud and cold; and somehow it was not only outward circumstances that made them both unhappy. He, perhaps, was the more unhappy of the two; she did not think, as he sat and looked at her with little Gerald in her arms, what wild, despairing thoughts were passing through the poor fellow's mind. And a year ago, he and she both thought that one could have nothing apart from the other! Now it seemed as if his one passion was for diamonds, hers for her baby. Was it possible? Could little Gerald really, in his innocence, be a sort of separation between his father and mother?

One day Gerald came home as usual, and walked heavily into the half-dark room. He was very thin, and worn, and sunburnt; his eyes were hollow; his digger's clothes looked rough and careless; he was tired and slouching, and half stumbled at the door.

"Take care, dear; you'll wake him," said Theo softly from the sofa.

Gerald muttered something, and flung his hat into a corner, and himself into a large chair at the other side of the room.

"Come here," said Theo; "are you very tired, poor boy?"

"Of course," he said; but he did not move; and presently she said in a low voice: "I can't come to you, because I don't want to disturb him; he has been crying all day."

"He never does anything but cry, poor little beggar!" said Gerald. "I wonder the doctor can't stop that; it's perfectly awful."

"There might be things," said Theo, "but Combe says they wouldn't agree with him. He is so weak, you see—so delicate."

"I believe Combe knows nothing on earth about babies."

Theo did not answer; it was not worth while to defend Combe's knowledge; but presently she asked the usual question:

"Have you any good news to-day?"

"I should have told you long ago if I had," said Gerald.

There was a long pause, and then she said:

"I wonder how this will end, Gerald? A month ago, when I told you I could not keep him here when it was hot, you said we must wait a month, and then decide something. I'm sure the heat is already bad for him. Mrs. Jackson says so—and, Gerald, she was here this afternoon, and she said he grows smaller every day."

Her voice failed, leaving a sort of sad echo in the room. There she lay on the large, dark sofa, all white, holding her baby in her arms; his little face was pinched and wasted, his tired little eyelids were closed; he looked patient, poor tiny thing, but hardly peaceful or happy; it was only a few minutes' rest from the sorrow and pain that seemed to have belonged to him ever since he was born.

"Don't let her bother you; it is his nature to be small," said Gerald rather impatiently; and after a minute or two he added: "He's not so weak as you think. When I went off this morning, he took hold of my finger and held it like a man."

"Gerald, you are such a long way off. Do come here!" said Theo under her breath.

"I shall wake him if I do."

"Very well, I can't help it."

He came to her very gently then, and kissed her, and looked into the little sleeping face; and presently, in silence, went lightly back to his chair again.

"Sell it to-morrow, dear, and let us go away," she said.

"Ah, that's all very fine," he answered despairingly. "But what are we going to live on? And—look here—the man who buys it will have all the good luck. He'll find a big stone the very first day, and go on finding them, and make his fortune in a few months. And if he does, why shouldn't I?"

"Simply because you don't," said Theo.

"That is such nonsense. Of course it is despairing work—killing work, nothing

but failure day after day—who knows that if I don't? If it was a bad claim, there would be reason in what you say. But it's a good one, as you know; the last fellow made his fortune out of it, so why shouldn't I? One only wants patience."

"Patience is such a dreadful thing," said Theo, half to herself.

"How can you be so childish?" said Gerald with a sort of groan, twisting himself in his chair. "I'm doing all I can, the best I can for you and him, and you won't even wait to see what two or three months will bring."

"Why should they bring anything more than the last seven, or eight, or nine?"

"Because they must. It's impossible, it's against reason that they shouldn't. It would be madness to sell the claim now."

"Madness!" repeated Theo. "Sometimes madness comes from staying here too long. Do you remember that farm, Gerald?"

He laughed.

"It depends upon you to fulfil that prophecy," he said,

Theo sighed. After a few minutes she said:

"If the claim is such a good one, you would sell it well, and then we should be all right."

"It has a bad name now, you see," said her husband. "It certainly would not pay me anything like what I have spent upon it. Stirling knows it wouldn't. Everybody knows it would be ridiculous to attempt selling now. I must stick to it. I'm sorry you hate it all so desperately."

"Am I unreasonable?" said Theo.

She did not try to argue with him or persuade him any more, for she was very tired. After all, she thought, as far as she was concerned, it did not matter much. She had lived through all these months of fever and wretchedness, and she would probably go on living; she was not afraid now that she would die. And if Gerald could ever be happy and fortunate, and could carry out what he had set his heart on, perhaps it did not matter that her cheek had lost its young roundness, and that her pretty, delicate colouring was gone for ever, and that she looked and felt years, instead of months, older than the girl who had left England, full of eager, restless happiness, to join him in this country. No, it did not matter at all about her, but it did matter about the baby; the horrors of that climate, the dust and the flies which she had laughed at,

became real horrors now that they tormented him. She was uneasy about him, though perhaps not really anxious, for people had been too soft-hearted to frighten her. She could not bear the thought of her child growing up in this country, a boy like other boys she saw at Kimberley. She talked to him about it sometimes in confidence, for when she said these things to Gerald he was rather hurt and angry, and asked her if she really thought he meant to stay at Kimberley always.

After all, perhaps he was right in a certain way. He thought of the future, and was doing his best, as he said, for her and the child; it was her duty, then, to try and bear the present for herself and him; yet if Theo had been strong and independent still, if that climate had not had its fatal effect upon her mind and body, one can hardly imagine that for any reason she would have consented to stay.

However, after that evening she did not say much more, and seemed more patient, and tried to smile and encourage Gerald when he came back day after day with the same sad story of failure. About this time she had another attack of fever, which left her very weak; and little Gerald grew lighter and smaller every day, and cried more than ever, when he could not lie in his mother's arms. When she was getting better she had a long affectionate letter from Helen, full of the charms and health and beauty of her two children. Theo would sympathise now, she thought. Theo took her own baby in her arms then, and laid her face against his, wetted his poor little cheek with sad, hot tears which made him cry.

One hot afternoon, when she was better, but hardly strong enough to walk, Combe was obliged to go out, and left her on the sofa with the baby. She was alone in the house, except that the faithful Zulu was lying asleep in the sunniest corner of the compound, and Toby, the dog, sat with one eye open in the porch. Some Kafirs were holding one of their feasts just outside the camp, and there was a great noise of wild music, and singing, and shouts, and yells, which yet was not exactly a disturbing or discordant noise, as it floated in at the open door, and the windows with their venetian shutters.

The mail-cart from Cape Town had just driven into the camp, and one of its few passengers, pale, worn, sunburnt, dizzy with the extreme fatigue of that long journey without pause or rest, asked his way

through the blazing streets to Mr. Fane's house. Toby barked at him violently, as he came up to the gate in the reed fence, and opened it. The dog then changed his mind, smelt at him and wagged his tail, with the instinct of some dogs for their master's relations. Hugh North steadied himself with one hand against the porch, and waited a moment, peering into the dark interior. He heard a low moaning sound, and saw a woman walking up and down, with steady, measured steps, which yet sometimes seemed to fail and totter a little, as if she was almost losing command over herself.

As Hugh's dazzled eyes became used to the darkness, he saw that it was Theo, and that she had a baby in her arms. He thought there was something very strange in her look, and manner, and way of walking; and in that great heat he turned suddenly cold, and shivered all over, and wished he had gone first to the mine to find Gerald Fane, and to hear how she was, instead of startling her by his unexpected arrival.

And yet how he had hurried to reach her! how even the mail-cart with its frantic, dashing haste and bustle, which frightened ordinary travellers, had not been half quick enough for him!

He stood still for a minute, afraid to go forward or to attract her attention; but she very soon saw him, and came to the doorway with the child in her arms. Hugh looked at her; and saw in a moment every detail of that terrible change—so it was to him. Yet Theo was looking curiously brilliant that afternoon; her eyes were shining with their beautiful brown light, her cheeks and lips were burning red. She smiled with pleasure as she met Hugh, and gave him her right hand, and held up her face to kiss him; the touch of her hand and of her lips was like fire.

"Come in, dear Hugh; I am so glad," she said. "Are you starving? Have you come from London to-day? Combe will be in very soon, and you shall have some dinner. Sit down; that's Gerald's chair, he will be so glad to see you in it. And how are Uncle Henry—and Nell?"

By this time Hugh had quite forgotten his fatigue, his hunger, in the inexpressible terror of looking at Theo and listening to her. It was fever, he felt sure—thank Heaven, only fever!—which of course gave her the strength to walk up and down in that restless way. He was only thankful that she was not too delirious to know him. He sat down for a moment, as she

told him, and watched her pacing up and down. Now and then she bent her face over the baby and moaned a little; the baby lay quite still—asleep, he thought. He wished she would sit down, but hardly knew, at first, what to say to her.

"Nell is very well, thanks; she sent her love to you, and so did Lady Redcliff—at least I think so," he said, trying to speak lightly. "And I saw Miss Fane before I left; she sent a number of messages. You see I have accepted your invitation, Theo. And where's Mr. Fane? at his work, I suppose."

She hardly seemed to hear his slow, gentle voice at all.

"I do wish grandmamma knew all about it," she said after a pause. "She would be very angry at first, but not really, and we might go abroad and forget it. Do you know—it is so funny—I sometimes forget where I am."

"You were always rather absent," said Hugh. "But I must say, with a sun like this beating down on one's head, it would be difficult to ignore Africa."

Then there was another pause, a long one this time. He could not sit still; he began to wonder when her husband or Combe would come in, to relieve him from the awful strain of this meeting. As she paced up and down, he got up, and stepped forward as she passed him.

"Won't you be tired, Theo? Hadn't you better sit down?" he said, with a little of his old gentle authority.

She lifted her beautiful wild eyes to his face, as he stood close to her; then they fell again on her baby.

"He likes me to walk about; it sends him to sleep," she said.

"But he is asleep now," said Hugh.

"Fast asleep, my little child," she murmured. "He is not crying now. Gerald says he always cries. But look at him, Hugh; did you ever see him so quiet and peaceful? He really is smiling; he looks as if he would never cry any more."

She trembled and tottered a little as she stood. Hugh put out his arm to support her, and she leaned against him for a moment, pressing the baby closer.

"Oh, Hugh," she whispered, "you don't know what he is, or what things we tell each other."

Hugh hardly heard what she said, for he, too, was looking intently down into the baby's face. It was, indeed, a peaceful little face, white as marble, and motionless; and there was something on the tiny

wasted features which might be called a smile. And as Hugh looked, and felt the mother tremble as she held her sleeping child, there came into his mind the strange, solemn conviction that she had spoken the truth when she said that little Gerald would never cry again.

"My poor Theo!" he thought; but he kept himself perfectly calm, and, to make quite sure, he touched the baby's little hand with his finger, and did not, by any start or exclamation, betray that the life was no longer in it.

"Listen to me, dear Theo," he said, very low and gravely. "I know you have been ill, and it is not good for you to stand and walk about so long. Now, will you sit down, and let me hold the baby and walk about with him? You must not forget that he is my godson, Theo."

She made no resistance, but let him guide her to the sofa, and let him take the child into his arms, and sank back almost unconscious on her pillows.

"Now he is in my care," said Hugh in the same low voice, "and you are to lie still and rest while I take him to Combe. Then I shall come back and talk to you."

He left her, and walked on into the dining-room.

"Combe," he said, "where are you?"

But there was no answer. Plainly, there was no one in the house but himself and Theo. He looked round him with a wild anxiety, not daring to carry the child back into the room where she was. It seemed to him that she was on the verge of brain-fever, and that a sudden shock might be terrible. How she was to be told he did not know; he did not dare to think. He saw another door, and went on through it into the bedroom beyond. There he saw the baby's tiny white cot, and gently laid him down. He felt the little heart, but it was still; tried vainly and hopelessly to call back the life that was gone. No; little Gerald had found the world too painful, even in his mother's arms, and had gone back, a pure baby-spirit, to the peace from which he came. Hugh North's eyes were burning with tears when he turned away from him, afraid to stay too long, and met Combe at the door. She was rushing in in wild amazement, for her mistress had told her that Captain North had carried the child away, and Combe, thinking that this was only a feverish fancy, flew to look for him. Hugh held up his hand to keep her quiet.

"It was over before I came," he whispered.

He went back into the drawing-room, where Theo was talking to herself in low, sweet tones, rather indistinctly, moaning and sighing now and then. Hugh had forgotten all about himself; he was now thinking of poor Gerald Fane, and wishing to go out and meet him; but he could not leave Theo alone. Then quick steps came near the door, and a cheerful whistling, which silenced itself as they approached nearer, and then Gerald almost darted into the house, and sprang across the room to his wife, holding out something in his hand.

"There, what do you say now? Who was right, after all? Two big stones, the least of them over six carats! If you and he were strong enough, we would be off to Barkly to-morrow. I don't care what I do, now that the luck has turned."

He had knelt down beside his wife's sofa, not seeing, in his eagerness, in that darkened room, that anyone else was there. She put out both her hands, and laid them round his neck, drawing him close to her, and to Hugh's intense surprise, she said very distinctly:

"He will never cry again."

"What do you mean?" said Gerald.

"Ask Hugh; he knows," she said.

But Hugh had sprung up from his chair and gone out into the porch; he felt as if he could not bear any more.

THE WHITE QUAKERS.

In the year 1834, a man named Joshua Jacob was an important and highly-esteemed member of the little Quaker society in Dublin; he took a prominent part at the monthly meeting, and was frequently "moved" to speak at the gatherings for worship. Being also a very "plain" friend, he was, all things considered, justly regarded as one of the shining lights of the community.

Jacob's great desire was to root out all the innovations which had arisen since the days when Loe and Burneyate first spread the doctrines of Divine Light in Ireland, and thus to restore to the Quaker society what he deemed to be its pristine purity and simplicity. In imitation of George Fox, he also claimed to have "revelations" and "openings," or "first guidings," and, in a word, set up for a prophet. His first utterances were received by the Dublin

friends with great respect, and, as they naturally felt proud of having within their scanty pale a man of such distinguished gifts, they obeyed his dictates as reverently as if they were to be found in the Book of Discipline itself.

Jacob was particularly solicitous that the Irish Friends should return to many of the primitive customs which had long fallen into disuse. They were to revive the cumbersome phraseology of Burrough and Apjohn, and to reduce life to the simplicity inculcated by George Fox, and as a rider principally his own, to assume an attitude of passive antagonism to all persons outside the sect.

George Fox, argued Jacob, was inspired by "best wisdom" to originate and establish Quakerism, and had printed rules and bye-laws for its guidance; if these were inspired—and all Quakers at that time professed to believe that they were—every departure from them must have been wrong. The Dublin Friends could not well avoid admitting the force of this argument, and, consequently, set to work to follow Jacob's directions. The revivalist movement soon became an enthusiastic one, and might have proved very valuable to the sect, had not Jacob and a few of the more fanatical of his adherents soon set up a claim to possess "best wisdom" of a superior quality to that which guided the "man in the leathern breeches."

The Quakers dubbed this movement the "New Light," and, it is said, added fresh rules to the Book of Discipline, in accordance with its directions; but as these alterations are not to be found in the records of the society, this is extremely doubtful.

All seemed to promise well, but the Jacob party continued to have so many "first guidings," and those of such an extraordinary character, that the common-sense of the Quakers at length triumphed over their credulity. Jacob, however, succeeded in convincing the meeting of the enormous sin of wearing mourning, or of harbouring any musical instrument in their houses, and even persuaded them to declare that any Friend who committed these offences should be disowned.

George Fox, as everyone knows, insisted on great plainness of dress, and bright colours have ever since been regarded as uncanonical by his followers; but Jacob carried the principle a step farther, and announced that any shade of colour was inconsistent with Christianity. All men

and women, he decreed, should dress in white, or the nearest approach they could obtain. By way of example, he adopted a suit composed of shoes of untanned leather, unbleached cotton stockings, white flannel breeches and coat, and a broad-brimmed hat of the lightest procurable tint; and in this costume he appeared at the meeting, accompanied by his wife, who was clad from head to foot in coarse unbleached calico. He had his house whitewashed inside and out, the woodwork was painted white, the handsome furniture was replaced by rough deal, and the very patchwork quilt was discarded in favour of one innocent of sinful hues. Mrs. Jacob was an implicit believer in her husband's inspiration, and outdid him in enthusiasm. One morning she collected every scrap of crockery they possessed which was defiled with a tinge of gold or colour, and broke them on the doorstep to the amusement of the passers-by. As her husband remarked that her action was a noble deed, she fetched out the mirrors and ornaments, and having smashed them too, was rewarded by the conjugal commendation of being a noble woman.

A first guiding such as this, entailing, as it did, considerable pecuniary loss upon themselves, the Dublin Quakers could not believe to be the result of "best wisdom." Whether in consequence of it they disowned Jacob or he them is uncertain, but he ceased to belong to the society immediately afterwards, and with the help of about a hundred persons who still believed in him, he set up a sect of his own, of which he was, of course, the head. They termed themselves White, and the orthodox Friends the Black, Quakers, to show that while they were revelling in the light of truth, the others were still in the darkness of iniquity.

Both Jacob and the greater part of his followers were persons of considerable means, and they set up a socialistic establishment near Dublin, where they lived in a quiet and unostentatious, but peculiar and expensive fashion. At first they tried hard to force the Friends to break their rule of never engaging in a controversy, and published a monthly paper called "The Truth as it is in Jesus," in the columns of which they asserted, and endeavoured to prove, that they were the only true followers of Fox and Barclay; but as the others would not condescend to notice their virulent twaddle, this remarkable production was soon discontinued.

As Jacob was believed to be inspired, no command he gave was too ridiculous to be implicitly obeyed. As I have said, most of his followers were people of wealth and position, yet they willingly performed insane acts, and suffered great privations. An aged woman, who had lived in luxury all her life, was directed to clothe herself in a single thin cotton gown, and early one winter's morning to take a basin of porridge, and eat the contents on the steps of the Bank of Ireland, as a sign unto the people. Another delicate woman who had offended him, he ordered to do all the washing for the establishment (consisting of more than a hundred people), and this she did till her health broke down, when he permitted her to die uncared-for and alone. An account of her death, which still exists, is not pleasant reading.

In Notes and Queries for 1861, there is a record of a visit to the White Quaker settlement: "I paid them a visit once," it says, "when they rented a house and demesne near Clondalkin, which formerly belonged to Lord Kildarden. Not being allowed by law to walk as they wished in the naked simplicity of their Adamical forefather, they adopted the white garments as being next best. Everything with them was white within and without, and they had even a white jaunting-car. They went barefoot, but some, I believe, were allowed the indulgence of white shoes. They lived wholly on vegetables, and professed to cultivate silence extensively. They also cultivated polygamy (not very productive of silence, one would think), and were in many respects more like the Mormons than the followers of Tryon (a vegetarian, teetotaler, and anti-tobacconist), who, though a fanatic, was an honourable and upright man. I shall never forget the White Quaker who kept the gate; he was a bare-footed man in white, with a red beard, and came slowly to open the gate, reading, as he came, a book in his hand, then silently admitted me."

Dublin was not the only place where these fanatics had a meeting-house, and at one time the sect bade fair to become numerous; but its members were so constantly before the magistrates, that it got a deservedly bad name. They imitated George Fox in going into churches and disturbing the congregation by testifying against the "men wearing white shirts," nor did they leave the meetings of their old society alone. One Sunday morning

two White Quaker sisters and a brother entered the Dublin Friends' meeting-house, when the congregation had been seated for about half an hour in silence. For a few minutes they did not speak; then, as they turned to leave, they all cried, "Woe to this bloody house and to this bloody people!" But they were not always so dignified. On another occasion they tried hard to break up a meeting, and when the Friends endeavoured to turn them out, threw themselves full length on the floor and resisted their efforts by kicking, screaming, and swearing.

The White Quakers were constantly quoting Scripture in support of their actions, and, judging from the specimens which remain, were certainly clever in making it fit with their wishes. One favourite text was, "to the pure all things are pure," and, as they deemed themselves the "pure," this text was used to cover the most monstrous licentiousness. When their immorality became known, some Friends, whose wives had joined the society, obtained the assistance of the police, stormed Jacob's residence, and carried off as their loot each his own wife.

One of Jacob's victims was the widowed mother of several young children, and she gave up to him not only her own money, but that of her family. The relatives of the children tried to force Jacob to return it, but although he suffered imprisonment for a couple of years, he managed to stick to his booty in defiance of the law.

In 1843, the measure of their iniquity was full. The society was deeply in debt, and its leader was in prison. Acting under the direction of the Court of Chancery, the meeting-house in William Street, Dublin, was broken open by a body of soldiers, who thoroughly searched the place, and then, under a distress warrant, commenced a packed auction. According to a White Quaker broadside, the soldiers so hurried the auctioneer from room to room that the whole furniture fetched a mere nothing, and they also accuse them of having kept away all the people who appeared able to pay a fair price. A sister named Elizabeth Pim threatened everybody who purchased anything in a manner blasphemously grotesque, though doubtless intended to be solemn and prophetic, but when she heard that the auctioneer had sent for the police, Mrs. Pim was "moved" to be quiet.

When the house was completely stripped, for everything, even to the very Bible, was

sold, the few White Quakers who still remained got some straw and lay down on it, "rejoicing that they were thought worthy to suffer for their religion." But the society had received its death-blow. Its members removed from Clondalkin, and for a time lived close to Dublin. One after another deserted, and ere the end of a decade the society was practically extinct. The founder, Joshua Jacob, seems to have been one of the first to desert, and is said to have found a resting-place in the bosom of the Church of Rome.

Absurd as the schism was, it did great damage to Quakerism in Dublin. Many of the friends, dreading the doctrine of inspiration, enrolled themselves within the pale of the Established Church, some joined various bodies of Dissenters, and a few turned their backs on religion as a thing only fit for knaves and their dupes.

Of few religious sects can we say, as unhappily we must of the White Quakers, that during its whole existence it made no one purer, wiser, or better, that it taught no useful lesson, and did no good works; its only result was to show for the thousandth time into what depths of folly it is possible for misguided enthusiasm to sink its votaries.

A MARSHAL'S TRAINING.

"THE victories of the Republic," we are sometimes told, "were won by the old soldiers of the royal armies." It may be so. Certainly at the beginning the Republicans made a poor hand of it. But France undoubtedly lost useful soldiers by casting out her noblesse. They were hereditary fighters; and, grand though it is for the career to be so freely open to talent that stable-boys, small tapsters, and gardeners' sons may win the Marshal's bâton, still hereditary aptitude counts for a good deal; and Bugeaud, who was of that small nobility which always (as our own civil war shows) stands up most stiffly for its privileges, became as able a marshal as a very son of the people like Soult. He was Thomas Robert Bugeaud de la Piconnerie, youngest child of the Marquis of that ilk, by Françoise, daughter of Count Sutton de Clonard, who came also of a fighting-stock; for the Suttons belonged to that Irish Brigade, which we lost and France gained after the capitulation of Limerick. Both families took their share of war by sea as well as land. A

Sutton de Clonard was second in command in La Peyrouse's ill-fated expedition, and Ambroise, an elder brother of our Marahal, was serving under him; the former perished, the latter came home. Bugeaud was one of a family of seven; his father—a man of a terrible temper, who has got mixed up in the legend of the Grand Veneur, and is still thought by the peasantry to haunt the woods of La Durantie at night, on a great white horse, with eyes of fire, following a pack of fierce dogs, and attended by a troop of squires as wild as himself—was one of twenty-three.

In those days the Church was the resource of younger sons and of unmarried daughters. The eldest son got the property; the second, the chevalier, "payait de sa personne" for the family's privilege of nobility by serving His Majesty. He was bound to go into the army, unless bodily disqualification prevented him. Of the rest, those who had no stomach for fighting might become abbés if they were worldly-minded, monks if they were really religious. The La Piconneries were like the rest, and, when the first breath of the Revolution blew down the religious houses of Perigord and Limousin, the Marquis gave up La Durantie to a whole colony of uncles, cousins, and aunts who had got turned out of their convents. Their nobility, however, had not hindered them from doing something to provide pensions for all these idle mouths. The ironworks at La Grandumas, their other château, were still working; and the Marshal, a thorough aristocrat, as proud of his descent as a Spanish grandee, used to joke about his grandfather having been a smith who earned a lot of money for his idle son to make ducks and drakes of. There was always a good deal of Italian common-sense in regard to trade among the French noblesse of the south. From the first introduction of glass-blowing they had seized on that as a noble craft, the idea being that it was work with the mouth, not with the hands. How the Marquises of La Piconnerie reconciled ironfounding with the pride of Perigord nobility, I do not know; but they did somehow, and thus in spite of inconveniently large families managed to rub on. The Marshal's father did what he could to ruin them. He did not, indeed, go to court, and waste his money at Versailles; he had not money enough to think of that. But instead of dividing his time between his two châteaux, like an exemplary country-squire, he lived in the family mansion in Golden Jug Street,

Limoges; and there our Marshal was born in 1784, and was at once destined for the Church (being third son), his title from his cradle being M. l'Abbé. Certainly the châteaux were not inviting. The word is deceptive; one thinks of a castle, when one ought to be thinking of something very much less dignified than those manor-houses turned into farmhouses of which modern improvements (!) have still left us a good many in some counties.

In Ireland, where the landlords and the farmers look on one another pretty much as noblesse and peasants did in France before the Revolution, one might find a good many "castles" as poverty-stricken as La Durantie; but they would not have the attempts at ornament—in summer bunches of flowers in the very old earthenware vases; in winter "trophies" of beet-roots and apples, and miniature sheaves—which lighted up the low, dark living-room.

This room had a rough unplaned floor laid on the bare earth; but then there was a fine walnut sideboard across the whole of one end, and a massive table to match. In one bedroom was a looking-glass, and two grand old bedsteads with splendid silk curtains. The hall and kitchen were pitched with cobbles; and round the other sides of the quadrangle were cellar, barn, workshops, store-rooms. The courtyard had a big manure-heap in the middle. In a field in the middle of the farm was a tower, sole remnant of the feudal hold of La Piconnerie, said to have been destroyed by the English.

Well, the Revolution came, and the nobles had a bad time of it. Patrick, the eldest of the La Piconnerie family, a spoilt child whom his father had always kept with him at Limoges, emigrated; so did the sailor, Ambroise. The father and mother and youngest daughter were put in prison. The eldest daughter was married; the second, Phillis, the Marshal's good genius through life, was then sixteen years old, and at once began, along with the third daughter, to make shirts, stitching away from morning to night to maintain those in prison. The future Marshal, seven years old, cooked, ran errands, and took home the work when it was done. Phillis was very beautiful; and her niece hints that on this account she was often summoned before the revolutionary tribunal. Thomas went with her; and either her beauty or the quiet courage of the children so impressed the judges, that sentence on their parents was delayed and delayed, till, just after their condemna-

tion, Robespierre died, and all prisoners were set free. The mother soon died—not till she had seen little Thomas get his first school-prize; and the father, giving himself up to Limoges life, sent his daughters and his youngest boy to live in the old château. One wonders why he did not emigrate like his elder sons, for his coming to the château was always a terror to the children, none of whom were allowed to speak to him unless they were spoken to. "Never once," said the Marshal, "did he give me a single caress. I do not remember his ever kissing me once."

At La Durantie the children were not alone. There were two old aunts, with nothing but their spinning-wheels, and some clerical uncles, driven out of their monasteries. But the young people were left to themselves, and young Thomas used to get up at daybreak and go out with his gun, and generally managed by dinner-time to have got something to help out the chestnuts and potatoes which were their staple fare. In the afternoons his sisters taught him what little they had learnt in the convent school, and they all got up scenes of Molière and Racine by heart, and acted them. In the evening he went off to fish with the country lads of his own age, most of whom grew up as farmers on the estate. He had no shoes, and, finding sabots soon wore out in cross-country rambles, he made himself sandals with cherry-bark and string. Want of shoes often kept his sisters within doors for months.

Once an invitation came to a grand wedding in the neighbourhood. The girls could not go—that was settled at once—and his patched grey frieze would not do for the brother to go in. Just as he had decided to refuse, one of them remembered to have seen in a closet in the loft a suit that some Marquis had worn at Louis the Fifteenth's court. Brushed, and altered a little by the sisters this answered very well, and the delighted boy got three days' dancing at his first party. So things went on till Thomas was in his eighteenth year. He was passionately fond of field sports—used to try to make his sisters care for them; woke them up one hard winter night to look at a flight of woodcocks waddling in the moonlight over the hard snow. But there was "no future" in field-sports, so he tried to get a clerkship in some large ironworks. "I don't want a gentleman for clerk," replied the iron-master. "The army is the place for you: you will do well there."

So he went, by no means enthusiastic, assuring Sister Phillis that after three or four years he should take his discharge. Napoleon had a weakness for the old noblesse; and so Thomas was able, in 1804, to get into the *Vélites* (Light Division) of the Grenadiers of the Guard, quartered at Fontainebleau—a corps which the First Consul meant to be a nursery for officers. He found it a hard life—scanty food (“How I longed,” he says, “for the chestnuts and potatoes that I used to roast while out shooting!”), and even his rations he made scantier by selling bread to buy books. Candles were too expensive, so he used to wait till the rest were asleep, and then study by the smoky barrack lamp. The old soldiers could not bear his white hands, beardless chin, red hair, and love of books. Mess in those days was a primitive affair. A ring of men stood round the soup-bowl, and each, by turn, dipped in his spoon. One day, Thomas was so hungry that he forgot, and took two spoonfuls. The old soldiers rushed at him, and one of them shouted, as he came on, “With all your geography and your mathematics, you are only a confounded greenhorn!” whereupon the lad, losing his temper too, flung the contents of the bowl in his face. A duel followed, and Thomas killed his man*; but, though this saved him from further annoyance, it did not make him happy. He was constantly bemoaning his hard fate, and the poverty which had forced him to enlist, in letters to Sister Phillis,† and when off duty he would wander into Fontainebleau Forest, and pour forth his woes at the foot of a tree. One day, when life seemed more unbearable even than usual, a comrade happened to meet him, and, calling out, “What are you about, you fool? Don’t cry like a calf. Come to the laundresses’ ball!” took him by the arm, and, before long, had him dancing with one of the prettiest girls in the room. “I was mad for dancing,” he wrote to Phillis—he told

* He had the same luck in his two other duels. In Austria, a sergeant began to insult the daughters of a house where they were quartered. Bugeaud expostulated, and they fought. The sergeant was killed on the spot. So was Deputy Dulong, who, in 1834, insulted him about his having been “gaoler” of the Duchess of Berri.

† His love for Sister Phillis lasted all his life. At a family dinner, a little before he died, he said something that vexed her, and thought he saw a tear. Jumping up, and throwing himself on her neck, the old Marshal burst into tears, crying: “Oh, my darling sister, have I really made you weep? Why, I shall never forgive myself!”

her everything. “The ball did me a deal of good, and I did not go nearly so often to weep among the big trees.”

Before long he had got ambitious. He found that the only way to advancement was “to attract the notice of the chiefs;” and so, though he was annoyed that most of the officers were men of low birth and small means, he tells Phillis how he bragged of himself as a thorough Nimrod, in order to get friends with a captain who was said to have sporting tastes.

It is curious to find that, in Fontainebleau, “the soldier” was exceedingly unpopular. Although the *vélites* were a special corps, they were looked on with contempt, and, strange to say, the officers shared the same fate. Thomas tells Phillis there is only one *vélite* who mixes in good society, and that because he has relations in it. So Thomas devotes his leisure to working at English and geography, goes to mass on Sunday, and hears a sermon, and says his prayers, and is never laughed at for so doing—“several more do the same.” Of course he is hard up, and grumbles that his trustee—his father was dead—is very backward in paying his allowance. Nevertheless, he acts on Polonius’s advice, “Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,” and says, “It is only the louts who go about all day in uniform. If one does not want to be thought a nobody, one has to put on nankeen or kerseymere breeches and silk stockings as soon as one is off duty.” Before long he tells Phillis he is hoping to get into society through the lady in reduced circumstances of whom he rents a room for his private lessons; and he begs for a recommendation from some Perigord relation to help him to get into the theoretical class. “No one gets into it without interest; talents count for nothing, and no one is made a sub-officer who does not get into it.” The regimental school he found a perfect farce. “There are three hundred in the drawing-class!” But worse than this was the order against hiring rooms in the town. This cut him off from his private lessons; he groans to Phillis about the difficulty of even writing a letter, ten in a room, with one small table, and very few caring for anything but making a noise. However, he had got popular with his chiefs. A friend was arrested on his way to fight a duel, and was ordered to state his case on paper. His wrist was sprained, and Bugeaud, who had been his second, had to write for him.

The commandant, Chéry, was very pleased with his production, and often employed him as his secretary; "and so I have had the pleasure of seeing his daughters, who are very ladylike." It shows how things had changed since the Republic had abolished all titles, to find the chiefs addressing him as M. de la Picconnerie. In his letters he uses a strange mixture—the date *anno Domini*, the month *frimaire*, or *nivôse*, as the case may be. Still, favour does not make him contented. He has got off guard-mounting and patrol-duty, and has been appointed instructor, has to superintend a two hours' lesson. "I am as happy as possible—for a soldier; but my love of soldiering diminishes every day." He is afraid of being a private all his days, and longs to get into the Military School, because "one can really learn there, and is sure to come out sub-lieutenant." However, the Pope arrives at Fontainebleau, and the Emperor, driving in to receive his Holiness, actually says a few words to the smart young *vélite*, who had begged to go on guard during the imperial visit, and had the good luck to be stood sentry at Madame Bonaparte's rooms. "I saw her several times, and had a quarter of an hour's talk with a very pretty and amiable lady of her suite." The corps goes to Paris for the coronation, and Bugeaud does not know whether most to admire the splendour of gilded coaches with eight horses, illuminations, fireworks, and fountains running with wine, "everything looking heavenly," or to moan over the discomfort of marching four miles from barracks, and then standing every day in the freezing wind as stiff as a post, and always presenting arms.

He caught cold; and when it was all over, broke down, and had to hire a carriage back to Fontainebleau, where he went into hospital, and fell to thinking of his dog and gun at La Durantie—"so much better than this silly ambition. . . . Perhaps my pathetic tone makes you think I'm weak; but if you knew how hard it is for a man of any spirit to be a soldier, you would think otherwise." Meanwhile, his consolation for not being among the two hundred sent to Italy, and being just too late to volunteer, is that some of the corps must soon be made corporals, and that corporal in the guard ranks with serjeant-major in the line. His regiment is sent, at twenty-four hours' notice, to the camp at Boulogne, and with active service the grumbling at once ceases, and the letters are full of

spirited accounts of sea-drills, in which the young landmen of the guard throw things into confusion by pulling the wrong ropes. The English at Wimereux take advantage of the confusion, and the *vélite* sees some sharp fighting. But Admiral La Touche Tréville died, and Villeneuve (whom Napoleon called "a wretch who deserves to be hooted out of the service. He would do anything to save his skin") had not dash enough. At least, that was the excuse for breaking up the camp and hurrying the troops off across Europe, "at the rate of eighty leagues a week, with all our kettles, spades, etc., on our backs," moans Bugeaud, who also was disgusted at the fowl and bacon and firewood stealing; though he adds: "When I am hungry, I secretly tolerate such conduct." He was in at the capitulation of Ulm, but had no fighting at all till Austerlitz, though once (after having been five days without bread) his corps had to stand before the enemy a whole day and night, while it was raining, snowing, and hailing by turns. Of course he longed for a charge; nay, by-and-by he began to hope that one of the shots that were mowing down the French files would cut him off. The looting of villages pleased him as little as standing under fire and weather for twenty hours: "The profession of a hero is so much like that of a brigand that I hate it with my whole soul."

At last they got to Austerlitz, where the Emperor promised to keep his distance so long as they were victorious; "but, if you hesitate an instant, you will see me fly into your ranks to restore order." After the victory they had another speech, beginning with, "Soldiers, I am pleased with you," and ending, after a promise of speedy peace, with something like Henry the Fifth's harangue before Agincourt: "If anyone can say 'I was at Austerlitz,' men will cry out, 'He's a brave man.'" The young corporal—for Austerlitz gained him his stripes—was sent back to *depôt* in France, and soon after was gazetted as sub-lieutenant. He still thought of throwing up the army, gives this as his reason for not caring to win over an ill-tempered colonel, and hungered to come back home and take to farming; though at La Durantie things were not very flourishing. When he visited them in July, 1806, they could only give him ten louis and a horse—particularly unpleasant, because he found the life expensive; his theory being that "the way to attract notice is to make a display." Yet he had a good time of it on his way

back from France to the Grand Army—a carriage and four, without spending a penny; and by-and-by, five villages, occupied by his detachment, as much in his power as if he had been a feudal baron. He is greatly disgusted at the way the Germans are treated: "Everybody eats them up, from the General to the ranker. Some of the Generals give banquets that cost six hundred florins, and all at the cost of the people. Keep this to yourself. You need not think that I spend anything but what I am obliged to; and I pay my innkeeper."

Before long he got his first wound, and with it his lieutenantcy, at Pultusk. Going to be nursed at Warsaw, "that Capua of the North," he cannot resist a masked-ball, in the midst of which his wound begins to bleed, and is next day as bad as ever. So he is sent to dépôt at Besançon, missing Eylau and Friedland, which Napoleon called "the daughter of Marengo." At Berlin he found the French most popular, "because we are so free from pride—such a contrast to their own insolent officers."

He was very ill, and a Berlin doctor attended him for nothing, assuring him he was only too glad to be of service to a French officer. When his wound was well, he got six months' leave, and found the charms of home-life so strong that he actually sent in his resignation. His youngest sister, who had the posting of the letter, locked it up in a drawer; and while he was deep in the study of farming, came an order to join at once. He was sent to Spain, and was at Saragossa, where he took part in the desperate house to house fighting. The casualties to officers were excessive; the Spaniards always aimed at them. He got his company; but he hated the war, for he could not help admiring the gallant stand made by the Spaniards. He was under Suchet, who took a liking to him, as did General Abbé, who, after Tivisa, told him: "Young man, I think I may promise you you will be chef de bataillon before the year's end." At Lerida he was made captain of the first company of grenadiers, which, he tells Phillis, adds six hundred francs to his yearly pay. At Ordal he had his only brush with our troops, and next day he captured an English officer and thirty-five horse-men. "They might say God dam as such as they liked, they had to surrender." Had he been on that side of Spain where we were in force, very probably Algeria would never have been conquered; as it was,

he got praise from Suchet, and a letter from General Harispe, which he sent to his sisters; but Suchet was out of favour at the War Office, and so instead of getting a regiment, as a man who took thirty-six English ought, Bugeaud was only made major; at any rate, he ought to have got his pay, which was always in arrear. Very soon it was all hurry-scurry back into France; the allies were pouring in on all sides, and from the north of Spain the French were driven out. "My heart bleeds to hear about it all," writes Bugeaud to Phillis. "I say no more. I am too much pained." In the East, Suchet, of whom Napoleon said, "What a pity sovereigns can't create men like that," marched out unopposed. Bugeaud was quartered at Orleans, and the King—the Emperor having disappeared—made him Colonel over the heads of several old officers; a Marquis's son was sure to be a pet under the Restoration. Orleans was en fête, and a Royalist song, signed Bugeaud, Colonel, was printed and sung when the Duchess of Angoulême came there. Nevertheless, he went with the rest when the Hundred Days began. His enemies said he was so eager a Bonapartist that he made his soldiers mount the tricolour before marching them out of Orleans; but this is stoutly denied, and the Count of Chambord's high opinion of him seems to disprove it. The fact is, the officers of the Grand Army looked on Napoleon as the impersonation of France, and when he came to the front, there could be for them no other sovereign.

The Fourteenth was not at Waterloo. It had to make head against the Austro-Sardinians on the side of Savoy, and here, while the empire was being killed out in Belgium, Bugeaud captured two Piedmontese brigades, and with one thousand seven hundred men gave a desperate beating to General Trenck at the head of ten thousand Austrians, killing two thousand and taking nine hundred prisoners. Had telegraphs or even railways existed in those days, all these Austrians, and the French who were killed in killing them, would have been spared, for the battle was not fought till June 28th. Bugeaud, like Soult on the side towards the Pyrenees, was fighting long after the armistice had been signed. But news travelled slowly, and when it came could scarcely get credited.

Among the prisoners was a Frenchman, one of the Macarthys of Toulouse, who had two fine carriage-horses which he wished to ransom. Bugeaud spoke like

half-a-dozen Marquises rolled into one. "The Macarthy's of Toulouse are surely related to those of Bordeaux, who are my cousins. Pray accept the horses, sir; and for the sake of your noble name, command me in anything else I can do for you."

In May, 1815, Napoleon had raised Bugeaud to be a commander of the Legion of Honour, just two months after he had made him an officer of the Legion; and this told so heavily against the Colonel, that the Bourbons at once put him on half-pay. Indeed, for some time, his life was in danger from that White Terror, which, on a small scale, was just as horrible as the Red Terror of Robespierre and company. However, he got safe to La Durantie, and for the next fifteen years gave himself up to farming, learning to mow and plough, and founding the first agricultural society that was started in France. After 1815, many a brave officer sank into utter idleness, and became a haunter of cafés—a chevalier d'industrie, living on what he won at cards or billiards. But Bugeaud was lifted out of this slough of despond by his country tastes, and by that sense of noblesse oblige which is the only thing that makes old descent worth anything. The farming in his country was as wretched as when Arthur Young was in France just before the Revolution. Changes of many kinds there had been, but still there were the meagre, half-starved vine-stocks, the swampy meadows, the corn land out of heart, the wide stretches of moorland, the miserable farmhouses, and the ragged peasantry. The "Republic one and indivisible" had been too much absorbed in mighty schemes to lavish an idea on Perigord metayers, and Napoleon's only thought had been how many recruits he could get out of them.

Bugeaud had to work by example; the farmers round would not believe in his new-fangled notions till three or four splendid harvests had proved that he was right. Improving the buildings was even more ticklish work; he did it gradually on his own estate, and trusted to example, helping it on by lecturing all through the neighbourhood. That is the first half of his life; the second half began with the coming in of Louis Philippe, when he was at once put in command of a regiment, and had the, for him—a Legitimist by birth and sentiment—singularly unpleasant task of looking after the Duchess of Berri, who was imprisoned at Blaye.

This made him the butt of many violent attacks from the party to which he

naturally belonged, and increased that morbid hatred of newspapers and editors which was his one weakness. Happily Algiers, whither he was sent in 1836, saved him from being forced into politics; he got off with a good deal of abuse from all parties, and a duel with Deputy Dulong.

He was now fifty years old, and his military career, henceforth begun afresh, was an unbroken success, despite a good deal of bullying from discontented members of all parties in the Paris Chamber. Worried by prophets, a regular succession of Mahdis, another arising as the first was killed off; matched against the wolf-like endurance of Abd-el Kader; troubled with "patriots" who wanted to give the Arabs "equality and fraternity," while they robbed them through thick and thin; vexed in his righteous soul by peculating generals like De Brossard; forced to defend cruelties like those of Pelissier, he did his work through evil report and good report. His great grief was that discharged veterans preferred going back to France or hanging about the cafés of the Algerian towns, to taking farms in the soldiers' colonies on which he had set his heart. He was beloved by all the French Arabs, for they saw how he stood between them and oppression, and made the Arab Office a reality. In 1841 he was made Governor-General; in 1845 he won his "crowning mercy" of Isly, crushing at one blow the power (such as it was) of Morocco; in 1847 he was recalled from Algeria, and from a necessary though ignoble warfare in which he trained up many of the French generals who have since become famous. If he had had his way in February, 1848, the Orleans family, two princes of which were with him through a great part of his African wars, might still be on the throne. He died of cholera, in 1849; and the peasants round La Durantie and Excideuil still gratefully remember the man who taught them new and profitable ways of tillage. His life is remarkable, as I said, for having been cut into two halves, of which the former is the most interesting, because it shows us how the latter came to be possible.

LITERATURE IN THE SCOTTISH CAPITAL.

As one drives into Edinburgh from the south, and gazes, as he comes over the shoulder of the Hills of Braid, upon the grey city stretching round the crag-perched

castle—the Caer-Eiddyn of the Celts, and guarded by the lion couchant to which the hero of the Arthurian legends has given its name—as he watches the light of the afterglow fading over the distant Lomonds and the dusk settling down upon the Firth; as he sees the points of flame gleaming out from the windows and twinkling upon the streets; he is struck with the beauty of the northern capital, and perhaps wonders how the Laureate was prompted to write that shivering reference to

The clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens heaven and earth,
The bitter east, the misty summer,
And grey metropolis of the North.

But he may remember that Tennyson only knew the Queen of the North as could a stranger arriving by rail, and finding her wrapped in a mantle of mist. Besides, he is one whose life had been spent amid more genial scenery, and through whose poetry there is heard the echo of that familiar longing for the palms and temples of the South.

Very differently a foremost word-artist of our time, when he makes a member of a certain phaeton-party exclaim, as she looks out over the dark valley from Prince's Street to the fairylike vision beyond: "We have seen nothing like that, not even in your own country of the Lakes."

Diverse, accordingly, are the impressions left upon the man of letters as he hurries through. What of the litterateur who has made his home there, be it even for a short time? "Of all British cities, Edinburgh—Weimar-like in its intellectual and aesthetic leanings, Florence-like in its freedom from the stains of trade, and more than Florence-like in its beauty—is the one best suited for the conduct of a lettered life." Such are the words of an authority, of one who only went thither when his career was more than half run, and who may be held as free from the prejudice of local feeling. A glance back over the roll of illustrious names which she claims for her own will show at once that the city has been congenial to literature. Ballads are among the earliest modes of utterance of a people, and Edinburgh has her ancient ballads. Far away in the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century, a certain mendicant friar chanted the life of the grey old town. He was only one of a band of minstrels—the chief, doubtless, else might his lays have shared oblivion with those of

the Makars whose dirge he sang. Even he, like the lark, is but faintly discernible in the distance, as he floods the land with music. Onward down the centuries it rolls, caught from voice to voice, "from soul to soul," hushed for a space in that darkest epoch of Scottish history, the seventeenth century. Turn where you will, those voices of the past break upon the appreciative ear. A pathetic ballad floats round "St. Anton's Well." In the heart of the old town, in the now restored Cathedral of St. Giles, the voice is that of Gawain Douglas, the poet, priest, and politician, the turbulent blood of whose house proved his ruin, yet who will ever be remembered as translator of Virgil. It may well be doubted whether Sir Walter Scott's portrait of him is accurate; nay, from recent disclosures, we may confidently discard it. Still, it is pleasant to think of him as

A noble lord of Douglas blood,
With mitre sheen, and rooquet white.
Yet showed his meek and thoughtful eye
But little pride of prelacy;
More pleased that, in a barbarous age,
He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page,
Than that beneath his rule he held
The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.

From Hawthornden, where the leaves are quivering in the summer breeze, are wafted Drummond's sweet strains, through which there runs an ever-deepening sadness—the sadness of love driven back upon itself.

Between Hawthornden's minstrel and the "Homer of the Canongate" there is a considerable interval. A stillness as of death brooded over the land. It seemed as though the muse had taken flight before the advance of Calvinism.

Allan Ramsay is the morning star of the new day in Scotland—a day which was to be illumined by such as Fergusson and Burns, Walter Scott and Christopher North, and all that galaxy who made the opening years of Blackwood and The Edinburgh Review a blaze of literary splendour.

What then are the special attractions of the city which Tennyson deigns to notice only with a shudder, and which, confessedly, is haunted in certain months by stinging east winds and clammy haars, as by evil spirits. Its beauty of situation is known to all the world. Scarcely on two consecutive days does it wear the same aspects; it were difficult to say in what mood it is most picturesque. It has a mellow charm in the summer afternoon when the warm light of the western sun

lies lovingly over the valley where the Nor' Loch's stagnant waters lay. But, like fair Melrose, if you would see it aright, go when the skies are swept clear by the night wind, and the moon casts her silvery glamour upon the hoary houses on the ridge. A thousand lights are gleaming over the valley, up to where the castle keeps silent and solemn guard. A feeling of reverence for the past, of half-defined longing for the days that are not, and can never be again, wells up. The mind is carried back across the years; the civilisation of the time fades with the twilight; the tall houses of the High Street, which ever wear an old-world look, seem to have stepped back a century in their dreams—back to the age when their lot was lordlier than now, when powdered nobles and hooped and hooded dames trod their mouldering stairs, or gazed out upon the tumult raging in the thoroughfare beneath. Strange tales they tell to the imaginative mind, those gaunt dwellings, with their myriad eye-windows—tales of Celtic chivalry, of the old Titanic struggle of the races, of the never-ending conflict of poetry and prose, of romance and utilitarianism.

Moreover, from the bustle of the city, from its most fatiguing and stirring scenes, from the gay and fashionable life of to-day, from ephemeral gossip and social chit-chat, it is possible to pass in less than an hour to secluded valleys where may be felt the spiritual influence of

The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

Only the cry of the curlew, the whirr of blackcock, the scurrying of a rabbit among the fern disturbs the silence. In summer, the hollows are verdant, the braes are aglow with purple heather. Tarns lie there unvisited and unpolluted as in the heart of the Highlands; on a holiday, perhaps, a stray angler goes thither to whip the water for trout. Winter, too, has its charms, for then the peaks, which are hardly peaks, stand out white against the cold, pale sky, or catch a faint glow in the ruddy sunset. In the ravines all is deathly still; it is pleasanter to sit on the summit of one of the lower eminences in "the bountiful season bland," and let the eye wander over the meadows and the streams till it rests on the dim hills of the bonnie land o' Fife, and you dream of summer isles.

Where the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a
other clime.

Half lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of
sea,
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the
land.

Edinburgh is essentially the city of literary leisure. A poet, a dreamy essayist like Alexander Smith, a lover of the past like Aytoun, finds there fit haunt. Society is apt to brood over the glories of bygone days. The stimulating influence of the southern metropolis is wanting. Life moves less breathlessly; it is possible to loiter, to enjoy the passing hour. And thus it is that in these latter years most of the pushing and impetuous literary youth is lured Londonwards—some to be overwhelmed as poor David Gray was, some to succeed as Gray's companion, Robert Buchanan, has done; too many to bury their talents in the oblivion of newspaper anonymity. The centralising influence of the time is against provincial seats of literary fame. The coteries that flourished three-quarters of a century ago seem impossible on the same scale now.

In a sketch of the literary history of Edinburgh, it is hardly necessary to penetrate far into the somewhat misty ages before the Union; though, when the mist is blown aside by the wind of fact or tradition, a vivid enough picture is disclosed. A flash of Dunbar's satiric pen reveals King James the Third going to mass at St. Anthony's Chapel, the ruin of which still looks down upon St. Margaret's Loch. Again, there is the provost of the cathedral pacing the moonlit aisle, dreaming over his *Æneid*, then just completed, and suddenly startled by that strange vision which foretold the black day of Flodden. Recovering, he steps out into the High Street, only to hear the wild geese "claiking" as they "flee attour the city."* Or it may be Mary of Guise—the Regent of Scotland, while her daughter was yet a happy child in that fair land of France, which she never should have left—witnessing the performance at Holyrood of a kind of drama or morality, entitled, *A Satire of the Three Estates*, written by Sir David Lyndsay, of The Mount, Fifeshire, a county prolific of literary talent.

It was a different town to which a certain youth came trudging in from the village of Leadhills, a century and a half later, that he might be apprenticed to the important and worthy profession of wig-making. The court had fled southward

* Gawain Douglas's Translation of the *Æneid*.
Prologue to Book VII.

with the modern Solomon, a hundred years before. The grey old city was deserted. Grass grew in the streets. The lethargy which had oppressed the rest of Scotland settled down on its centre.* It was a time of great activity in London. Such men as Pope and Swift, Gay and Prior, Addison and Steel, Farquhar and Congreve, were making the reign of Queen Anne famous for all time as the classic age of England. It was far from being the brightest epoch in her literary history, we admit. Stilted, artificial it was. In reading the works then written, one feels as though one were walking in an admirably kept garden, where all is laid down by rule. The fountain here is balanced by the fountain there; the trees are decorously shorn; on the velvet lawn no blade of grass dare grow beyond another. At set intervals there are arbours; marble statues gleam out on the green sward. It is very beautiful, and very correct, and very proper, but it is not nature; a single Scottish mountain, glowing purple in the sunshine of an autumn afternoon, is not to be exchanged for it. Nevertheless, the prose style of that time is the noblest and stateliest in the language. Fragments, both in prose and verse, were borne northwards, and found their way into the young wig-maker's hands. Moreover, he knew something of the homely ballads of the borderland—the land of Merlin and the bards, and of him, the greatest of them all, who lies buried a while under the purple Eildons. Add the romantic story of the haughty beauty of the north, and the poetic temperament is seen to have had sufficient nurture. What wonder that, by-and-by, there began to float about humble printed leaflets, that manifested a power of song such as had been unknown in Scotland since Drummond was laid to his rest. A new poet had arisen. The citizens sent their children with pence for Allan Ramsay's latest print. Those poems are not much read now. The Gentle Shepherd, indeed, retains a measure of popularity; but dusty copies of *The Evergreen* and *The Tea-Table Miscellany* haunt the shelves of ancient book shops, and seldom find a purchaser. Nevertheless, these were the Songs before Sunrise for Scotland. In the time of Ramsay theatrical performances were regarded as leading to perdition those who witnessed them. Language could scarce express the characters of the performers.

* Scotland in the Eighteenth Century, in *Scottish Review*, 1884.

His literary enthusiasm led him to find for the drama a home in that last stronghold of Jacobitism, Carubber's Close. He was, of course, denounced, and had his theatre roughly closed. How strong must have been the prejudice against the stage might, apart from all record, be judged by the manner in which the antagonism yet flares up at intervals.

It was in the years immediately preceding the Union that the newspaper press of Edinburgh had its birth. A print styled the *Courant* was published by James Watson in Craig's Close. It was as ephemeral as many smaller ventures of the present day, but was the germ from which the journalism of the city sprang. In 1728 the *Evening Courant* issued its first number as a Whig paper, and still exists as the leading Conservative organ in Scotland. It provoked Jacobite opposition, which took the shape of the *Caledonian Mercury*, even as, a century later, the *Whig Edinburgh Review* was to be followed by *Tory Blackwood*.

The years rolled on. The organs of Whig and Jacobite chronicled, so far as they dared, the Stuart rising of 1745, when Bonnie Prince Charlie marched down the Canongate with pipes skirling and tartans waving, while from every window in the tall houses fair hands sped him to his ancient palace of Holyrood. That same year was Henry Mackenzie born. Five winters later, had they been gifted with the prophetic spirit, they would have chronicled the birth of a poet, Robert Fergusson by name, remembered now, perhaps, chiefly because of that scene in the kirkyard when a sturdy ploughman from Ayrshire, whose face is more widely familiar to Scotsmen than any other, stood bareheaded by his grave.

Curious and interesting are the stories that have come down to us from that winter of 1786-87, when Robert Burns flashed like a meteor through the literary society of Edinburgh—a distinguished society in its way, comprising, among its more prominent members, Lord Monboddo; the *Man of Feeling*; Henry Erskine, and Dugald Stewart. One of these traditions relates the incident of the first meeting between Burns and a lad of sixteen, who, though none may have dreamed of it then, was to do more for Scotland than the bard himself; another tells of a "little black creature" of a boy, Francis Jeffrey by name, who stood gazing earnestly at a man he had encountered in a peregrination down the High Street. Some one tapped

him on the shoulder. "Aye, laddie, ye may well look at that man, that's Robert Burns."

In Edinburgh, as elsewhere, the ancient landmarks are passing away. The quaint old houses of the Lawn Market, with their projecting upper storeys; the taverns in secluded closes where the symposia of other days were held, are nearly all things of the past. In the penetralia of such a close was Henry Mackenzie born. But Liberton's Wynd had other attractions for the man of letters than that. Was it not there that Johnnie Dowie, "sleekeest and kindest of landlords," welcomed his guest to a tavern famous even as Ambrose's? What nights must those have been! Thither went Fergusson, "maker" of songs; thither David Herd, collector thereof; thither Antiquary Paton. There Literature and Art went hand-in-hand: was not the Dowie College an Academy of Painters, of whom Sir Henry Raeburn was one? But seldom did the rafters respond to a more jovial trio than when Willie Nicol "brewed a peck o' maut," and Rob Burns and Allan Masterton "cam' to pree."*

Three blither lads that lee-lang night
Ye wadna find in Christendee.

These blithe nights, unfortunately for the greatest and the noblest of them, were of no uncommon occurrence. Now all are but shadows, and Johnnie Dowie's tavern is known no more.

It was under the auspices of the clubs that the magazines of old Edinburgh dragged out their mild, unsensational, and somewhat tedious career. The brilliant talents of the Mirror Club, which had no fixed place of meeting, but was oftenest held at a certain Lucky Dunbar's, were reflected in the Mirror for fifty years. The Cape Club, which met in Craig's Close, had a membership equally distinguished. Most celebrated of all was the Poker Club, which took its rise in a burning political problem, to wit, whether or not a Scottish militia should be formed. It outlived its political bias, but not the belief in its own importance. A member asserted that Edinburgh was the most eminent literary city in Europe, and, as the Pokers were the cream of Edinburgh litterati, it will be seen that they were a distinguished body indeed.

So the coteries flourished and gathered

* The original characters in this song met in Laggan in Nithsdale, but it is quite applicable to Dowie's Tavern.

for many a jovial evening, and published their essays and their magazines while the ploughshare of revolution was upturning the subsoil of European society. Men's minds were stirring to great things. In Edinburgh the Augustan age was about to dawn, and the city to merit more than before or since the appellation of the Modern Athens, if that be taken as referring to learning, and not to beauty.

In the last years of the eighteenth century the capital had welcomed effusively a Glasgow man, Thomas Campbell, who had already brought forth a prize poem, entitled, *An Essay on the Origin of Evil*. He had come with his MS. in his pockets. The society to which he was introduced was as free from suspicion of genius as *The Edinburgh Magazine* (the last representative of *The Mirror* class) itself. Talent undoubtedly there was. Leyden, the uncouth, eccentric youth from the South country; gentle Graham, remembered by his poem descriptive of the Sabbath; *The Man of Feeling*, acknowledged head of the litterati, are sufficient evidence of that.

One stormy night in the spring of 1802, when the wind was rattling the casements and the rain dashed wildly around the unlucky wayfarer, there met in an upper chamber in one of the high houses in Buccleuch Place a little clique of conspirators. In those days of lang syne Toryism was supreme. The Whig advocate, as he paced the long floor of the Parliament House, had ample leisure for the consideration of other than legal lore. But political Ishmaelism has a charm for the young. Thus it happened that a number of the ablest and wittiest of the new generation were briefless barristers. Chief of them was the "little black creature" who had been attracted by the figure of Burns, now grown to manhood, but insignificant in appearance as ever. These neglected geniuses were wont to congregate at a particular spot in the north end of the great hall by day, and to hold symposia by night in their respective abodes. On the evening in question Jeffrey was the host. His right-hand man was a lanky, supple-sinewed fellow from the border-country—Henry Brougham—to be known one day as Lord Chancellor of England. The third, most worthy of notice, was the witty and genial Sydney Smith, "a very unclerical clergyman," as the times went, yet one whose sermons may be peeped into when the vast proportion

of contemporary theological literature has long remained in the oblivion of certain shelves in the Advocates' Library. To the latter of the trio occurred the idea of a review which should at once afford an outlet for their pent-up talents and burst like a shell in the midst of the fossilised Toryism of that day. No need now to sit listlessly in wig and gown while more fortunate brethren floundered with much pecuniary benefit in the rhetorical morasses of Peebles versus Plainstones.* In October the first number appeared. "The effect was electrical," says Lord Cockburn. The Lake school had provoked no enemy so able as this—though to our minds now the review of Thalaba, with which the campaign opened, does not seem so very terrible, after all.

Whether the explanation unfolded by the professor of poetry at Oxford is sufficient to account for the extraordinary manifestation of literary genius and activity which marked the opening of the nineteenth century, is not a question with which we are here primarily concerned. But true it is that the excitement pervading the country had much to do with the success of the Review. Were there not awful stories of Jacobin ladies resident in the neighbourhood of George Square, who slaughtered fowls for culinary purposes by means of miniature guillotines? Was not this new venture in sympathy with Jacobin principles? More than that, however, was *amor patriæ* concerned: *amor patriæ*—pre-eminent quality in Scotsmen. Burns, turning his weed clips aside to spare the thistle, because it is symbolical of Scotland, is typical of his countrymen of all ages. Yea! even the most bigoted Tory was proud of the tribunal over which Judge Jeffrey presided, and which dealt so mercifully with the Southron. To his everlasting honour, Jeffrey was not blinded by party or patriotism. Even Walter Scott was a contributor to the Review; yet its editor did not shrink from risking his alienation.

Imitation was inevitable. The Tories could not leave the field to the foe. So, under very different circumstances, the Quarterly came into being. But as romantic as the knight-errantry of the Edinburgh was the appearance in the lists of Blackwood's Magazine, with the wild young blood running riot in its pages. The Chaldean MS. produced as great a sensation as Number

One of the Edinburgh had done. Though the life that it satirised is but a shadow of the past, it is possible in some measure to appreciate the effect.

These three periodicals, then, became the centres of a galaxy of literary lights. In addition to those mentioned, the eldest of the brotherhood could boast the support of Thomas Carlyle. It is possible to forgive Jeffrey a good deal, for his acceptance of that "little paper on Jean Paul," whose author was the son of the Ecclefechanstonemason. James Grahame, already referred to—a soul mild and peaceful as his poem—and the "gentle Horner," were members also of that band. The contributors to the Quarterly included men who had no connection with the modern Athens; its real steersman was the brilliant and caustic Lockhart. The genii, whom the head of the now eminent house of Blackwood summoned to his aid, were, like the earlier guild, mostly young advocates. Most notable of them was John Wilson—the man with the tawny mane sweeping his shoulders, "strong, supple-sinewed," apt at sport, who, from his residence at lovely Ellerray, had come almost to be classed as one of the Lakists himself—he who chronicled the feasts of wit and flows of soul yecept Noctes Ambrosiana. Of the Etrick shepherd it is not possible to say with certainty that he was actually concerned in the production of Blackwood. Nevertheless, his name is indissolubly connected with it, and the Scottish capital is fain to claim as close a connection as possible with the author of that most beautiful poem which relates the adventure of Bonnie Kilmeny. In passing, it may be asked whether the resemblance has ever been noted between the land to which the maiden was spirited away, and the island valley of Avilion.

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea.

We may not linger. The city is beautiful as ever; the grey houses gaze down over the valley as of yore; but forms oft met in olden times have gone from the streets.

"We are such stuff as dreams are made of. Visionary grow the old familiar scenes and faces, as brother after brother steals silently from us; spectral and remote the talk, the controversies, the criticisms, the habitual friendly greetings that were once so simple and commonplace."

Yet in the pages of one who has but

* Rodgauntlet.

recently gone away, himself one of whom Edinburgh is proud—the genial author of *Rab and His Friends*—some scenes from the days that are no more are painted in imperishable colours. Who that has once read it can forget the description of a certain November afternoon in 1810, “the year in which *Waverley* was resumed and laid aside again,” when its author, escaping with two comrades from the weary atmosphere of the Law Courts—like school-boys—sought his chambers in Number Thirty-nine, Castle Street. How wonderfully, too, does he paint the “stout, blunt carle,” with his broad and somewhat stooping shoulders, his sensitive and suggestive mouth, a large, sunny, out-of-door air all about him. Then, when the friends part, how the light goes from his eyes. “He was all within, as before he was all without—hence his brooding look.” One likes to linger over the portrayal of the wizard in his “den.” The features of the ordinary lawyer’s room; the green charter-boxes, the tape-tied papers; yet how different! For did not the portrait of John Grahame, of Claverhouse, “*ultimus Scotorum atque optimus*,” hang above the chimney-piece, flanked by Highland targes, and dirks, and broadswords? There were written *Peveril of the Peak*, *Quentin Durward*, and *St. Ronan’s Well*.

Of late years there has been a tendency—the inevitable reaction—to treat Scott’s poetry lightly. It is so simple, so straightforward, so free from hidden meanings and metaphysical gropings. A child might understand it all; therefore it is pretty much left to children. It is doubtful, too, whether the romances are so diligently perused as of yore; debauched with three-volume flimsiness and triviality the novel-reader is apt to vote them long-winded and prosy. To the children they are a mine of treasure—that is a test of their sterling worth. Along with the poems they caught and crystallised the old legends and traditions, the quaint customs, the simple manners of a bygone time, perhaps the most romantic in Scottish history. Scott is the overtowering personality in the *Modern Athens*. It is impossible to get rid of him, even were his company anything but charming. From Princes Street his monument is ever in view. His characters meet you at every turn. Jeannie Deans is at St. Leonards, Captain Porteous in the Grass Market. The shade of Peter Peebles haunts the Parliament House. As

you wander down the Canongate, you think of him who, born almost under the shadow of St. Giles, made his way down every wynd, and peered into every crannie; who rested not till he had deciphered each fast obliterating legend on the house-fronts, and learned their strange and eerie traditions.

The divine fire did not die out immediately. In 1849, the youngest daughter of Christopher North was married to William Edmonstone Aytoun, an advocate of little celebrity, but Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the University of Edinburgh. All that was best and noblest in Jacobitism blazed up again in this scion of a Fifeshire family. Like Sir Walter Scott, he did much to soften the hatred with which the memory of the greatest of the Grahames was cherished. Diabolical, truly, was that memory, were tradition to be trusted. Aytoun’s lays are stirring as trumpet-calls. But he could be tender and dreamy, too—satirical, if necessary. *Firmilian*, a Spasmodic Tragedy, evoked a faint reflection of the sensation of early Blackwood days. Though now one of the least known of its author’s works, its effect on contemporary poetry was salutary. It killed by ridicule the weeds which were springing up, fostered by a group of sickly poetasters. It led to higher things that true “maker,” Alexander Smith, whose writings had been tainted with the faults of the spasmodic school. All sorts of interesting folk paid court to this Jacobite minstrel, prominent among them the last lineal descendant of Claverhouse—Miss Clementina Stirling Grahame, of Duntrune, faithful as ever her ancestors were to the cause of the Stuart dynasty.

Aytoun has found a worthy successor in David Masson—the most thorough and painstaking writer of his time. *The Life of Milton* is a monument to his patience and perseverance in matters of detail. Recently the quaint figure of John Hill Burton, the book-hunter, was to be descried hovering about musty book-stalls, to explore the contents whereof he had wandered in from the haunted house in the suburbs, which was his residence in latter years. He, too, has been succeeded not unfittingly.

The Parliament House turns out an excellent writer now and again, as of yore. Robert Louis Stevenson, perhaps the most admirable essayist since Lamb, though an exile, is true in heart to Auld Reekie. If anyone rivals Stevenson it is John Skelton,

better known as "Shirley," whose secluded Hermitage nestles in a wooded glen, not distant from the city. Chief representative of the literary clubs is the Hellenic—a semi-private body—which includes among its members Masson, picturesque Blackie, Butcher, the author of *Oligig Grange* and *Kildrostan*, and other stars of the literary firmament.

But it is over the past that the glamour has been thrown; that past which is so near, and yet so far. So near, that "the reminiscences of intercourse with an elder generation are full of glimpses of the old days before them, when Gay and Smollett, Goldsmith, Home, Johnson, Boswell, Hume, and Burns were writing poems, histories, essays on miracles; dancing minuets; drinking; and doing much else which comes back on us now with so novel an interest as memories of the days that are no more."

"MY LADY DAFFODIL."

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IV.

BURTON'S rooms were nearly full. Most of the guests at the grand fancy ball, given that night, had already arrived. The clock was just striking eleven as a small group of three—a handsome middle-aged woman, proud and erect, a pretty, fair girl, and a young man—entered the ball-room.

The girl looked about her with the bright, eager amusement of girls of her age. Her chaperon gazed calmly on the gorgeous scene with an air of satisfied complacency, apparently justified by the fact that all things went well with her. Her only daughter was well married; her only son—of whom at one time she had had misgivings—was at last out of danger, his safeguard being the pretty, well-portioned, well-born girl at her side; and with supreme contentment in her party, she sailed down the room to take up a good position for view and partners.

The young man followed with a slightly bored look. Eric Weldon was growing a little tired of balls and the gaieties which society provides for its fortunate members, and was beginning to think that the marriage, which was to take place in a month, would be rather a pleasant change than otherwise.

There was not much excitement about it, but he and Miss Askewe liked each other very much in their own way. He had not altered much during the three years that had elapsed since the visit to Les Vaux. He

scarcely even looked older; but there was a kind of dissatisfied look on his handsome face that had not been there in those old days when he used to throw himself so heartily into every pleasure and amusement of youth, and at times he displayed an irritability entirely foreign to his former sunny, careless temper.

He still enjoyed himself, if taking advantage of every amusement which fortune gave him could be called enjoyment. At one time it would have been so to him, but during the last year or two something seemed to have gone out of himself which took the freshness and zest from all the amusements in which he once delighted. He had now taken up a soberer side of life, having accepted an appointment which employed some part of his time, though, as his future wife said, there would be no occasion for him to be chained to a horrid desk when they were married, as her income, without his, would be enough to keep them in comfort. Whether he would agree to the desire of his wife his friends did not know.

But, as he told one of his friends, he had "grown tired of mooning about."

That friend came forward out of a corner of the room, from which he had been watching with a good-humoured cynicism the dresses and strange metamorphoses of the guests, who, at other times, seemed in their right mind, to meet the little group advancing up the room.

"Hallo, Arnot, how awfully well you look!" said Weldon, nodding to his friend and glancing with involuntary admiration at his splendid figure, displayed to advantage in a close-fitting costume of silk and puffed satin.

"I feel an awful fool!" said the other, shaking hands with the two ladies. "I should never have come to-night if it had not been for Miss Askewe. She makes everyone obey her commands." And he looked down with the gentle light in his eyes, that only women and children ever called there, at the pretty, smiling girl.

"And you ought to be very glad that you obeyed. I am sure the other guests will be. You are quite an ornament to the room. Don't forget to ask me for at least three waltzes. Eric looks nice, doesn't he? Such a trouble as I have had to make him come properly dressed! I think, if I had let him, he would have come clothed completely in crape."

"More appropriate to my feelings!" said the young man with grim amusement.

"I can't think how people can make such fools of themselves! Balls are bad enough, but these——"

"Words fail to express their utter folly! Yet, Mr. Weldon, accounts that your mother occasionally gives me of your former conduct and habits, rather contradict your present misanthropy," laughed the girl, slipping her hand lovingly in to his arm.

"One gets tired of everything," returned the young man carelessly.

And the group, its number augmented by Arnot, made their way to some seats.

The three years had not apparently weakened the friendship between the two men. They still met, and visited each other, and acted generally as they had done since the friendship had commenced. But anyone who had noticed the two lives closely, or felt any keen interest in watching them, would have seen that the want of change was rather outward than inward.

They had drifted into a habit of making their own arrangements or amusements without consulting each other.

They rarely ever discussed together any point of real importance in their own lives, and went and came without any particular reference as to what the other thought or did. But still, when they were together, they generally found themselves by each other's side. And it was apparently perfectly natural that among all his many acquaintances in the ballroom, Arnot should choose to attach himself to the family party of his friend.

"Have you seen the heiress, Mr. Arnot?" asked Mrs. Weldon, who was always very gracious to her son's friend, though she thought that he might have chosen one of more important birth and position. "She is evidently wishing to make a sensation by coming in when all the guests are assembled. I hear she is lovely, and enormously rich. He who wins her will be a lucky man."

"I am dying to see her," exclaimed Miss Askewe, who had never been jealous of another girl in her life. "Annie Martin, who knows Miss Herbert, who knows Miss Spencer, the heiress, says she is coming as a daffodil."

"Your information will be probably accurate, coming from so direct a source," said Wilfred Arnot gravely.

"Don't be disagreeable, Mr. Arnot. At any rate, no one has more direct information—no one knows anything about her. She is an interesting mystery."

"I believe she came into her fortune three years ago very unexpectedly," said Mrs. Weldon, who was always interested in heiresses, and had even been guilty of a faint wish, in spite of a certain cold liking for Miss Askewe herself, that Eric had waited for this match that put Miss Askewe's little fortune so completely in the shade.

"I wonder what she is like!" exclaimed Miss Askewe, happily unconscious of her future mother-in-law's thoughts.

"I know," answered Eric Weldon shortly, who had an intense aversion to daffodils—"great, staring, yellow things," he called them one day when Miss Askewe had put some in her dress. "She will have a thick, dark skin, and bright, beady eyes, and will be clad in a fearful garment of brilliant yellow to show up, as she imagines, her brunette beauties, and which will only make her more like a diluted negress than ever."

"I don't believe it! Do let us go down nearer the door. I don't want to dance yet."

As none of the three younger people were anxious to begin dancing, and Mrs. Weldon was contented to do as they wished, the group made its way down again towards the draped doorway.

"Ah, there she is. Oh, how lovely!"

They had scarcely placed themselves in a good position for seeing, when Miss Askewe broke into this exclamation. A girl entered the doorway.

A dead-white dress of thick silk, which only the most perfect fairness of skin would have dared to wear, caught up at one side enough to display the gold silk petticoat beneath; a tunic of the white silk thickly fringed, with the golden flowers and long green grasses falling over the other skirt, and draped in soft, rich folds; a close-fitting bodice of white silk, revealing a perfect figure, with a band of the same flowers edging the open round of the neck, that left bare little more than the beautiful white throat. A palm-leaf shaped fan of daffodils and pale, long, slender leaves, a long, thick garland of the same flowers over her arm trailing down on to her dress, and the costume of the Lady Daffodil was described.

There was not a single ornament in the red-gold hair, gathered in coils on the top of the shapely head; not a single jewel on throat, or arms, or in the tiny ears, though rumour whispered that her diamonds were priceless.

"Wasn't it worth while getting such a good look?" exclaimed Miss Askewe as the

dancers hid from view the Lady Daffodil and her chaperon. She turned to the two men as she spoke. "Oh, Eric, what is it?" she exclaimed, shrinking closer to him, for on his face was a look such as she had never yet seen on any man's.

"Nothing." His voice sounded hoarse and hard as it came from his pale lips. Then he turned abruptly from her. Arnot had already left his place by the side of Mrs. Weldon.

Mrs. Weldon, who was neither keensighted nor sensitively sympathetic, nor given to see mysteries where their presence was not a well-established fact, had not noticed the subtle change in the manner of the young men. She was faintly astonished at their both leaving Miss Askewe and herself, Eric making some hurried excuse about seeing a friend and wishing to speak to him. But the girl sank back in her seat with a vague feeling of fear and pain such as she had never known before in her careless happy life. Yet this dim sense of trouble was all she ever knew of the past of her future husband's life. Neither before nor after her marriage did she ever have another glimpse into it, and neither she nor the self-complacent Mrs. Weldon ever knew how that evening they had strayed on to the borderland of a tragedy, in which one so near to them had played so chief a part. For Eric rejoined them after a little, apparently the same as ever; and Miss Askewe, only too thankful to be able to thrust aside the vague dread that the new comer, with her lovely face, had had some share in the mystery of that look on her lover's face, gladly accepted his return to his usual manner; and as the evening went on, and Eric showed himself her usual attentive attendant, never once looking again in the direction of the beautiful woman who was attracting the admiration of the whole room, she gave herself up once more to the unmitigated enjoyment of the ball.

It was growing late in the evening; Miss Askewe was dancing with one of her numerous partners, and Eric Weldon was left free to do as he liked. He never danced much with anyone now except Miss Askewe, and this evening, beyond his waltzes with her, he had engaged himself to no one. He had not once come near enough to Arnot in the course of the evening to speak to him. Both men seemed rather to have avoided each other. That recognition, which each knew the other shared, had opened up a gulf between

them—a gulf that had been between them in reality ever since that spring holiday three years ago, a separation which had only been tacitly ignored, and thinly covered over by ordinary courtesies and old habits of acquaintance.

They recognised and acknowledged its presence now, as Wilfred Arnot joined Eric Weldon in one of the recesses of the landing. Their manner was cold and constrained, faintly tinged on Arnot's side with a contempt that Weldon saw and could not resent.

"Could you have believed it possible to have had such a strange meeting? It was enough to knock a man down," said Weldon, beginning abruptly as his friend stopped by his side.

"It is strange. It is you only who have made it so much to be dreaded," answered the other bitterly.

It was the first time he had ever employed such a tone in speaking to Weldon. The latter noticed it, and reddened with hot, resentful feeling, but humility and shame gained the upper hand.

"I know," he exclaimed humbly. "Oh, Arnot, if I could only gain her forgiveness; but I behaved even worse than you know. I wrote to her once or twice, making all sorts of excuses about not telling her grandfather. Then I suddenly stopped, and never said another word. I just left her to puzzle it all out by herself, without a sign or a word, or one single help——"

"Hush, you fool!" exclaimed the other fiercely, clasping his arm like a vice. "See, she is coming."

My Lady Daffodil was just coming out of the ballroom with one of her partners. She came along the crimson-carpeted landing, the lights from the gas-brackets above gleaming upon the dead-white of her dress and the gold of her flowers. She was smiling, in response to some remark of her partner, and was apparently entirely occupied with his attentions and conversation, never once looking towards the two men who were watching her in such a fierce fever of hot, jealous pain, remorse, and regret.

She was close to them now, almost touching them as she passed, still apparently perfectly unconscious of their presence. Then she turned her face towards them, and bent her head in grave salutation.

"Thank you," she said, every note of the low, clear voice thrilling to the hearts of the two men, still bewildered at the suddenness of the recognition. "You need

not trouble to take me any farther, Mr. Clara. I have found my friends."

As the young man turned away, with a disappointed look at his dismissal, the other two with a simultaneous movement stepped forward, then as suddenly stopped, both doubting. Each one, as he saw the other advance, fearing with quick humility for himself, and yielding precedence to the other.

She took a step nearer the two men standing side by side. Then spoke again :

"Will you please take me downstairs?"

She spoke to Arnot.

With a quick, eager gesture, a deep-drawn breath, Wilfred Arnot advanced and offered his arm, a whole flood of light illuminating his pale face.

She laid her hand on it, and then, with another grave bow to Eric Weldon, passed on with Arnot, and left the other to face alone the folly—ah, if it had been but that!—the baseness of his past. And as he stood here in his isolation, it was as the very bitterness of death that swept over his soul. To the end of his days, such another cup was never held to his lips. Estelle and Arnot walked the length of the landing and down the stairs before the silence between them was broken.

"I am afraid this is very unconventional. I am not acting as others would; but you must remember my past training. I was not used to social restrictions."

"It is a thing to be thankful for," answered the young man, who had, at least outwardly, recovered himself.

"But you might not have wished to renew the acquaintance—you might have forgotten."

"It is we who should say that."

He could not help the allusion to the past. It slipped from him involuntarily; but his nerves were still unsteady with the shock of the meeting, with the wonder and amazement at the change in her.

A scarlet flush swept over her face, troubling and paining it, but she answered quietly :

"It was a mistake. I found it out afterwards. It was a little hard, but we all make mistakes, and have to find them out. Do not you believe that?"

"It was not your mistake; it was our crime. Yet if I could have prevented——"

"I know."

"There is no excuse. But will you try and believe that education and training sometimes make men cowards. I was afraid——"

"For me? Yes; I understood afterwards. You knew Eric Weldon best."

A small ante-room, set apart for the guests, but at this moment deserted, opened off the corridor. They turned into it, and now stood facing each other near a bank of ferns. A light from a lamp fell on Estelle's face, and she moved, to be more in the shade.

"But when it all came—the trouble and the awakening—I remembered what you had said to me. Then I thought perhaps you had forgotten—that I had made another mistake. I was in trouble, and you gave no sign."

Even in the midst of the confused pain and excitement of the moment, Arnot noticed the difference in her speech, the graceful diction, just as he and Weldon had both noticed the subtle change in her manner, which, always sweet and gentle, had added to itself the self-possessed graciousness of the women of their own world.

"I did write," he said eagerly, "directly after Eric Weldon told me everything was over between you—how shameful the breaking-off was, I did not know till a few minutes ago. But I had no answer. My letter was returned. Then I went to see for myself, only to find the place shut up. I could get no news of you except that Mr. Dorey had died two months after we left, and that you had gone away and left no trace of where you could be found."

The colour which had dyed her face as he began faded and left her white as her dress, and when she spoke her voice was no longer so steady :

"A strange thing happened. At the time when I was thinking that everything that was good was taken from me—I told you that I had made a mistake—a letter came from England from a relation of whom I had never heard. My grandfather, for the first time, spoke to me of my history. My mother, his only daughter, had run away from home, and married a man far above her in birth and position. Her husband's father, a very proud man, never forgave his son, and my grandfather, though only a peasant, was equally hard and proud. He repudiated my mother, considering that she had deceived him and exposed herself to unnecessary contempt by entering a family that despised her. My father was quite young. He had never been accustomed to any work. After he was married, as his allowance was stopped, he did what he could.

But for some reason or another he was always unsuccessful. They grew poorer and poorer, and all the time neither of my grandparents would help them. Then, at last, my father died—of want and trouble at seeing my mother almost destitute. After that her father took her back, and me with her. I was just three. She only lived a few months. Then he took care of me, but from that time he never spoke of my father nor mother, nor of my father's people, despising and hating the very name of a gentleman, as being, as he considered, the cause of all the misery that had come into his and his daughter's life. So I was brought up at the mill, as you saw. He would not even let me keep my father's name. But, at last, Mr. Spencer wrote. His heir, a nephew, was dead, and because he would not let the property go to a distant connection, he thought of me. My grandfather had a great struggle before he could make up his mind to accept the offer which promised me the inheritance that belonged of right to my father. He yielded at last, because I had not a single relation except himself and Mr. Spencer in the world, and he himself was ill, and had little to leave me. But I think the struggle hastened his death. I stayed with him till he died. You will guess the rest. I went away without a word. I think I felt hard and bitter against everyone at that time. My other grandfather was very kind to me. He seemed to grow fond of me, and I did my best to learn the arts and graces of my new life."

For the first time, a faint scorn came into her eyes.

"Do you think that I have succeeded? They say that I have."

He did not speak, but looked at her with a strange wonder in his eyes. Even he was astonished at the perfection of the studied lesson.

"You could not have succeeded so well if all that was graceful and womanly had not been there before," he said slowly, with a gravity that made the speech the simple utterance of a soul-felt truth.

Her eyes fell before his. Then she spoke again, hurriedly:

"Last year my grandfather died, and now I am alone."

"Alone!" he echoed. "Do you know

that rich people are never alone? They have always friends."

"Friends! Friends who will come to them when danger threatens them? Friends who will offer so simply the sacrifice of their whole life that it makes them glad, ashamed, sorrowful, proud, all in one?"

A brilliant light had come into her eyes, and on either cheek burned a crimson spot.

It was he now who trembled before her.

He drew back a step, faint and bewildered, but, with a violent effort, he conquered his weakness, though, when he spoke, his voice was hoarse and unsteady.

"It was such a little thing to offer, thinking as I did."

"As you did! Then you have thrown away the daffodils? Well, I could hardly expect you to keep them. They were only worthless wild-flowers, after all. I was not worthy of your friendship."

"Friendship! Was it friendship that I offered you that day at the mill? I did not know; I thought it was love. Oh, Estelle, don't raise again all the doubts and the tortures of that time. I sometimes wonder even now how I could have lived through them. But I could not again. A man can only go through once in his life what I did those three weeks of that spring."

"Mr. Arnot, do you remember what I said that morning? That I would ask for those flowers again when the time came in which you alone, in all the world, could help my life. Will you give me back my daffodils now? I have waited three long years for them."

"Estelle!"

A low cry, wrung from the very depths of a man's heart—a cry heavy with the burden of the pain and the suffering of that past time, of the patience and weary waiting of years, of the strength of self-sacrifice, of the great passion and love, satisfied at last.

Then Estelle was drawn close into Wilfred Arnot's arms, and the kiss that followed set the seal to the poem of their lives.

"I told you that I made a mistake," she said afterwards. "It is you who have to forgive, for I found out, among all the trouble that came to me, that it was you I loved all along—not Eric Weldon, nor another."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

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LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

"I DON'T believe you have heard one word I have said," exclaimed Edie Fairfax from her perch among the low branches of a spreading walnut-tree. Then with a sudden petulant upward movement, she seized a bough that gracefully arched itself over her head, and sent a whole shower of the over-ripe nuts on to the brown, withered grass beneath, where, book in hand, half lay, half reclined, the lithe, long figure of Philip Wickham, nephew to Miss Edie's father's oldest friend and nearest neighbour, Colonel Wickham, of Wickham Place. Her betrothed lover also, ever since, as a small maiden of twelve years, she had looked up in his face and said: "Phil, I love you better than anyone in the whole world; when we grow up we'll keep house together, so mind you don't marry anybody else."

Phil looked up lazily for a moment as the nuts came rattling about his ears.

"How now, Edie; what's up?" he said calmly. (One might almost have declared he was used to such vehement expostulations.) Then his eyes wandered back to his open book once more.

Edie grew more and more indignant.

She was a small, slight girl, of the brown-eyed, brown-haired English type, with a complexion pure and pale, and a colour that came and went with every passing mood. Her features were small and regular, her lips daintily curved, her nose straight. At first sight one was apt to think that somehow Nature had made a mistake in fitting such a nose on a face that seemed emphatically to demand one of the artless retroussé type; as one knew her better, however, one would feel bound to

admit that Nature was correct as usual, and the nose as right as could be—just what one would expect a person of Edie's temperament to own to; in fact, the face taken as a whole (nose included), expressed the girl in all her moods to perfection. It was a face that before anything else seemed to say, "I am a happy young person, and I have been all my life a spoilt, petted, and happy young person. I am, perhaps, a little disposed to be imperious at times, and, not a doubt, I can't stand being thwarted or denied my own way."

At the moment, however, when she rattled the ripe walnuts about Phil Wickham's head, it is possible that her face expressed more imperiousness than happiness, for the pretty little lips were straightening out of their usual curves, dimples had disappeared, and there was a very determined ring in her voice as she said:

"Phil, once for all, will you put away that horrid book, and listen to me with both your ears?"

"My dear Edie, I have been listening to you ever since I came out this morning with my book and pipe at eleven o'clock; and now it's nearly one—that's close upon two hours of listening," was Phil's rejoinder in the same mild, lazy tone as before.

"That's close upon two hours of reading, you mean? How anyone in his senses could waste all that time over a stupid novel is more than I can understand. I thought you men were above such frivolous nonsense as reading novels, I really did."

"My dear Edie, we only occasionally look into them to see what the women spend so much time over. Also, I would like to remind you that the book I have in my hand at the present moment cannot

be characterised either as stupid or frivolous; it is written by one of the cleverest men of the day, and is called——”

“I don't in the least want to know what it is called. It is written by a man, and that is quite enough for me; I never take more than five minutes, at the outside, over a man's book”——here the short upper-lip curled itself into the prettiest little attempt at a sneer of which it was capable——“such creatures as they turn out for heroes, and one is to take their word for it, that they are drawn from life!” Here a visible shudder, which sent half-a-dozen or so of the driest of the walnut-leaves on to Phil's pages. “Well, I only hope a good providence won't send any such heroes limping across my path. Why, we'd die old maids a thousand times over rather than put up with such a horror as the one you're reading about there. I've forgotten his name——Heth, Hether, or Hethering something or other. A man who'd preach to you morning, noon, or night, no matter what you might do. He'd preach to you if you laughed, and he'd preach to you if you cried, and he'd preach to you if you didn't do either!”

Here, pausing for breath, she nodded somewhat viciously at the book, which Phil had now closed, and was leaning his elbows upon, while he looked up in her face, waiting for her tirade of criticism to cease.

When at length it came to an end, he clapped his hands vigorously, crying, “Well done——well done——”

But Edie interrupted him:

“Be quiet, Phil; you know how I hate to be applauded in that ironical way,” she began petulantly.

“My dear Edie,” retorted the young man, “you should have let me finish. I was applauding myself, not you. I was going to say, ‘Well done, Phil, old fellow; you are a capital listener, after all.’”

Edie laughed outright. In this young person's April-like temperament, smiles and petulance frequently trod upon each other's heels, or even at times came hand-in-hand.

“You do well to applaud yourself for your listening powers——no one else would do it for you. Not I, at any rate, for you have not heard one word I have been saying, as I have already told you a hundred times over.”

“My dear Edie, as I have already told you, not a hundred times, but once only, I have heard not only every half-syllable you have uttered since I have been lying here on the grass at your feet, but I have heard

more than your words. Don't lift your eyebrows at me in that fashion. I distinctly heard two tremendously heavy sighs when you made the announcement that Lady Lovelace was coming to stay with you for a few months——for the winter most probably.”

“I object to having my sighs catalogued in that businesslike fashion. As though they concerned anybody but myself! I object also to having my cousin called by any but her proper name, Ellinor Yorke.”

“But, Edie, she is a Lovelace——at the commencement of her career. Nothing will ever unmake her.”

“Now, Phil, who and what was Lovelace? The man himself, I mean? I am always meeting with allusions to him in books, but I have never come across the man himself, although I get through piles of novels every year! Who was he? What did he do?”

“Oh, nothing very much; he used to go about the world breaking people's hearts——that was all.”

“Well, I see nothing wonderful in that; as if anybody couldn't do that, if they tried!” this said with a scornful emphasis.

“And crushing people's souls——women's, that is,” continued Phil.

“Ah, that's another thing! Anybody couldn't do that. But, Phil,” this added after a moment's reflection, “it would have been grand to have turned the tables on him!”

Phil looked up suddenly in her face.

“You couldn't do such a thing, Edie!” he said sharply, one might almost have said nervously.

There came no answer from Edie. She was slowly pulling the big leaves, damp and limp from October night dews, from the bough on which she sat, dropping them one by one on the ground at her feet. She seemed all engrossed in her task.

Phil, with something of a canine stretch and shake, got up from his recumbent posture. He was a fine, stalwart young fellow, of about five or six and twenty, with a frank, honest-looking face, bright blue eyes, a heavy thickness of fair curling hair. The absence of beard or whisker on his face possibly made him look somewhat younger than his age. Also he carried himself——head and shoulders, that is——with an easy, indifferent, happy air, which, perhaps, robbed him of another year or two. His was emphatically the carriage of an easy-tempered, happy man, of a man who, it is possible, might possess strong

will, strong brain, strong muscle, but who as yet was scarcely conscious of his possessions, never having had occasion to draw upon them.

He held out his hand to help Edie from her perch.

"I suppose we ought to be going in," he said; "it's nearly luncheon-time."

But Edie did not offer to stir. She had pulled off the last leaf from her bough, and was now slowly tearing its delicate tissue into morsels.

"I told you, Phil, at breakfast this morning, that I had something of importance to say to you, if you would listen with both your ears instead of one and a half," she said in a low tone.

"But, Edie, I thought the important communication was made, and that it had reference to Lady Lovelace's visit," said Phil with an accent of surprise.

Edie went on pulling her leaf to pieces.

"I am all attention, dear," said Phil, wonder increasing on him.

Edie seemed to make a great effort. She dropped her leaf, folded her hands in her lap, and looked down into his face.

"Well, it's just this," she said, speaking as though the words would hardly come. "I have been thinking a great deal lately, and it has come into my head that somehow our engagement does not seem to be like real love-making, but more like playing at it, and that—that—that—perhaps, it would be better—better that—that—that we should not be engaged to each other any longer!"

The last half-dozen words came out with a desperate rush and hurry, and left her almost panting for breath. She had practised saying them at least a hundred and fifty times that morning in front of her looking-glass, to make sure she could give them with proper effect; but somehow now they were said they did not seem to sound one whit as she had expected they would.

Phil stood still, looking at her dumbly. Never a word found its way to his lips.

The pause was insupportable.

"Don't you understand me, Phil?" she asked, her words jerking in time and tune to her painfully beating heart.

"I don't think I do," he answered hoarsely. "I can't think you mean to throw me over, Edie, after all these years."

He was listening with both his ears now, not a doubt.

Edie began to grow troubled. Her eyes drooped, her fingers twined and twisted themselves in and out on her lap.

"I did not think you would take it in that way," she began falteringly. "I hardly know how to explain what I mean. It seems to me sometimes that we are more like brother and sister than—than—anything else. You see, we somehow slipped into our engagement without exactly knowing how, or thinking much about it—and—and—of course it's a thing that ought to be thought over——"

Here she broke off; it was absolutely impossible for her to get another word out.

Phil drew a long breath; his senses were beginning to come back to him.

"Am I to understand," he began in slow, somewhat formal tones, "that you, having thought well over our engagement, have come to the conclusion that there is something in me so objectionable that you can't possibly love me and be happy with me?"

Edie slid off her perch in a moment. She stood close to Phil's side (her head scarcely reached to his shoulder), laying her hand upon his arm, and throwing her soul into her brown eyes, which she lifted appealingly to his blue ones.

"Oh, Phil, Phil—dear Phil!" she cried, "you must not talk like that, or I shall wish I had not spoken. You don't understand me one bit, I can see. As if I ever could leave off caring for you! Why, I've known you ever since I was a baby! What I really meant to say was: I was not sure whether—whether—oh, don't you see?—whether I cared for you in the right sort of way, and whether you cared too. Don't you see—can't you understand?" Here she stamped her foot petulantly on the dry leaves at her feet. "Oh dear, oh dear! what a great, dull fellow you are. There's nothing bright about you but your eyes and your hair!"

Phil began to smile again; he loved to hear Edie talk to him in this way, it seemed more like her natural self.

"I am, as you say, Edie, a great, dull fellow," he answered quietly; "but I think I begin to see what you mean. You won't mind my telling you, dear, that you— you only of us two—are the one who need to find out whether your love is of the right sort. I am, you know, eight years older than you, and all you have just been saying came into my head exactly five years ago, and was very satisfactorily answered. Now don't you think, dear, that the easiest and best way for you to get an answer to your doubts would be to

marry me as quickly as possible—say in a month's time—you could then without much trouble find out the sort of way in which you cared for me."

His arm stole round her waist as he finished speaking. He even dared to push back her poke sun-bonnet so as to get a better view of those brown eyes and the now rapidly flushing cheek.

Eddie greatly affected poked sun-bonnets; they were such comfortable things and could be so easily tilted with a jerk from behind over her eyes when Phil took it into his head (as he often did) to say sweet or saucy things to her.

She did not try to free herself from his arm, in fact seemed very comfortable under its pressure, and to be rapidly recovering her composure.

"Now, what an absurd thing to say, It's just like you!" she cried. "Where would be the use of my finding out after we were married that I didn't like you, and didn't want to live with you. Don't you see it's the point of the whole thing that I'm to find it out before it's too late! Now do be sensible and serious, Phil, and help me out with what I want to say. I'm not asking anything very unreasonable; I only want not to be engaged for a time—say a year—and then, you know, at the end of the year, if we're both willing, we can be engaged again. That's all. There's nothing very terrible in that, is there?"

Phil grew grave again.

"Must it be a year—a whole year, Eddie?" he asked; "wouldn't three months do?"

"Three months—absurd! Why, that would be like playing at breaking it off; I want it to be the real thing. No; it must be for a whole year, beginning from to-day!"

"From to-day! No, no: we needn't start so soon as all that. Let's begin at the beginning of next year, start even and fair from the 1st of January, or a little later on—say somewhere in March, about Lady Day—eh, Eddie?"

And he thought to himself as he said this:

"Thank Heaven, all the detestable tennis-parties are over for this year! There are those confounded Christmas balls, though, to get through!"

Eddie was resolute.

"It must be from to-day," she said, with a great air of decision; "when you have made up your mind to a thing, there's nothing like beginning at once. Now

there's the luncheon-bell; please carry my cloak so, on that arm; my sketching portfolio so, in your other hand; now we'll walk sedately up to the house if you don't mind, and, remember, we're beginning now—this very minute—not to be engaged."

"This looks like beginning," said Phil, as he ladened himself obediently with Eddie's belongings.

But Eddie knew very well what she was doing. She had given Phil occupation for both his hands, and her waist was consequently set free.

It was a hot, hazy October morning; they had gone down to a quiet corner of the orchard under pretence of sketching a pretty little "bit" Eddie had said she was "dying" to have framed and hung in her sitting-room. The sketch, however, had fared but badly; a few faintly-marked pencil lines were its only representatives in the portfolio Phil closed and tucked up under his arm.

The dry leaves crunched under their feet as they slowly made their way towards the house; the autumn sunlight went dancing and glancing in and out among the pear and plum trees; a late bee went by humming cheerily; a big codlin came down with a crash almost at Eddie's feet.

"There's one thing more," she said, stopping suddenly on the edge of the orchard: "you must tell the papas all about it, Phil—I mean my papa and your uncle. You know men always do the asking and telling in such matters."

"Do they?" said Phil; "with exceptions, you mean. You won't forget you made me the offer in the first instance—Eddie, let me see—exactly six years ago."

"When I was an absurd little dot in short frocks, and thought asking a person to marry you was much the same as asking for more pudding or a new doll! Well, at any rate now you must do all the disagreeable part. I dread telling papa, in case he should be ridiculous and lose his temper."

"Now, Eddie, as if your father had ever in his whole life been known to lose his temper over anything except a game of whist!"

"Well, then, in case I might lose mine—it comes to much the same thing in the end. Now don't forget; this afternoon I'll see that you get papa all to yourself, and you must tell him that from to-day—by-the-bye, what is the date of to-day, Phil?"

"The 1st of October, 1881."

"Well, then, from the 1st of October,

1881, till the 1st of October, 1882, we are not to be engaged. Now, that's all, I think." And Edie went serenely on her way once more.

"That's not all; there's one thing more, Edie," said Phil in low, earnest tones, laying his hand on her arm.

"One thing more! What is it?" asked the unsuspecting Edie.

"This," and Phil, throwing cloak and portfolio on the ground, caught the girl in his arms, and imprinted one long, strong, passionate kiss on her lips.

"Forgive me, dear," he said humbly; "it may be so long before I shall get another!"

And a sudden sharp terror seized him as the thought rose up momentarily in his heart: "Would that kiss, in all its passionate fervour, be repeated on the 1st of October, 1882?"

THE CLIMBS OF THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

SOMEONE has said of England that it is a reproduction in miniature of the scenery of the Continent. It were difficult to justify the likeness instance for instance, but certain resemblances are obvious; and if the Dart be the English Rhine, the Ventnor Undercliff the English Riviera, and so on, then with much more truth may the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland be said to stand for the Alps. And the climber who cannot reach the great European playground may well be content to practise upon the Cumberland peaks, which, by-and-by, he will come to respect and love—to respect for the difficult crag-work they offer, and to love for their beauty and grandeur; their gladdening views of dale, and lake, and tarn; their keen and healthful winds, like those Charles Lamb encountered atop of Skiddaw; their flying mists, and echoing storms. But he who would win their secrets from the mountains, and be filled with their inspiration, must court the mountain-spirits in their solitudes, and must shun the beaten tracks and "tourist centres." Round Ambleside you will indeed find hills and waterfalls, but the waterfalls are decked with greasy sandwich-papers and porter-bottles, and the hills echo the steam-whistles of the Windermere steamers, bringing crowds of thirsty "trippers" from the Staffordshire potteries. Brass bands play under your hotel windows; "char-a-bancs," waggonettes, and breaks of all colours rattle about with

cargoes of tourists who have been "doing" some favourite "round;" touts pester you in the streets; and in the hotel coffee-room you overhear a gentleman ask angrily: "Why don't they build a 'ut on 'Elvellyn? They 'ave one on Snowdon."

Of course Ambleside has associations. Harriet Martineau and Dr. Arnold, Wordsworth and Hartley Coleridge are great names. To-day, Mr. W. E. Forster and Mr. Matthew Arnold love and visit it, and Birket Foster has made a pretty "bit" of the old mill. But the village is vulgarised almost beyond hope. Let the railway be brought there from Windermere, and its ruin will be complete. Though there is now no Wordsworth to pen noble sonnets of protest against further railway invasions of the district, there is happily an energetic Lake District Defence Association working strenuously to save from the destruction which threatens it the sweetest spot of English ground. Already it has defeated the Borrowdale and Ennerdale schemes, and long may it be successful in keeping the railway promoters at bay! Lovers of mountains will avoid Ambleside. Keswick is better as a mountaineering centre; for Skiddaw and Blencathara, the minor heights round Derwentwater, and the beautiful range stretching from Griesdale Pike to Grasmoor are all within easy reach. The farther you get from the stale air of towns the better. Grange and Rothwaite, those beautiful Borrowdale hamlets, are tempting resting-places; but he who goes to Cumberland to walk and climb will not be satisfied till he finds himself face to face with the highest peaks at Wastdale Head.

Wastdale Head — or, more properly, Wastdale, for that part of the valley below the lake is Nether Wastdale—is the finest mountain-valley in England. Round its head are symmetrically grouped the highest English mountains—Scafell Pikes, and its companion, Scafell, Great End, and Great Gable. The lower heights of Lingmell, Kirkfell, and Yewbarrow form stately buttresses for the loftier summits beyond. On all sides the mountains plunge straight down to the valley, and if you row over the gloomy surface of Wast-water, close to the Scree, you can see the steep rocky slope continue straight down into the lake till it is lost in the black water. Approaching Wastdale Head by the carriage-road from the little coast-towns of Drigg or Seascale, where there are railway-stations, the valley appears a

cul-de-sac, and people wonder how they can get away again without retracing their steps. There are but three exits, and these are mere "fell-tracks:" steep, stony zigzags, swept by mountain-torrents in winter, and in summer forming the most detestable paths. Seven scattered farms occupy the valley, and its church and schoolhouse are the smallest in England. Wastdale Head has sown its wild oats and become decorous. But get some old dalesman in a talkative mood, and he will tell you of other times, when old "Will" Ritson, sheep-farmer, innkeeper, and wit, was the genius of the place. What fun went on then under the shadow of Scafell; what feats of fish-spearing by torchlight; what wild fox-hunts over the fells; what fine wrestling-matches on the green on summer evenings; what card-parties, and dancing, and good-humoured riot! Once someone tied a donkey by its tail to the bell-rope of the little church, and the animal's struggles raised a clangour which brought the parson rushing to the spot. But times have changed. The frolic ways have been abandoned, and the dalespeople have settled down with gravity to their two staple industries of sheep-farming and entertaining tourists. Either at the inn, or at Mrs. Thomas Tyson's famous farmhouse, climbing-men linger through the summer. Some come in winter, and then the surrounding peaks offer excellent practice for Swiss mountaineering. They are enthusiastic fellows, these climbers. They ascend their favourite mountains time after time (one honoured pioneer of lake-climbing has made ninety-nine ascents to the summit of Great Gable); they are unwearied in finding new ways up everywhere, and their talk, when they get together, is of nicks and notches, ladders and ledges, gullies, ghylls, and chimneys, and even of cols, arêtes, and couloirs. All Cumberland and Westmoreland is familiar to them; they are at home on the Blencathara Edges, looking down to the waters of the dark tarn which is said to reflect the stars at noonday, on the precipices of Scafell, and Striding Edge on Helvellyn. They have clambered among the waterfalls of Piers Ghyll, climbed the precipice of Pavey Ark and the crags of Lingmell, crossed the sloping stones wedged in the cavern at Dungeon Ghyll, scaled the crags of Great Napes on Gable, and the great couloir in the front of Great End; yet ever do they return with greater fondness to the most

enticing peak of all—the redoubtable Pillar Rock of Ennerdale.

The spell which this Rock throws over the minds of those who have once visited it is enthralling. It is of the nature of a psychological mystery not to be accounted for on ordinary grounds. It is strange. The Pillar Rock is merely a mass of crags, with no inherent difference from other masses save that it juts up boldly some nine hundred feet from the precipitous breast of the Pillar Mountain. Yet, once seen, it is as the loadstone to the pieces of iron in the story of the Third Royal Calendar. Perhaps it is the fact of its unique position, standing alone overhanging the desolate valley of Ennerdale, its apparent inaccessibility, or the tragic interest which two deaths have given it. Whatever the secret of its attraction, that attraction is undoubted. One climber, a senior wrangler and member of the Alpine Club, has scaled the Rock more than forty times, and younger men are at this moment engaged in beating his record. It has been called, with exquisite inappropriateness, the English Matterhorn and the English Schreckhorn. But it has not the terrors implied in the latter name. It is, in fact, an interesting rock, accessible from several sides, the climbs being easy or difficult, according to the side from which they are made. Let us enter into details. Ennerdale is the longest and most desolate of the mountain valleys which radiate from Great Gable, the central knot of the Scafell system. Its upper end is closed by the magnificent dome of Gable itself, and its sides are formed by the precipitous slopes of Kirkfell, the Pillar and the Steeple on the one side, and High Crag, High Stile, and Red Pike on the other. An impetuous stream, the Liza, traverses the length of the valley, and flows into Ennerdale Lake. No habitation, no sign of human life breaks the solitude of the place. The murmuring of the stream, the cry of the raven or the hawk, are the only sounds. Upper Ennerdale is not, however, unfamiliar to the tourist; for the fell-track from Wastdale to Buttermere, after ascending by Black Sail Pass, descends into Ennerdale, and mounts on the other side to Scarf Gap, and so down to Buttermere. Those following this track may see the top of the famous Pillar Rock peering over a projecting ridge of the Pillar Mountain, and the most imposing view of the rock is to be gained by proceeding along the valley till opposite to it, and then climbing up to its

base. It is a fatiguing scramble, and it has been said that the cragsman taking this route, will find the way strewn with the graves of those who have preceded him. If there is exaggeration, there is also truth in the saying. Near the foot of the Black Sail Pass is a large cairn erected to the memory of Mr. Edward Barnard, a London goldsmith, who, overcome by fatigue and heat (it was in August, 1876), there lay down and died. Not much farther, but high up on the mountain side, is an iron cross marking the spot where was found the body of the Rev. James Jackson, who, on May 1st, 1878, fell from the precipice of the Pillar Mountain. Just to the left of the Rock is the gully where the youth Walker slipped over the ice and snow, and was dashed to pieces, on Good Friday, 1883, and at any point of the walk a turn of the head will reveal the horrid gully in the precipice of Great Gable where the Rev. J. Pope was killed a year or two ago.

You see yon precipice; it wears the shape
Of a vast building made of many crags;
And in the midst is one particular rock
That rises like a column from the vale,
Whence by our shepherds it is called the Pillar.

Thus did "the homely priest of Ennerdale" describe the Pillar Rock to Leonard in Wordsworth's poem, *The Brothers*, and the description is accurate. The whole Ennerdale front of the Pillar is broken up by projecting ridges which form a series of recesses or coves. In one of the largest of these coves stands the Pillar Rock, springing upward almost perpendicularly on the Ennerdale side to a height of eight hundred and seventy-five feet, but united on its other side to the Pillar Mountain by a neck, about one hundred feet below the summit of the Rock. All climbs are best begun from this neck, and to reach it from Wastdale it is best to ascend the Pillar Mountain from the Black Sail Pass, and walk on the level grassy summit till the small heath-covered top of the Rock is seen in air on the right-hand side, many feet below. An easy though steep scramble down the mountain-side then lands you on the neck. This route saves the long climb up to the base of the Rock from Ennerdale. Heated pedestrians approaching the Pillar from the valley have even been known to get bewildered by the many crags, to dispute among themselves as to which was the Pillar Rock, and to fall out by the way.

Standing on the narrow neck the Rock is immediately in front, and steep gullies

sweep down to right and left. The left or western gully can be descended, and from a point about half-way down the "west climb" is commenced. The right or eastern gully, after descending steeply for several yards ends in a sudden pitch. Viewed from the neck the Rock does not justify its name. A scramble round its base will reveal it to be a cumbrous mass of crags, its greatest length extending north and south up the mountain-side. In three places it is cleft perpendicularly by deep gullies or chimneys, whose lines of clearance are parallel to Ennerdale, and therefore at right angles to the greatest length of the Rock. These gullies split the Rock into four separate summits; the highest is called the "High Man," and the others "Low Men." (In the Lake District all lower summits are called "Low Men.") From the neck an easy way to the highest summit seems to present itself directly in front. The climber mounts gaily and with confidence, only to find himself cut off from the High Man by an impassable cleft, forty feet long on the level part at the bottom, thirteen feet wide at the bottom, and broadening towards the top. Opposite rises the main rock in a fine wall sixty feet high. This is the most southerly of the three gullies mentioned above. By an authority on the Pillar this false rock has been christened *Pisgah*, and the gap, *Jordan*.

Descending then from *Pisgah* to the neck, the attack must now be made from the right-hand or east side. Looking across to the Rock, a smooth sloping slab is conspicuous on its side. Make for this by scrambling a few yards down the east gully, and then ascending two natural steps (known as "the first ladder") about six feet high, which conduct to the upper edge of the "Broad Slab." The slab is covered with grass on its upper part; the lower part is smooth, and ends abruptly over the east gully. It is forty feet in length, twenty-nine in width, and slopes at an angle of thirty-seven degrees. A crack about two inches wide runs horizontally across the slab, and without this aid crossing it would be a matter of some little difficulty, for there is a considerable drop on to the rough rocks of the east gully from the lower edge, and a slip here is not to be recommended. The crack affords good foot-hold, and a few steps carry you across the Broad Slab. A few yards of uneven but safe walking conduct to a sort of corner, where the climber is confronted

by a projecting curtain, with a deep notch between it and the main mass. To the left rises the erect wall of the Pillar; on the right is a precipice of about sixty feet. From this grassy corner there is a perplexing choice of inviting (or uninviting) routes, and strangers have been known to bother about for half an hour or more and then sometimes give up the ascent, unable to find a way. From the corner there are, however, at least three ways of ascent, known respectively as the routes by "the notch," "the ledge," and the "arête." The notch way is far the easiest. Scramble up to the left-hand, aiming for the floor of the notch, between the curtain and the main mass. A moderate climb of twenty-four feet lands you on the floor of the notch, here twenty-one feet thick, and you find yourself on the south wall of the "Great Chimney," which is the name given to the middle one of the three gullies which have been mentioned as dividing the main mass of the Pillar Rock. The Great Chimney begins just at the top of the steep pitch in the east gully, and cleaves the rock almost to its highest summit. Seventy feet from its base, the chimney contains a sloping shelf, covered with rough grass. This shelf is sixty feet in length, slopes at an angle of forty-five degrees, and is known to the esoteric circle of "Pillarites" as the "Steep Grass." At the top of the Steep Grass the Great Chimney suddenly narrows, and dwindles to a small perpendicular chimney twenty-three feet high, about the width of an ordinary human body, and containing a large stone jammed half-way up. When on the floor of the notch the Steep Grass can be reached by a drop of eight feet. The easiest way, however, is to continue the ascent over comparatively easy rocks, keeping the Great Chimney on the right till you emerge on the grass at the top of the small chimney, whence a run carries you to the highest summit. Here you may add your visiting-card to the others in the tin-box hidden in the cairn, or you may sign your name in the visitors' book obligingly left for this purpose by two London climbers in 1882.

This is probably the easiest way of ascending the Rock, though it is almost unknown. The only way which seems known to the local guides is that by the ledge. To ascend by way of the ledge from the corner below the notch, the climber must first get up the cleft or natural ladder in the curtain, which is

directly in front after coming over the broad alab. The cleft—the "second ladder"—runs up the face of the curtain for ten feet, then broadens out into a scoop and ends; but from the scoop a ledge is to be seen running to the right and winding round the curtain. The second ladder presents no difficulty to a moderate climber, as the hand-holds and foot-holds are plentiful. It is not, however, a place to run up, as the face of the curtain here turns outwards towards the precipice in an unpleasing manner, and a slip would precipitate the climber on to the rocks of the east gully, some sixty feet below. Once up the ladder, the scoop offers a safe refuge, and the right foot must be placed on the ledge, which is here only about eighteen inches wide. There is, however, excellent hand-hold and foot-hold, and though there is a deep fall immediately behind, none but those with very unsteady heads need be afraid to trust themselves on the ledge. Almost immediately, it curves round the curtain, broadens out to ten or fifteen feet, and inclines downwards, when you step from it on to another corner of grassy ground. A swing round a little jutting rock with a seventy-foot drop just behind lands you on the lower edge of the Steep Grass. Scrambling up to the top, the small chimney is attacked by insinuating the body, and working upwards till just under the jammed stone. Throwing the arms round this, the climber gets his breast upon it, and then a brief struggle, while the feet are unoccupied in mid-air, enables him first to kneel and then to stand upon the stone. The upper part of the chimney is then attacked with ease, and the climber emerges at the point reached by the climb from the notch already described. This route by the ladder, ledge, and chimney was, it is said, first discovered by Mr. Leslie Stephen and a party of University men, about the year 1854. It is a pleasant and varied climb which does not overtax the powers of a moderate cragsman. Mr. H. L. Jenkinson, indeed, in his excellent Guide to the English Lakes (6th edition, 1879), says: "The rock has been scaled by very few, and it is exceedingly hazardous and foolhardy to attempt it;" but it must be presumed that this very exaggerated warning is intended for the waggonette-tourist, and not for the cragsman. The ascent from the notch by the "arête" (or south wall of the Great Chimney) is a much harder climb than

either of these already described. It has been accomplished by only four or five men, and at one point near the top, where both hands have to be clasped round a pinnacle rock while the weight is partly sustained by the knees, it verges on the dangerous.

The three climbs already described are all on the east side of the rock, and they lead direct to the High Man, the total height ascended being about one hundred feet. But there are other and longer climbs both on the east and west side of the rock which conduct to the summit of the Low Man, whence there is some good climbing to reach the highest point. Those climbs are very little known, and any detailed description of them is impossible, as they may be varied in several ways. As far as the summit of the Low Man, where the east and west routes unite, they are scrambles rather than climbs; but during the whole ascent great care is necessary, for on slipping on these sides of the rock the cragsman would bound from one rocky ledge to another, and finally pitch to the very base of the rock, if not beyond—a matter of some five hundred feet. More than one way may be taken from the Low Man to the High Man, but one is chiefly used. Care is necessary throughout; and the worst bit is the ascent of a wall of rock close to a poised block which is easily recognisable. The descent here is especially awkward. Indeed, in nine cases out of ten the descent of rocks is more difficult than the ascent; had we eyes in our heels the difficulties would be equalised. Two ascents to High Man have been made from Jordan Gap by Mr. W. P. Haskett-Smith, the first and only cragsman who has accomplished this feat. Much of our recent knowledge of the Pillar is due to Mr. Haskett-Smith, a most skilful and daring climber. This gentleman has ascended the rock by more than twelve distinct routes, and to his courtesy we are indebted for several of the measurements of parts of the Rock which are here made public for the first time.

Of early ascents of the Pillar Rock little is known. By the dalespeople it was long considered inaccessible, and Mr. G. Seetree, in his little pamphlet on the Lake District, says that it was first scaled by "a hardy young shepherd, named Atchinson," in the year 1826. Speaking of this, or some other early ascent, to a member of the Alpine Club, an old dalesman said, in that Cumberland dialect which is now

becoming so rare: "Fwoks deah sai theer waz a chap at yance gat tul t' toop efter a fox, bit t' crahg waz seah brant an' 'sape in yah pleace at theer waz neah hod for owdther hand ner feut, an' he hed to ram his jackalegs inta a lahl crack to sarra for a step up." It may be noted that the shepherd James, in Wordsworth's poem *The Brothers*, is described as being killed through falling from the summit of the Pillar Rock, and the supposition that the poet was here confounding the top of the Rock with the top of the mountain, is precluded by the accurate description he gives of the place in an earlier passage. The writer of *Murray's Handbook to the Lakes* was not, however, so well informed; for he makes the astounding assertion that the Pillar Rock is the top of the Pillar Mountain. Of ascents between that of the shepherd in 1826, and that of Mr. Lealie Stephen, about 1854, little or nothing can be discovered, though the name of a Mr. Baumgarten is mentioned as among the first. It was not till 1874 that the Rock became known. About that time a bottle was deposited on the top, and visitors left their cards; but, on June 29th, 1876, two navvies who reached the top, carried away the bottle, cards, handkerchiefs, and other mementoes of the early climbers. As far as can be ascertained, a Miss A. Barker, who ascended July 9, 1870, was the first lady to reach the top; Miss Mary Westmoreland, of Penrith, was the second (1874); Mrs. Ann Crears (June, 1875) being the third; and Miss Edith Maitland and Miss Butler (August, 1875) the fourth and fifth. But of all the earlier climbers of the Pillar Rock, the Rev. James Jackson, the octogenarian clergyman of Sandwith, near Whitehaven, was the most remarkable. This enthusiastic old mountaineer was a man of character; energetic, quick-tempered, and eccentric. He was a bit of a versifier, had travelled on the Continent, and had brought home certain relics from Loretto, which he deposited on the top of the Pillar Rock, whence they were ruthlessly carried by the vandal navvies in 1876. He had an enthusiastic love for his native lake mountains, "from Black Combe to Skiddaw," and in his ramblings on the fells, he had often looked down longingly to the Pillar Rock from the mountain, but deemed it inaccessible. Having read, however, a rhyming account of their ascent, contributed to a local paper by the Messrs. Thomas and Edward Westmoreland, two noted Penrith climbers, the old clergyman resolved to try,

and aided by ropes and spiked nails he succeeded in reaching the top on May 31, 1875. Mr. Jackson was then in his seventy-ninth year, and he was immensely pleased with his achievement. He dubbed himself "Patriarch of the Pillarites," and at once took the Rock under his especial care. On May 1st, 1878, this fine old mountaineer, then in his eighty-second year, fell a victim to his passion for climbing. He started from Wastdale, provided with poles and ropes, intending to ascend the Rock; but as he did not return, search-parties were organised, and on the second day his body was found in a large hollow called Great Doup, somewhat to the east of the Rock. The 1st of May had been misty, and it was evident that he had approached too near the edge of the precipice, had lost his balance, and fallen a distance of about three hundred feet. In a bottle in his pocket, which he had intended to leave on the Rock, were these lines:

Two elephantine properties are mine,
For I can bend to pick up pin or plack;
And when this year the Pillar Rock I climb
Fourscore and two's the howdah on my back.

Two years later two veteran lovers of the Lake Mountains (Mr. F. H. Bowring and the late Mr. J. Maitland, who had been playfully appointed "presumptive patriarch" by Mr. Jackson) placed a cairn and iron cross on the spot where the old man's body was found.

The sad death of the youth Walker, who was killed on Good Friday, 1883, by slipping on the snow and falling over the precipice of the east gully, has also led to the belief that the Rock is more dangerous than it really is. No accident has yet occurred on the Rock itself, nor need there be any if it be attempted in proper weather by active, steady-headed cragsmen. Between twenty and thirty persons reach the summit every year, and of these probably three or four are ladies. Almost all ordinary climbers go by the ladder, ledge, and chimney route, which is, indeed, the only one at all generally known. Ladies attempting the ascent will find an Alpine dress a great convenience. The actual top of the Rock is small, and to look over into Ennerdale gives something of the impression of being on a mast-head at sea. A unique ascent was made during the present summer, when a party of seven (including two ladies) climbed the Rock by the little-known east route, starting from the bottom of the Great Chimney,

and took a guitar with them to the top. A pleasant hour of good music followed.

In another article we shall give an account of climbs in other parts of the Lake District.

THE MUD VOLCANOES OF CALIFORNIA.

CALIFORNIAN travellers—and nowadays there are many of them—almost universally follow one beaten track, taking San Francisco as their head-quarters, and making flying excursions from thence to the Big Trees of Mariposa and the Yosemite Valley. Where every department of Nature is on such a gigantic scale, it is, perhaps, but natural that the attention of visitors, whose time is generally limited, should be concentrated on what is certainly one of the most remarkable districts in the continent of the New World, though it should not be inferred that it exhausts the curiosities of Rocky Mountain and Californian exploration. No matter what are the scientific tendencies of the traveller, California can gratify them all, and its unrivalled scenery and numerous physical phenomena will furnish sufficient material for years of patient observation. One of the most extraordinary contrasts to be found in any country, and one which cannot fail to strike the most casual observer, is the variations of altitude that characterise the surface of the land.

California contains within its limits some of the highest ground in the world—after the Himalayas—and also some of the lowest—not excepting Holland. Through the centre of the state runs the wild and jagged Sierra Nevada, dominated by the precipitous cliffs of Mount Whitney, over fourteen thousand feet; but as the Mexican border is approached on the south, the hills gradually give way, and eventually sink into the Californian desert, which is actually two hundred feet below the sea-level. A desert, wherever it may be, is never an attractive tourist-ground, and this one, by nature, forms no exception to the rule; but it has one great advantage—viz., that its whole breadth is traversed by the South Pacific Railway, on its way from Texas to the Californian city of Los Angeles, and that therefore the dangers and dreariness of the passage are reduced to about twenty-four hours, spent in easy luxury in the armchairs of the Pullman-car. Once we have crossed the Colorado river, we leave Arizona and enter California,

amazed at the pertinacity of the American engineers, who carry their lines through the loftiest passes in the Rockies with the same boldness as they do through the trackless wastes of the desert; and although the dead flat presents no real engineering difficulties, it has dangers of its own in the sandstorms, which are peculiarly disagreeable to encounter. When there is a strong wind blowing, the sand rises in huge clouds, which turn day into night, and make it perfectly impossible for the traveller to proceed without a compass, while the sharp silicious pebbles with which the air is filled, render it a matter of impossibility to face the wind. There is nothing for it but to pull up and halt until the storm is gone by, and even the train, with its tremendous weight, is delayed for many hours, from the mass of sand which is piled up on the rails. Under any circumstances, the passage of the desert gives one a kind of nightmare from its exceeding monotony, its bizarre vegetation of cactus and sage-bush, its glaring atmosphere, and its sickly white carpet of sand stretching as far as the eye can reach; but, with all these drawbacks, it is well worth a visit, if only to see the salt geysers and mud volcanoes.

But before describing the Pandemonium-like effects of this burnt-up region, the physical features of the desert itself are curious and interesting, and illustrate in a marked degree the power for good and evil possessed by water; for from various signs, patent to those who can read them, it is clear that it was not always an arid waste, but, on the contrary, a great inland sea, extending for at least two hundred miles. If we look at the map, we shall notice that a long peninsula, called Lower California, but really belonging to Mexico, stretches south for a considerable distance between the Pacific and the Mexican mainland, and that it is entered on the north by the Colorado river, which is joined a little higher up by the Gila. Having mastered this little bit of geography, it is evident that, once upon a time, the Gulf of California spread over this great plain, and that it might, and probably would, do so again, if the alluvial matter brought down by the Colorado was removed. When we consider the amazing depth and length of the Grand Canon, through which the river has carved its way for a thousand miles or so, it is clear that this detritus must have been deposited somewhere in the neigh-

bourhood. Indeed, the river took its name — Colorado — from the tint of the water, caused by the material from the red rocks of Arizona, which even coloured the Gulf to such an extent that it was once known as the Vermilion Sea. In fact, a great delta was formed, which caused the Gulf to recede, finally cutting off a portion, which at first became an inland salt lake; and as the banks of the river rose, so that the stream flowed directly into the Gulf, the lake gradually dried up, leaving in its lowest depression an extensive bed of salt which still exists.

The changes thus brought about were probably not of such very ancient geological date, and, indeed, are occasionally reproduced on a small scale even now; and it is no wonder that the desert has been the birthplace of many traditional legends, especially when coupled with the fiery belchings of the mud and salt volcanoes, in themselves quite uncanny enough to scare away any number of natives. The researches of modern observers and geologists have, however, proved that, with all its terrors, the district contains many elements of riches. The ground underneath is a perfect laboratory of chemical and mineral products. There are salt, borax, sulphur, and nitrate of soda to be had for the digging, while gold-mines are worked within the limits of the desert; and though it does not appear to be very promising agricultural land, a plentiful irrigation would make it blossom like a rose. Indeed, all up the Gila valley there are remains of extensive irrigation works, constructed by the primitive inhabitants, so that what could be done then could surely be done now.

Nothing seems so out of place in this weird region as the railway-station of Volcano, which, from the nature of the ground, is seen from an amazing distance. It is not unlikely that it is approached under certain mirage effects, when it appears to be dangling in the sky, and altogether occupying a position quite unfit for a proper and well-regulated station. Any ornamentation is quite unnecessary for a building in such a locality, where there is no neighbourhood to admire it, for it does not seem probable that a single passenger-ticket is issued from one year's end to another. But it serves its purpose as a watering-place for the engines, and, ugly as it is, its construction is well adapted to the intensely high temperature, which in summer is usually one hundred and twenty-

five degrees in the shade, while that of the night is seldom below one hundred and ten degrees. The only way to guard against the daily scorching, and make the station habitable for the officials, was to give it a double roof, one being at an elevation of four feet above the other.

The volcanic element is not far to seek, although it is on a comparatively small scale; and as the train comes to a stand, a long line of figures, looking perfectly black in the glare of the sun, emerge from the cars and struggle across the plain to visit a small solfaterra of evil and malicious aspect, and with an equally evil smell. The latter, indeed, is the only sure guide to it, for it is merely a depression of a few feet in depth, occupying a circular area of about half an acre. Scattered about are a number of little cones, some three or four feet high, from which there is a constant hissing discharge of sulphurous, carbonic, and hydrosulphuric acid gas, that in its escape forces up a quantity of black mud. As the force becomes expended, the mud assumes a bubble-like appearance, and finally gives a little jerk into the air, falling back exhausted in the effort with a loud flop.

Although the cones are very hot, no steam comes from them, and it is evident that the vitality of this little group of volcanoes is very feeble, and will probably soon expire altogether. It serves, however, as some index to the force and vividness of the great system of "salses," which lie about six miles from the station, the jets and clouds of steam on the horizon betokening their whereabouts. A more arduous six miles' excursion is not to be found on this side the globe, and it should not be undertaken without preparation and great caution. The danger arising from the heat, both overhead and underground, is sufficient reason why these singular phenomena have been so rarely visited, only three occasions of the kind being on record. The first excursionists (in 1850) were Dr. Le Conte, of Philadelphia, and Major Heintzelman, of the United States Army, who, being quartered at San Diego, had their curiosity excited by the rumours of an active volcano in the middle of a great salt plain. It was a long and difficult journey across the desert, and it very nearly failed, for as soon as the Indian guides caught sight of the distant cloud of steam, they refused to go any farther, stating that devils had been known to rise from the volcanoes, in the shape of

great black birds, which pounced upon their victims and devoured them. It appeared that some years back, a trader named Juan Longousse had ventured to the spot, and was immediately destroyed by the birds; the real solution of the matter, that poor Juan went too near to the geyser, and that the crust of the surface let him in and instantaneously swallowed him. After all the trouble of the long journey, Dr. Le Conte could not remain for more than a very few hours before he was obliged to beat a retreat, and the same happened to Dr. Veatch in 1857, who visited the place to search for borax. He could only stay for an hour and a quarter, while the next batch of visitors, consisting of Mr. Hanks, the state mineralogist, Mr. Smith, and a Chinaman (in 1881), nearly shared the fate of the trader Juan, Mr. Hanks having to be carried back with badly burnt feet, which invalidated him for six weeks. It is evident, therefore, that the Californian volcanoes are not to be rashly approached, and are never likely to be included in the programme of a personally-conducted expedition.

As seen from Volcano Station, the ground between it and the salses appears a perfect level, although in reality it is a continuous series of ravines, not very deep, but exceedingly fatiguing to cross. The soil is made up of incredible numbers of tertiary shells, so minute as to require one hundred and sixty-six thousand to weigh a pound, and these have been banked up by the wind in regular rows, as if they had been mowed down, and were waiting to be made into coaks and carried. The mirage effects are extremely curious, and are thus described by Mr. Hanks: "When we had passed over about half the distance, we seemed to have entered a charmed circle. Instead of the sandy plain of reality, a visionary lake of water lay before us, skirted with trees which required no vivid imagination to recognise as palms. Although knowing this to be a mirage, it was almost impossible to see anything illusive in the picture of the lake, with hills in the foreground every now and again transformed into islands. Turning towards the station, it was seen as a castle several storeys high. As we gazed, the upper portion became detached, and, by some optical fiction, globular, and seemed to rise like a balloon, and fade away in the air. In the distance might be seen a large object, of undefined shape, seemingly a mile away. As we approached, it rapidly dwindled to a fragment of pumice-stone, (not bigger

than an egg, the real distance not being more than a hundred yards. Hogarth's picture of perspective would not seem so absurd, were it placed in a phantom picture-gallery in the Colorado desert."

The last mile of the journey is the most perplexing, although the ravines have all been crossed and are succeeded by an inclined plain, sloping towards the salt basin. But the dry sand is now replaced by layers of hot sand, which clings to the feet like melting snow, and "balls" in a most alarming manner, while it is impossible to keep the feet still for a single instant, on pain of sinking to an unknown depth. Fortunately, a rim of comparatively dry land surrounds the geysers, which would otherwise be perfectly unapproachable. Within this rim are three mud lakes, two of them connected with each other by a narrow channel, and the length of the whole being about one thousand five hundred feet. The surface is a seething mass in constant activity, globular elevations being continually pushed up, and the balls thus formed shot into the air, according to the strength of the propelling gases; and a quantity of water is mixed with the mud, the temperature varying from eighty-five degrees to boiling-point. A cone once formed, grows rapidly from the ejected material overflowing and running down; and the nature of the overflow is such that it does not make a cone with a wide base, as would be the case if dry sand was poured slowly out of a spout, but shows a tendency to build up sharp pinnacles, with angles from sixty to seventy-five degrees from the horizontal. Of course, the area of the disturbed surface would increase indefinitely were the cones of a lasting character, but this is prevented by the very thin crust of the ground, for when the weight becomes too much for it, the cone sinks down, and a new one is immediately commenced. Each one of the numerous active vents gives off an incessant flow of gas, each having its different sound, varying from a sharp hiss to the roar of a locomotive letting off steam. The most noisy of all, however, is a simple orifice in the ground, which emits a scream as from a dozen safety-valves.

With all the deafening uproar, the infernal smell, and the general demoniacal appearance of the place, there are elements of great beauty about it. Many of the vents are fringed with exquisite crystals of bright yellow sulphur and snow-white salt, which in some cases partly cover the

sides of the cones. Others are plastered over with blue mud, which, in contrast with the salt and sulphur, have the appearance of miniature mountains decorated with flowers. The most singular ornamentation, however, is one of inverted stalactites, formed of carbonate of lime, and each having a channel for the escape of the steam. They are of a dirty-white colour tipped with red, very like coral in course of formation, and are remarkable instances of the deposition of minerals by the action of thermal springs. The building up of these stalactites must be very slow, for they were measured and described by Dr. Le Conte just thirty-one years before Mr. Hanks visited the spot, and they were found by the latter to have undergone very little material change.

STONY LANE.

A STORY.

It was almost cruel of the authorities to stick such a name in radiant blue and white paint at the corner of the lane. As if working-folk had not sufficient hardness in their lot without being made publicly to acknowledge that they lived in such a proverbially dry and stony place!

"But it looks cheery, though," said a girl who sat at a window stitching uppers.

Of course the word means the upper part of a boot or shoe. Stony Lane was one niche in a big town, where all the world lived and died, feasted and starved on leather—and what came of it.

Statistics of the shoemaker's trade would be dull; at the outside one does not look upon the business as brilliant, or suggestive of poesy, or giving any—even the least—scope for one's artistic instincts. But one girl, you see, thought even the newly-painted name of the street cheery; she must have had a cheerful heart, than which there is no possession more delightful.

Truth to say, Stony Lane looked its best. The early sun came slanting down athwart the shining vane of the old church-tower, touching up the brand-new white letters at the lane's corner, then sweeping over flower-pots with scarlet geraniums and musk in them, until the pebbly foot-way actually shone.

Footway and roadway were all in one; it was an ancient quarter, made, doubtless, when countryfolk, and townfolk, too, trudged afoot. A row of two-storeyed houses ran along on each side, strongly-

built houses of good flint; there were no decorations in the way of railings, no ornament except what the indwellers made of outer greenery and inner muslin.

It was grey, and dreary, and stony in winter, a sort of cavern of darkness, with its one lamp projected by an iron arm from its centre house; but in summer—well, in summer it could be bright enough.

"Cheery," as the girl had said of its newly-painted name—Elizabeth, or Lil, Brice was her name, emphatically the type of a Townlingham shoe-girl. She earned her money and spent it. Who should remark upon the smartness of a girl's dress when she has earned every thread of it herself? Lil Brice was always smart.

"Yes," answered a companion; "yes, it's cheery. But it don't suit."

"There's one of your fallals; don't try and make me take up with them, because I can't. No, Mary Weldon, I can't."

"The place is all old together, and, as I take it, the old letters were of a piece with it."

The speaker was evidently a girl of another type; she was dressed differently—even in working hours it is easy to make a difference in style—and her face was of a more delicate colour and form.

Lil was brown and strong.

"Them old things!" she cried. "No one saw them except you; if so be all Townlingham didn't know Stony Lane they'd never have made it out, writ as it were. Them lectures have put notions into your head, girl!"

"Yes," said Mary, in quite a different spirit to that of Lil's remark; "yes, I'm getting to see things—"

"Your work's none so grand!"

"It's no worse, though."

"Well, I don't hold with lectures; I'm for going out for walks o' summer nights. So'd you, if——" And she laughed aloud.

The other girl could take a joke.

"Very likely," she answered, laughing low. "But the lecture's one night in the week, and I can walk other nights."

"Walk!" with supreme contempt.

Lil Brice "walked" with a railway-porter; Mary Weldon went with other girls. So, without doubt, there was, in the eyes of Lil and of girls of her class, an unmistakable and broad gulf of division between the manner in which they severally took their evening saunter.

Very lovely was it over the Townlingham meadows in the cool, after a hot July

day. Just work closely at hard leather-work yourself for ten hours, and then see if there be not a new charm in the already fair radiance of a summer evening.

One's muscles relax, one's limbs are free; one no longer sits cramped in heavy, heated air. One could run, or, being tired, there were banks to sit on whence the cricketers could be seen.

Naturally Lil was always by the cricket-field, for when Bob Drayson was not with her he was playing—he was the crack Townlingham bowler.

She and Mary worked together, for Mary had lodged with the Brices in Stony Lane since her stepmother had sent her in from her village to work. Mary was fatherless as well as motherless, and her stepmother had her hands full, and wanted the higher town wage. She was by no means a cruel or a hard woman, beyond the hardness that must inevitably grow up beside a straitened, bare life. Mary could not rough it in farm-work, so she set her to shoe-work. The girl was wasting and pining till some chance took her one winter's night to hear a lecture.

The Kyrle Society never got down to Townlingham, but there were some people in the neighbourhood who had taken up the idea of giving art to the people. They worked their idea in their own way. Stony Lane this summer had got flowers at nearly every house. The Brices even at last had them, thanks to Mary's quiet though persistent begging. She would tend them if she might have them, so the strong, plain Brices gave in. And Mary lifted herself from the dreariness of the weary work, and as the summer grew held her own bravely against Lil and her wild jests.

One day there was a merrymaking outside the town, a school-treat, and a Foresters' or a club fête—it matters not what. At any rate, the great field, lent for such business, was full when the evening came; children's games were going on, and games in which elder children played went on at the same time. They danced, too, these Townlingham girls, to the music of a violin.

There are players and players. This one, Hal Coates, was no awkward scraper of a fiddle, but went in for what to a few he called classical music, but what with the unenlightened he only called "his tunes," giving no specification beyond that to ears which could not understand.

He was overlooker at the factory which gave Lil and Mary their work. (What with

indoor hands and outdoor hands he had a tribe to rule.

He came from the next county, and amongst the shoe-girls there was a notion that Coates came of well-to-do folk.

Here is a specimen of their opinion of him. Shoe-girls do not mince matters: they call a spade a spade.

"Mary," said Lil as she passed her dancing, she herself grand in the possession of her lover's arm, "your game's no good. I've known six—aye, six try it on in my time, and no good come of it to them. They lost a good chance, more'n one of them. Don't you do it."

"What things you say!" returned Mary. "I never know half you mean."

"Then you are stupid. Don't you flatter yourself Coates looks at you—he don't. He's one of your lecture people, and he'll marry his fiddle, but never a shoe-girl!"

Mary could not mistake. She coloured, her pale cheeks matched the cherry-coloured tie she wore to fasten her collar; for the moment she could not answer.

Why so?

Lil had hit upon the truth. She did think—nay, five minutes ago she would have been sure in her heart that Coates had pointedly asked her—her and no other—what should be the next dance. But now?

She flashed out this one angry word:

"No fear! I am as good as any—aye, as good as he, if I am a shoe-girl."

"Highly-tighty! we are angry at last. Well, I'd stop dancing, then; maybe he'd give over fiddling—eh?"

Mary's fire had died away.

"Not he," she said quietly. "He knows they can't dance without his music; he has learnt to look for other folk's pleasure, if he's learnt naught else at the rooms. We girls don't get nights like this many days in the year!"

Lil and her lover walked away.

But the fair and beautiful night was spoilt for Mary. She stopped dancing and drew away. Even when Coates came and spoke to her, as he had grown accustomed to speak to her, she gave no such answer as he looked for.

Perhaps he was as sensitive as she was—he, too, drew away. And then he played on, but, for himself, the music was soulless, there was no dancing in the spirit, though the quick tunes jumped and rollicked for the dancing feet of the girls.

Mary went home early. Stony Lane was empty, the sun was down, and the moon had not risen, and her feet dragged

wearily over the stones. Never before had she felt so alone; never before had she cried over the mother she had never known. She did not know why, but she felt vaguely that that mother would never have cast her child into that busy, lonely town. What could she do? Should she try to find her mother's people? They were Burley folk. Burley folk! No, she would never seek Burley.

Burley was the place Hal Coates had come from years back, they said. Better to be alone in the crowds of Townlingham, than perchance to meet—aye, and to be forced into acquaintance with—other Coates in the little town of Burley. Yes, better far! She cried herself to sleep that night.

All the summer went. Lil got married; and Lil, from the grandeur of her own doings, became wilder, and more reckless, and sharper upon Mary.

Rude jests were flung at the girl, and from taking them quietly she at last grew to stiffen herself with pride and to become quite silent when Lil and certain of her companions came near her.

All the world gets a holiday in some counties at Whitsuntide. They make it a time of beginning and ending service, and Mary had nearly endured a year of her hard life when the home-going time was at hand. For a day she was going. And in her own mind she was going, so to speak, to move heaven and earth, rather than come back to the purgatory of Stony Lane and its rough ways.

The white May light swept down the street as she walked up it from taking her work to the factory. She had a parcel in her arms of gifts she was taking home, and that she had bought as she passed the big shops.

Stony Lane was all but empty. Folks were out shopping and strolling. Brice, the father, stood in his shirt-sleeves at his door, smoking the pipe of nightly custom. Suddenly Mary felt rather than saw someone come from behind her to her side. Her cheeks flushed. Did she know?

Yes. She had twice avoided meeting that same person. Now she hurried on to old Brice.

"Stop—wait!" said the person. It was Coates, as may be surmised. "You avoid me, Mary, but I must speak to you. Yes, the time has come when I—when you must listen."

Mary trembled. She could not do less than stop.

"Yes," said she.

"I cannot go on——" he began.

Then Mary wondered, and the thought which had made her tremble passed into another thought—it was of himself, and of himself alone, that this young man would speak. She stood and raised her fair head quietly, yet proudly.

"You want——"

"I want much," he ended for her. "Do you know what you and I are to each other, Mary?"

What a strange question! The girl felt her pulse dance, but the months past had made her so strong and so proud that she could rule her features and her speech. Perhaps she flushed a little, but she answered:

"Master and maid, I suppose."

He clapped his hands together. He was a tall, fine-grown young man now. He had a manner which made him almost like Mary as he, too, drew himself up, and answered as proudly as she had done:

"That point does not touch us at all—as I see things." A moment's silence followed. Then, looking straight into her eyes, he said: "We are cousins."

She could only gaze—strangely, wildly.

"It is true. Your mother was a Burley woman; she and my mother were sisters. It is only a short while since I knew this. I have waited until to-day because—because I had made up my mind—because now it is all easy."

This was most vague and hesitating.

But no word came from Mary's lips; she could not find anything to say.

"You go home to-morrow?" said he.

"Yes."

"And now I am going to ask you not to come back here, but——"

"That is just what I had made up my mind to do. Now, certainly, it will be better that your cousin should not be a 'hand.'"

He only smiled a grave and quiet smile at her.

"That was a mean thing to say, Mr. Coates," she said, after a pause; "I am sorry I said it!"

"You are my cousin, Mary; so, when I have said my say, I shall try and scold you."

She could not understand him.

"I have a plan. I will go home with you to-morrow to Dilsham, and I will talk to your stepmother. Then we will together go to Burley, and you shall stay with my mother."

"You won't set mother to make me go against my will?"

"Is it likely your will will be against it?"

"Yes, very likely. I cannot go to Burley—no, not now—not yet."

She was direfully troubled.

"I shall only be there for a day."

How oddly he had fathomed her thought! She felt her face become one flame of scarlet.

"But—Mary, listen—I was hoping that you would be with my mother, and that one day I should run over to Burley, say a month from to-day, and that instead of being only my cousin, you would be my wife. That is why I do not want you back in Townlingham. I will not have you back until I bring you—my wife!"

A masterful lover is the best lover. What girl cares for a weak, puny slave?

By-and-by the moon glistened down Stony Lane, and its grey dimness vanished in a flood of clear whiteness. What a long talk must have been going on!

Ah, well! Perhaps something more was said than the little we have written down; but, if so, there was no one to hear, for even old Brice had gone away—carried himself and his pipe where he would find company.

And, for Stony Lane to tell secrets—Stones do not speak.

Never mind the speech. Stony Lane felt grand when, a month hence, Mary brought her husband, the head man of Barnes's factory, into the Brices' house.

THE YARMOUTH TOLHOUSE.*

It is not always convenient when an extensive country possesses several towns bearing the same name. Love-letters may go unpleasantly astray, to say nothing of bank-notes and cheques. In this respect at least, we are comparatively sinless, and not so bad as other men are. True, we have more than one Lynn, several Thorpes, several Caistors (castra, camps, fortresses), and more than one Newcastle—which latter might be distinguished by calling the youngest town Newcastle, if we only knew which was the newest.

The United States, with their Londons and Cambridges, and other adoptions from our poor old country, almost abuse their

* The Tolhouse at Great Yarmouth, by Frederick Danby Palmer. J. Buckle, Great Yarmouth, 1884.

right to christen yesterday's-built cities at their pleasure. But, the worse-confounding of topographical confusion is a matter of little import there. In a land of liberty, may not every man misname his own fresh-fixed residence as he chooses?

In Switzerland, there is Neuchâtel (both town and canton), and in France, Neuchâtel (whence come cream-cheeses), and also Neufchâteau, unless it has been included in Bismarck's annexations. But France abounds in towns synonymous with others lying within its own or in neighbouring territories. It has Frenchified Aachen into Aix, although it has an Aix in Provence; besides which, there is, in Savoy, another Aix (les-Bains), close to, though not on the banks of, the Lac du Bourget. There is an Arles at the foot of the Pyrenees, a quaint little market-town, typical of southern ways, within an easy and pleasant drive, or even walk, of Amélie-les-Bains; and there is a much bigger Arles in Provence, west of Marseilles, with a famous Roman amphitheatre, and "justly celebrated," says Murray's Handbook, "for the beauty of its women."

As to Montreuil, they may actually be counted by the dozen. The French Clermonts, too, are a widespread family.

England can boast of two Yarmouths only—if they were all like our Yarmouth, she might be proud of a score. I do not reckon Southtown, otherwise Little Yarmouth, in Suffolk, because it is only a hamlet of the Norfolk Yarmouth. One is in the Isle of Wight. We will not affront this nominal duplicate by calling it Little Yarmouth, because, perhaps, it is the elder of the two. It may have existed as a group of prehistoric habitations, erected by cave-bear-hunting and aurochs-eating man, before Wight was scooped out by the sea from England, and before England, who now rules the waves, was isolated by those waves from the jealous continent of Europe, just fourteen thousand years ago, as Adhemar tells us.

The other, Great Yarmouth, if you please, Magna Jernemutha, logically, rationally, and royally so named in the reign of Edward the First, from standing at the mouth of the river Yare, on a spot where Norfolk smiles at her neighbour Suffolk basking in the sunshine just over the way, is really the pearl of East Anglia, though only quite recently cast on shore by the currents of the German Ocean.

The exact date when the site of the town first emerged from the sea is not known,

or at least not recorded, possibly because nobody was there to witness and record its emersion. The uprising, too, occasioned by accumulations of shingle and sand, was probably gradual, occupying a period of years, and not sudden, in a few days or hours, like the upheaval of certain volcanic localities and islands. Fuller, a fisherman, enjoys the renown of having been the first to haul his boat ashore and pitch his tent on the new-made terra-firma; and some rising ground, in the north part of the town, is thence called Fuller's Hill, though in truth there is very little of the hill about it. But Domesday Book (1081-1086) makes the earliest authentic mention of the town, denominating it Terra Regis, or King's Land, as if it were one of those waifs and strays which fell, as a matter of right, to royalty.

At any rate, Great Yarmouth is not prehistoric, nor is its origin lost in the night of ages. So much the better. It saves a vast amount of antiquarian quarrelling. Sufficient for us is it, that Fuller's adventurous example was followed by other fishermen, who, finding the long sandbank firm and healthy, took to themselves wives, increased and multiplied, discovered the annual immigration of herring from the neighbouring depths of the German Ocean (not from the North Sea, as Pennant taught) to the shallower water along the coast, about the Feast of St. Michael, first salted and then smoked their catch, and, firmly believing that there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it, established a permanent sale of their wares, and thereby grew healthy, wealthy, and wise, not so much by early rising as by toiling all night and all day too, as long as there was fish for their nets to haul on board. Evolution, now accepted as a law of nature, could not fail to improve smoked herring into bloaters. Of both these valued eatables there are imitations in sundry other maritime towns and countries; but, be it known to grateful peoples throughout the world, Great Yarmouth is the fountain and origin, the undoubted parent, the alma mater, of red herring and their natural outcome, bloaters. Red sprats, or bloater sprats, are only a plagiarism from the bloaters of Yarmouth, which furnished the original idea.

Yarmouth has scarcely had adequate justice done to it, certainly not in print, recently. Even its material creature comforts are imperfectly published to the world. Thousands who shout approval of

the bloaters, never mention, because they have never knowingly tasted, the shrimps. And yet those superlative red shrimps, which once rarely travelled farther, by cart or coach, than Norwich, are now distributed and dispersed anonymously by rail, north, south, and west. Eastwards, that is to say in the sea, they constitute the holiday fare of turbot, sole, and other dainty fish.

How their presence in the Yarmouth Roads was accidentally discovered, nearly a century ago, is a curious fact not generally known. Three species of shrimp are eaten in Great Britain: the prawn, the red shrimp, and the common brown, or flat-nosed shrimp. The second, less common than the third, is preferred to it by ladies, invalids, and persons of delicate appetite. It is caught in deeper water, and farther out to sea. Both the red, or rather pink, and the brown species are caught at Great Yarmouth, but in very different localities. The brown kind is taken alongshore, at ebb tide, in the harbour, and in the inland waters, and is more easily obtainable, and for a much longer period of the year. The present mode and locality of the red shrimp fishery was a lucky hit made by some boats that were employed in recovering lost anchors by a process which is called "sweeping." Two boats, at a certain distance from each other, proceed up and down the roads, having a loose rope suspended between them, at the middle of which is fastened a large fish-basket, or "swill," partly laden with stones to sink it. By these means the place of the anchor at the bottom of the sea is ascertained, and it is then raised and restored to society. But, in particular states of the tide, it was found that the swill, when brought to the surface, was filled with red shrimps. The men took the hint, kept their own counsel, got nets made, and, for a time, had the first gathering of the harvest, soon to be shared with others. Oddly enough, along the Isle of Thanet, it is the brown shrimp which is preferred.

There is no need now to send to Murrayshire for Findhorn, vulgo Finnan, haddock, which George the Fourth introduced to the south, since they are so admirably prepared in Yarmouth as to deceive the very elect of connoisseurs. Whoever doubts it, has only to apply to Chapman, fish-merchant, Middlegate Street.

In short, without pretending to kipper salmon, because it has none, Great Yarmouth perfectly cures any fish caught off the coast that is curable. Not having

salmon to kipper, it kippers herring. Only try them. And this is the perfection of art—to turn native produce to the very best account. Yarmouth, in respect to fish, is what, in the South of France, Cette is in respect to wines, where excellent port, and delicious Madeira, are produced from native grapes, with, perhaps, a little help from Spain. "I can't procure such Madeira as this," said a very particular friend while enjoying a bottle of first-rate Cette. "How do you manage to get it? There is none to be had from Madeira itself." Of course he was left in the ignorance which is bliss. Yarmouth Finnan haddocks merit equal praise, being, if possible, an improvement on their prototypes.

Yarmouth townfolk are justified in singing, "Home, Sweet Home! There's no place like Home!" There really is no town, or borough, or village, that I know of, like it. The nearest approach to its ground-plan is the Palace of the Escorial, in Spain. Where else will you find a town cut up into sections and slices by the system of narrow, parallel "Rows," which is one of the specialities and singularities of the place, which rows act as admirable ventilators of closely-packed tenements and warehouses? Where else will you find the picturesque little carts, as expressly adapted to pass through those rows as a ramrod or a bullet is to enter the barrel of a gun?

Even the minor surroundings of the borough are charming. Take a trot or a gallop on the South Denes—the open portion of the original sandbank still unbuilt on, between the town and the harbour's mouth. On one side you will behold the grand procession of shipping continually (with a fair wind) passing through the roads; on the other side you have the house and villa crowned heights of Gorleston. While thus inhaling the purest of breezes, you will be attended throughout your ride by three or four swallows gracefully circling round you, not through any affection they entertain for yourself, but for the sake of the insects which your horse's feet startle from their repose in the scanty grass. Or, in winter, you may see the black and grey crow sail in from Norway, not in the least tired, but as leisurely as if it had only flown a mile or two.

There are doctors who send their patients to breathe the resinous emanations which pervade the pine-groves of Arcachon or

Ravenna; but I have known invalids who, instead of travelling so far, delighted to inhale the healthy perfumes of pitch and tar given out by the South Town ropewalks and dockyards. Along the quay and the riverside, the very noises of Yarmouth are cheerful. During working hours, besides the sailors' musical cries, there is the continual knocking of the ship-builder's tools, not too loud, but sharp, brisk, and lively.

Yarmouth has always been rich in old ladies, who attain great longevity by a simple plan. The only season not conducive to their indefinite survival is early spring, during the prevalence of north-east winds, which arrive, icy and dry, from arctic regions. The fair elderlies then confine themselves to snug apartments which command a view of some sensitive weathercock. So long as its head remains between north and east, they keep as strictly inside the limits of their rooms as the self-imprisoned Pope does within the walls of the Vatican; but when the head of the vane veers persistently to west or south, they wisely judge that the time is come for outdoor airings.

As to modern literature concerning Great Yarmouth—well, I ought not to say much, but will still say something. In the seventh volume of the original Household Words, page one hundred and sixty-three, there appeared a paper headed, *The Norfolk Gridiron*, the title, at least, of which was wrongly attributed by local readers to our lamented chief, the late Charles Dickens. The error was most flattering to the actual writer, who still survives to send occasional scraps to *All the Year Round*. A serious, learned, and costly work—three pounds ten—in three large volumes, bound, is the late C. J. Palmer's *Perustration of Great Yarmouth*. The last contribution to its history is an elegant monograph—only two shillings and sixpence—*The Tolhouse of Great Yarmouth*, by Frederick Danby Palmer, a descendant of one of its oldest leading families, whose object it is to rescue from destructive dilapidation a most interesting and monumental building which dates from the thirteenth century. The effort, both literary and conservative, is highly honourable to its author. For when the site of an important town has been thrown up by the waves in quite recent historic times, it is clear that it can possess neither classic nor ancient British antiquities—no Roman amphitheatre, baths, or mosaic pavements.

But as all towns are proud of the architectural heirlooms bequeathed to them by their forefathers in early times, Yarmouth naturally cherishes a building which can claim at least six hundred birthdays. Such a treasured relic of the past is the Yarmouth Old Gaol, otherwise the Tolhouse.

But what is a tolhouse? Not merely a house for the taking of tolls, although tolls may have been taken there. In Scotland it would have been a tolbooth. "The ancient tolbooth of Edinburgh," wrote Sir W. Scott, "was built by the citizens in 1567, and destined for the accommodation of Parliament as well as the High Courts of Justice, and at the same time for the confinement of prisoners for debt and on criminal charges." Doubtless, Mr. Palmer argues, both the Edinburgh and the Yarmouth buildings were also used in early times for the collection of the town customs or tolls, but it may be urged that the true derivation of the word being from the Saxon "thol," i.e. "the liberty of buying and selling, or keeping a market," and this right having been conferred on the borough of Great Yarmouth by the charter of King John, the town then became a market town, and its town house was thereupon known as the "Tolhouse," a name which has been retained by it to the present day.

Our tolhouse, certainly, has combined the varied functions of pratorium, audience-chamber, court of justice, assembly-room, county-court, mart, and prison. Here, too, the corporation rents were made payable. The building itself, originally entirely detached from the adjoining houses, occupies the space between the rows Numbers One Hundred and Six and One Hundred and Eight in Middlegate Street. One of its greatest peculiarities is that the principal entrance is by an open external staircase, which leads from the street up to the first floor, where is situated the principal apartment or hall of the building. This staircase leads up to an open porch, in which a two-light, cinque-foiled window, or arcade—for it is open, and has never been glazed—commands a capital view of the street; and it appears especially designed for the purpose of addressing an assembly gathered below, such as the reading of proclamations, or, perhaps, the ordering of turbulent sailors to go home quietly to bed.

Entering the hall, the visitor is in the apartment known as the "Heighning Chamber." To "heighen," pronounced

"hay-en" in Norfolk dialect, is to heighten, raise, or advance the cost of an article; and in this chamber, the corporation at one time claimed the right to enhance the price of all herrings landed at the port. The entire building was not unfrequently called the "Host House," in consequence of the hosts of foreign fishermen who resorted to it at the time of the "Free Fair," since degenerated into the sale, on the beach, of gingerbread and dried fish, by foreign boats drawn on shore. This hall was used for all purposes of state—for Yarmouth men could do things grandly—such as the reception of the Barons of the Cinque Ports, and at the same time for the administration of justice. It once contained an old dais which has disappeared, but its position is marked by a chair of state, formerly the mayor's seat in St. Nicholas Church.

The more ancient part of the structure, used as a place for the punishment of criminals, is appropriately known as "the Hold," and into this dungeon all culprits were formerly thrust without distinction. It is an underground chamber, twenty feet long by twelve wide, having a height of sixteen feet, doubtless not much altered or improved since, as Manship records, "It pleased King Henry the Third to grant to us (in 1261) a gaol for prisoners and malefactors, according to the law of this land, to be imprisoned, and which ever since has been continued, and is commonly called by the name of the Tolhouse."

In this famous hold, iron rings were fixed to a great beam of wood crossing the floor, to which, in more rigorous times, prisoners were indiscriminately chained. It is poorly lighted and as badly ventilated; but possibly it was originally somewhat better in this respect, by reason of an open arch under the entrance porch, now closed, which communicated with the street. It is intended to reopen this—let us hope not for the benefit of any expected prisoners. The gaoler was a trifle better off, though his apartments are also on the ground floor. The massive nature of the doors, and other precautions for safety in this part of the building, are very remarkable and suggestive.

If these old prison walls had tongues, as other prison walls have ears, what strange, almost incredible stories they would tell us! Mr. Palmer, by careful listening, has caught a little of what they have to relate. Thus we learn that, at the Yar-

mouth Sessions in 1295, John Chapman and William Reymer, for stealing a super tunic of the value of two shillings, a pair of "paternosters," a razor, and other goods; Catherine Herre, for stealing cloth; Walter Helmes, for stealing a chest from a ship; John de Waterbeche, for stealing a pair of shoes; and five other persons, for similar petty thefts, were all condemned to death and hanged.

The severity of their punishment for such small offences would naturally, one would think, suggest to other intending malefactors that they might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb—for a great crime as for a little one. Better luck, in 1507, had Emma Barefoot, a prisoner in gaol on a conviction for felony, who, "for default of good and sure keeping, out of prison escaped and advoided," and the bailiffs had to obtain a discharge from the king for their negligence. But the severity of the penal laws was still maintained. At the sessions held in 1552, Richard Ramsey, of Blackeney, mariner, was convicted of stealing "a peyr of chenys of iron and an iron hoop," the goods of Thomas Betts, valued at five shillings, and being found guilty, and having "no goods nor chattels, lands, nor tenements," he was condemned to be hanged, and was hanged accordingly.

Political struggles could not occur in the realm without sending their contingent of prisoners to the Tolhouse den. Henry Coke, a royalist, who had been member for Dunwich in the Long Parliament, and one of the first expelled the House, was imprisoned there for "malignancy" in not acknowledging the power of Parliament even by paying taxes or petitioning for his release. The release, however, was obtained by the solicitations of his wife. In 1656, when there was a report of a Royalist rising, and that Coke had secreted arms, a party of horsemen from Yarmouth searched his house, took him into custody, and again lodged him in Yarmouth gaol, where, being then "old, very fat, and unwieldy," he was detained for two days, during which "he would neither pay for any meat or drink, nor give the soldiers one penny for guarding him." The governor then released him, and without waiting for his own coach and horses, he hired a Yarmouth cart, in which he drove to Sir Nicholas Bacon's house at Gillingham. One of his sons, in gaol with him, being only nineteen years of age, and "raw, and of little experience in martial or any other affairs," confessed,

after having "burning matches put between his fingers," and was sent to London.

For other details, past and present, respecting this curious old tolhouse, the reader is referred to Mr. Palmer's interesting history. While the dilapidated edifice is awaiting the funds needful for its complete restoration, we may naturally ask ourselves, What would not some of the new cities in the Western States of North America give—supposing that it were for sale—for such an antique gem, to ornament one of their brand-new squares, where it would be treasured as highly as the *Maison Carrée* at Nismes, and revered almost as deeply as the *Santa Casa* at Loretto? But with their present high customs' tariffs on works of art and vertu, the duty imposed upon it would surely prohibit its importation. The venerable tolhouse will remain where it is, no doubt, with a new lease of life bestowed on it by solid and judicious repairs.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXXVII. BROUGHT HOME.

HUGH never knew, and could never be sure in his own mind, whether Theo had known that her baby was dead when he first arrived at the house. He was inclined to think so; but he had no time to puzzle himself about that till long afterwards. It seemed as if he had come to Africa only to have his heart wrung by saying good-bye to his cousin; for after the baby had been taken away from her, and Gerald, and Hugh, and Bob Stirling had followed him to his grave in the desolate cemetery—a place that Hugh could never think of without an involuntary shudder—Theo lay for days so ill with fever that she knew none of them, and the doctor told them that he did not think she could recover. But she did recover—very slowly, very sadly, as if it was a terrible weariness to be dragged back into life again. As soon as it was possible to move her, Gerald took her away to the river, leaving his Kimberley affairs in the hands of Bob Stirling and Hugh. The claim was sold—that miserable claim, to which one life had already been sacrificed—and the house, and the furniture, and the horses; for the doctor said that Mrs. Fane must go home to England, and Gerald was only too glad, now, to escape from that terrible place and that terrible country. Africa had, indeed, shown him

now her dark, her awful side. The freedom and grandeur of her life seemed now to be mere shadows; or the freedom was unlimited despair, and the grandeur was that of an iron, crushing fate.

At this time one of Theo's wishes was realised: Gerald and Hugh began to like each other. Hugh's quiet considerateness had a soothing effect on Gerald, who was half wild, poor fellow, with grief and anxiety. Hugh was very sorry for him, when he looked round at Kimberley and its inhabitants, and remembered how the young man had banished himself here, feeling that he must leave England for no fault of his own. There must be something in him, Hugh concluded, having the fairest mind in the world. Theo, after all, would hardly have loved a worthless fellow with all the strength of her noble nature, as she had loved Gerald, even to following him here. Hugh thought that if he had himself realised the tenth part of what it meant, going out to Africa, he would have moved heaven and earth to stop Theo's going. But as it was, he was glad to be able to assure himself that her devotion had not been quite wasted; she had probably saved this fellow from utter shipwreck; for though there was a certain boyish clearness of character about Gerald which Hugh liked and appreciated as he came to know him better, he saw that his mind was not that of a very strong man. His passionate love and anxiety for Theo, mixed, as it seemed, with something like remorse; his dread and agony at any hint of danger, made Hugh moralise a little, wondering what would have happened to Gerald if she had never belonged to him at all.

When Kimberley was done with at last, and she was just well enough to travel, they drove down in a cart of their own to the railway. The weather was tremendously hot; the parched plains glowed red and yellow under the glowing sky; it was impossible to travel in the heat of the day, and Hugh was sometimes afraid that they had moved Theo too soon. But she did not think so herself, and did not seem to feel the heat much. She noticed nothing by the way, and spoke very little. She did not sleep much, but lay back in a sort of indifferent dream, very sad, with half-closed eyes, hardly aware of anyone but Gerald.

When he touched her hand she would look up into his face and smile—Hugh thought he would rather have seen tears than such a smile. Since the day little Gerald died she had never once spoken of

him, never shown by any sign that she missed him. Hugh almost feared sometimes that she had lost her memory; but Combe did not think so.

At Cape Town she stayed a few days with Mrs. Forester, to rest after her journey; and with her she was just the same—gentle, sad, silent, receiving all her friend's tender care with a sort of peaceful indifference, only restless when Gerald was away.

Mrs. Forester, who could have given her such perfect sympathy, saw that it was no use offering it, but she talked to Hugh and comforted him, and told him that time and England would be the only cure.

Theo awoke at last from her long dream, and found herself in her grandmother's drawing-room one cold, foggy afternoon in early spring. She was on the sofa, covered with a fur rug. Lady Redcliff was in her own old chair opposite. Just now, Gerald and Ada had been in the room; Ada sitting on a footstool by Theo, silent, and holding her hand; Gerald answering all manner of questions which Lady Redcliff was asking him about Africa. Lady Redcliff seemed to like Gerald very much; she watched him with twinkling eyes, and said nothing ill-natured. When he and

Ada had gone out together, she sat smiling oddly to herself for a minute or two. At last she said in a sharp little voice:

"Thank you, Theo; I'm very much obliged to you, my dear."

"What for, grandmamma?" said Theo.

"Can't I make a remark?" said Lady Redcliff. "Don't catechise—don't be priggish, like your excellent cousin. Well, so you are quite strong now, are you?"

"Oh yes," said Theo wearily. "The cold agrees with me. I wish I had always been cold." And she shivered as she spoke.

"You always used to be—an icicle, except when you were in a rage," said her grandmother. "It was a bad business going out to that murderous climate—about the worst piece of mischief I ever did in my life. Don't you think so?"

"No; I don't know—"

"You and Gerald are two of the silliest fools I ever met," said Lady Redcliff. "You know it was all my fault, and yet you are as friendly to me as if I was the dearest and kindest relation in the world."

"So you are," said Theo quietly. "Who else would have thought of sending for us home? Grandmamma," she said, and she opened her eyes, and a strange, beautiful light seemed to shine in her face, "you

love me better than anybody in the world, and I love you."

"What nonsense you talk!" said Lady Redcliff, giving her a quick glance, and looking down. "Why, Theo—after all you have suffered—and you can't imagine that I cared about it all."

"I don't imagine—I know," said Theo. "And I am very glad that he and I were out there together. We belong to each other—more than anyone here can understand. If there are depths out there, the heights are just as wonderful. There is only one thing—if I could have shown you my baby—"

Lady Redcliff looked at her sharply; she suspected rightly that this was the first time Theo had mentioned her baby.

"Ah, poor little fellow!" she said, in a strange, soft voice. "And yet, do you know, my dear, I have been capable of wishing that at least one or two of my children had died when they were babies. I don't enter into any doctrines or imaginations about them—that you understand; but your boy, every day he lives, he belongs to you less. If you lose him very soon, you lose him at any rate before he has loved any one but you."

It was an odd sort of consolation; and, perhaps, Theo did not quite hear it or take it in; but she began to tell her grandmother all about the baby, crying softly now and then.

Lady Redcliff listened with wonderful patience and kindness, presently moving to a chair by Theo's side, and laying her cold little wrinkled hand on her forehead.

"Now look here, child," she said presently, when Theo was calmer, "you have had enough trial and trouble for the years you have lived, it seems to me. When I told you just now that I was very much obliged to you, had you the faintest idea what I meant?"

"You had been talking to Gerald, and I thought you might mean that you were obliged to me for him," said Theo with a happy smile, looking up into the old face beside her.

"That is exactly what I did mean," said Lady Redcliff, nodding. "And now I want to know what you are going to do with that poor young man in future? Not set him to some stupefying work again, I hope?"

"He must find something to do; we have spent all our money."

"Yes; you seem to have behaved like a

wonderful pair of idiots. But I warned you long ago that he couldn't work. He was not born to make money, but to spend it. I told you so before, and you knew quite well I was right. Now, do you see what I am driving at?"

"Not quite," said Theo.

"Then you are blind. You and he are my children. He must do nothing, and you must have this house for your home. Ah yes, I know you used to be frightfully bored here, but it won't be so bad, perhaps, now that you have him. You needn't look disgusted. I'll make him a good allowance."

"But, grandmamma—thank you so much—but he could not!" exclaimed Theo, quite roused by this startling proposal.

"Why not? I have nothing to do with the Norths," said Lady Redcliff rather angrily, bringing a sudden flush of colour into Theo's face.

"He could not," she repeated.

"He can, and he shall," said Lady Redcliff.

"He won't, grandmamma."

"He will. I know him better than you do. You were always the blindest person in the world; you always thought, if you liked people, that they must want to do what they ought. I know better, my dear. I wonder by this time you have not picked up more knowledge of men. Mr. Gerald will be very glad to be lazy, and to live on somebody else for the rest of his life."

Theo coloured almost angrily; but then she could not help smiling.

"On the contrary," she said, "Gerald likes work, and if you ask him he will tell you so."

"I dare say he will; but I sha'n't believe him. You will see; I shall settle it all. He is not so downright ungracious and ungrateful as you."

"I'm sorry——"

"Don't be a humbug."

"But he is quite as independent as I am."

There is no knowing how long this dispute might have gone on, or how angry Lady Redcliff would have become with Theo's obstinacy. Probably they would have argued till Gerald came in to answer for himself. But in the midst the butler came to ask if Mrs. Goodall could see Mrs. Fane.

"Mrs. Goodall! What a bore! Do you want to see that fat creature?" said Lady Redcliff.

"Yes, please," said Theo meekly.

"I hope she has not brought a dozen babies. Are there any babies, Finn?"

Finn gravely answered that he thought there was one in the carriage.

"Let it stay there. What a fool the woman is!" said Lady Redcliff, half aside.

Helen came in, fair, and placid, and peaceful. She was dreadfully afraid of Lady Redcliff, but she did not show it in the least, except by watching her a little anxiously after her first greeting with Theo. She sat and asked little questions, and answered Theo's questions, and looked at her with soft, sympathising eyes. Even in this dark room it was easy to see what a change there was in Theo. Helen was very sorry, but she could say nothing now—certainly not while this old dragon, as she mentally called Lady Redcliff, was in the room.

"Well, Theo," she said presently, "has Gerald made any plans yet?"

"For the future? No," said Theo, glancing across at her grandmother, who was amusing herself by staring at Helen.

The rich potter's wife was a soft, pretty sight in her furs and velvets; her fair, bright hair, her delicate skin, her sleepy eyes, with their long lashes, were unchanged from the girlish days when Lady Redcliff had seen her before. It was a sort of beauty that Lady Redcliff despised; all milk and sugar, as she described it. She looked from one young woman to the other, and wondered if any one on earth could admire Mrs. Goodall more than Mrs. Fane. Theo looked years older than Helen now; hardship, and illness, and grief had left a mark never to be effaced—no, not by a whole lifetime of idleness and ease. No one could ever look into Theo's face now without seeing that she had suffered. Her girl-beauty was gone; but there were two or three people who thought that she was more beautiful than ever.

"You are a contrast, you two," said Lady Redcliff suddenly.

"Poor Theo! no wonder," said Mrs. Goodall softly and pityingly; there was at least no doubt in her mind that the advantage was on her side.

She took Theo's hand and held it caressingly, while Theo lay and smiled at her.

"When people are weak, they don't like to be pulled about," said Lady Redcliff impatiently; but Helen did not take this remark to herself at all.

"I hear you have brought a child with you," said Lady Redcliff; "he will catch cold, or measles, or something, if you keep him waiting long in a cab."

"Oh, thank you very much; he is well wrapped up, and nurse will take good care of him," said Helen innocently; she thought Lady Redcliff was going to ask the baby in. "You wouldn't like to see him, Theo?" she suggested, turning to her cousin.

"I think, perhaps——" Theo began.

"I won't have it," said Lady Redcliff; "quite enough excitement for her to see you, without being introduced to a strange child; though no doubt he is immensely worth seeing."

"As to that," said Helen, smiling good-humouredly, "I dare say he would seem to you much the same as other babies."

"No; I'm quite aware that there never was such a child before. He is the image of his father, isn't he? How is his father?"

"Very well, thank you; he is in London, but I thought he had better not come with me to-day."

"What a horrid disappointment!" said Lady Redcliff; "I should have been charmed to see him. I respect Mr. Goodall; he is something unique in my experience."

Here even Helen's placid mind began to suspect impertinence, and she turned away to Theo with a faint extra shade of colour in her cheeks. But a little feeling of defiance made her go on talking about John. She was an excellent wife; she liked John much better now than when she married him, and though she was not quite blind to his defects, she thought him in most things very superior to other men.

"Do you know, Theo," she said, "John has been wondering very much what Gerald means to do. He has made no plans, then?"

"Other people may have made plans for him, perhaps," remarked Lady Redcliff. "Tell Mr. Goodall so, with my compliments, if he thinks of teaching him to make pots."

Helen gave Lady Redcliff a rather bored little smile; she thought this was only a rude joke, not worth noticing, and she went on talking to Theo, who lay looking with grave, tired eyes; it did not seem necessary, then, to explain what her grandmother meant.

"I don't know that I ought to say anything about it," said Helen; "perhaps I ought to leave it to John; but I should so much like to know what you think, Theo. Of course to me it seems a most delight-

ful idea, but you may think it very uninteresting."

"Don't mystify the poor thing; her brain won't stand much exhausting," said Lady Redcliff. "I'm curious, too, to know what Mr. Goodall has imagined, but I must warn you it is all of no use."

"Don't say that, grandmamma," said Theo, lifting up her head. "Tell me, Nell; John is very kind; what is it?"

"Well, dear," said Helen with a little hesitation, "you know the old house at Deerhurst, where Gerald used to live. I think I told you in a letter that John had bought it and the colliery. And it struck him the other day that if Gerald had nothing else to do, you might like to come and live there, and he could have his old post of manager, if he wouldn't despise it—till he gets something better. Of course it is a bad neighbourhood, but you know it already, and you and I would have each other. Of course I see lots of advantages, but then it is quite impossible for me not to look at it selfishly, don't you see, Theo?"

She stopped, looking at her cousin with real eagerness and anxiety, but Theo's eyes were fixed on Lady Redcliff, who had flung herself back in her chair and snatched up a newspaper.

"John is very kind," Theo repeated absently; then, after a moment's pause, she looked at Helen and smiled. "Thank you so much," she said; "Gerald must decide. Everybody is very kind to us. I must tell you, Nell, how good grandmamma has been."

"Don't be a fool or a hypocrite," said Lady Redcliff behind her newspaper.

At that moment, before Theo had time to say anything more, the door opened and Gerald came in. He looked bright and well, and he and Helen met as cordially as if they had been old friends.

"I have just seen Mr. Goodall," he said to her. "He has done me an immense kindness; he has given me work to do, and a house to live in. He is the best fellow I ever met."

Helen flushed with pleasure, and Theo could not help smiling as she looked at him; but for a moment neither of them spoke. The first voice heard was Lady Redcliff's, she herself being still hidden from sight by the Times.

"What a happy release for me!" said this old philosopher.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER II.

MR. FAIRFAX—or, as he was generally called by his neighbours and friends in the little village of Stanham, "the Squire"—sat comfortably rubbing his knees over his library fire. Although the days were bright and almost summer-like, the evenings were chill and damp, and he liked to hear the crackle and splutter of the logs up his wide chimney.

"And do you mean to tell me, Phil, you have known Edie all these years and not found out she has a will of her own, and a good stout one, too, at times?" he was saying to Phil, who was leaning against the mantelpiece, looking down on him somewhat moodily. This was the first opportunity Phil had had of informing the squire of Edie's resolution to suspend her engagement. All that afternoon Edie had had callers, and Mr. Fairfax had been obliged to put in an appearance in the drawing-room; then dinner had intervened, and Phil was compelled to ask for five minutes in the library before he could get the squire all to himself.

Anthony Fairfax was a fine, well-preserved, old country gentleman, tall, straight, massive in feature and limb. At first sight one would be disposed to credit him with a vast amount of dignity; a tendency to put stringent measures into force on a very slight provocation; a huge sense of self-importance. A second or third glance, however, would dissipate the idea entirely. One would find out that his appearance of self-conscious dignity and importance arose chiefly from the fact of his possessing a loud and somewhat magisterial voice, a good carriage of his head

and shoulders, a slow and stately walk. See a friend touch his hand, watch him listening to some woman's tale of sorrow, and all idea of a pompous, crusty old gentleman would vanish.

Edie knew her father's temperament, his "points" good and bad, just as she knew those of her favourite mare, who, as she used to say, "needed a light but firm hand." On this principle, to all appearance, she managed both father and mare.

Possibly the father knew the daughter as well as the daughter knew him, for he took Phil's confidences very easily, in spite of the disconsolate manner in which they were communicated.

"Give her her head, my boy, for a time—don't thwart her," he said, rubbing his knees once more. "If she has made up her mind to carry out this little whim, depend upon it she'll do it. You ought to have known her well enough by this time to know that. I am only surprised at your expecting me to 'get her to do' this, that, or the other—that's all."

Phil sighed.

"There's one thing I do think you might have done for me, Mr. Fairfax," he said, with something of reproach in his tone, "and that is, have let me hasten on our marriage; you know how hard I begged for it at the beginning of the year."

The squire laughed.

"A most unreasonable thing on your part to expect. Yes, yes, I remember perfectly; I told you then what I tell you now: that she is a great deal too much of a child for me to think of marrying her off for another three or four years to come. Why, she's scarcely out of short frocks and pinafores at the present moment!"

"She's turned eighteen, sir; you'll find lots of fellows think a girl out of short frocks and pinafores at that age."

"Aye, but not the fellows' fathers and mothers, Phil, who have lived a little longer, and know a little more, possibly. No, no; take my advice, let her have her own way in this little freak of hers; you'll come together all right again at the end of the year—take my word for it. And don't be in such a confounded hurry over the marrying part of the business. You young fellows like everything done at express speed—engaged to-day, married to-morrow! The world wasn't made in a day—"

"No; but I think it might very well have been made in three at the farthest," said Edie, opening the door at that moment. "Oh, papa, what can you two people have found to talk about all this long time? I am so sleepy, I have come in to say good-night. You can't possibly have anything else to say to each other."

"No; I suppose there is nothing more to be said," said the squire, looking at Phil with a vague feeling that he himself had said a great deal.

"I suppose there is nothing more to be said," echoed Phil, with a sigh and a vague feeling that he himself had said nothing at all.

"Then I'll say good-night and go," said Edie; "you know I must get all the beauty-sleep I can the next few days, if I don't want to look quite washed out beside my cousin Ellinor." She went up to her father, and gave him one, two, three good earnest kisses. "Now, papa," she said, as she gave him the last, "you are a sensible, middle-aged man, and are supposed to know everything. I do so wish you could give me an idea—the glimmering of an idea—why Ellinor has taken it into her head all of a sudden to come and take up her abode with us?"

"My dear, her mother gave a sufficiency of reason when she wrote. She is obliged to take Juliet—that's her other daughter," he explained, turning to Phil—"to the Riviera to pass the winter, on account of her lungs, so she naturally wishes to leave Ellinor in comfortable quarters till her return."

"But why couldn't Ellinor go with her, or why couldn't she stay with some of her intimate friends in London?"

"Her mother naturally prefers leaving her with relatives."

"But we are such distant relatives. You are her twentieth or thirtieth cousin, and I am fortieth or fiftieth, I suppose," said Edie, following a method of reckoning all

her own. "And to take so much trouble to hunt us up," she added; "it is incomprehensible."

"If," said Phil, "the Winterdownes were at the Castle, it could easily be understood."

Lord Winterdowne was the largest landed proprietor in the neighbourhood, but had not been in residence at the Castle for more than a dozen years.

"How spiteful!" exclaimed Edie, turning sharply upon him. "I did not think men ever said disagreeable things about beautiful young women."

"There are some beautiful young women who never have anything but disagreeable things said about them by men," answered Phil; "the heartless-flirt tribe, I mean."

"Heartless flirts are specially sent into the world by Providence to avenge the wrongs of their sisters who have hearts and get them broken—by the men," retorted Edie.

"Now, Edie—now, Edie," interposed the squire, who had a rooted dread of sparring, even in its mildest form; "what can you, of all people in the world, know about broken hearts, and what can heartless flirts, male or female, have to do with the reason why Ellinor Yorke prefers spending a winter with us instead of with her friends in London?"

"I should say she wanted to shuffle her cards and begin all over again," muttered Phil, a little savagely perhaps—but then he had met Ellinor Yorke in London, and had been thrown occasionally into her society.

Edie turned upon him quickly.

"If that's your opinion of my cousin," she began, "I should advise you not to—" She broke off a little suddenly, adding: "I think I'll say good-night, and go now."

Then, with a little bow to the gentlemen, she left the room.

"I think I'll go too," said Phil; "it's getting late."

The squire rose and went with the young man to the hall-door. It seemed odd to Phil not to see Edie's bright little face peeping behind her father's shoulder. She had stood on the doorstep and watched him away down the avenue—ah! he couldn't say for how many years. Well, he must get used to doing without her in all sorts of ways now, he said to himself with another sigh.

"Pitch-dark, is it?" said the squire, throwing back the door. "Have a man with a lantern to see you through the shrubbery? No! Well, I suppose you

ought to know your way about here by this time. Good-night."

Phil went on his way. The squire stood a moment on the doorstep.

"Phil—Phil, my boy!" he cried after him lustily.

Phil was back in a moment. Perhaps the squire had some good news, some little gleam of hope for him, after all!

"I say, Phil," the old gentleman went on in a somewhat dubious tone, "you won't let this—what shall I call it?—little arrangement between you and Edie stop your coming to the house, will you now?"

"After all these years! Oh no, sir. Trust me, I'll be here morning, noon, and night as usual," answered Phil a little desperately, a little carelessly.

"Yes, yes; night too! You won't let it interfere with our twice-a-week whist-parties, will you? You know if you and your uncle fail us, we come to a dead-lock at once. We shall have the parson wanting to bring his wife in again, as he did when you were away in London. Now, don't mistake me. Mrs. Rumsey is an excellent woman, estimable everywhere and in every way except at a whist-table, with thirteen cards in her hand! Why, she absolutely leads through her partner's queen, and up to her adversary's ace, and lost me the rub the other day with six trumps in her hand!"

Phil smiled a melancholy smile in the darkness.

"I won't fail you at whist, sir," he said, and then he went on his way once more.

The squire watched his lonely figure disappear in the gloom of the avenue.

"I almost wish," he said to himself as he went back into the house, "that Ellinor Yorke were not coming just yet."

He, too, had met Ellinor Yorke in London, but she had evidently left on his mind a different impression to that produced on Phil Wickham's.

CHAPTER III.

EDIE had not left off saying "Why of all places in the world Ellinor Yorke should choose to come here for the winter!" when Ellinor Yorke herself, in fur travelling-dress, followed by a stack of luggage, drove up to the door.

The squire himself drove her from the station. Edie took her up to her room, and sent for some hot tea for her. Then, about five or ten minutes after, the little maiden confronted her father in the library, and apostrophised him vehemently:

"Papa, if you had only told me what she was like! How—how—beautiful—and—and impertinent, and—and—together horrible and intolerable, and—and——" she began.

"My dear!" interrupted the squire mildly.

"Well, she is that—all that—and a great deal more. Why didn't you tell me what she was like? She should never, never, never have come into the house!"

"My dear!"

"Papa, I mean it. Ladies always have to invite ladies, and I would never have invited her. Why did you not tell me what she was like? is what I am asking you."

The squire's eyes began to twinkle.

"Edie is afraid of her Phil falling captive. Perhaps Ellinor's coming may do good, after all, and throw the young people into each other's arms again," he thought to himself. What he said was:

"My dear Edie, I told you she was a very beautiful young woman. She promised to be so ten years ago. Don't you remember—when I took you up to London to see her mother."

"Ten years ago! What could I know of beauty, or anything else, ten years ago! But it isn't her beauty I'm finding fault with—I could put up with that—it's herself: her voice, her manner, her smile, her—her everything!"

"I found her very agreeable and entertaining as we drove along from the station!"

"Oh, no doubt. She is one of those who must be agreeable and entertaining to men. With women she is odious! odious! odious!"

"Why, child, you are boiling over! You can't have been more than five minutes with her at the outside. Now, Edie, let me give you a word of advice."

But Edie did not wait for the word of advice; she went on, speaking more and more rapidly.

"Five minutes, papa, is ample time to form an opinion of anybody or anything under the sun. In five minutes a person can say, 'Yes,' 'No,' 'Indeed,' and can look—oh, all sorts of things. In five minutes I can always find out exactly what everybody is like. Now I'll tell you precisely what happened in Ellinor's room from beginning to end. You know I went upstairs with her to show her her bedroom and dressing-room. Well,

I naturally offered to help her off with her heavy seal cloak. 'Thanks no, little Edie,' she said with an impertinent, supercilious smile. 'Will you ring for my maids?' Maids, papa! Of course I rang the bell, and in there walked two—two creatures in bibs and frills. She did not even ask permission to bring one; but let that pass. One of them was French, one German. She speaks first to one, then to the other, in her own language; ignores me entirely. I remind her of my presence by saying, now that she has all she wants, I'll leave her. She gives the same sweet, intolerable smile again, turns to her maids, and begins once more in French and German to tell them about unpacking her trunks and what dress she will wear to-night. Of course I leave the room. There, papa, that's exactly what happened from beginning to end. What do you think of such treatment?"

"My dear Edie, as I've often told you, you are much too hasty in your judgments. I have listened to you patiently; now you must listen to me. Try and see the whole matter in another light, with another pair of eyes—that is, with mine. To begin with, the first offence for which you indict your cousin, seemingly, is her smile. Seen with your eyes, it is supercilious, it is impertinent, it is—it is—— Ah, pardon me, Edie; I have forgotten the other adjective you made use of."

"Oh, it was hateful, odious, patronising, irritating, intolerable!"

"That will do, my dear, thank you. I will select from that list. Suppose I take the last adjective you mentioned—'intolerable.' Well, you say her smile, to your eyes, is supercilious, impertinent, intolerable. Now, Edie, to my old eyes, perhaps every whit as critical as your young ones, it seemed a winning smile, a beautiful smile (for it parted a very pretty pair of lips, and showed a very pretty row of small teeth), and, above all, a well-bred smile, if I may use the term. Now, there are smiles and smiles. Ellinor's smile is essentially the smile of a lady."

"Papa, in another minute I shall begin to think you have fallen in love with her."

The squire's eyes twinkled more and more. Next to his bi-weekly whist, he enjoyed teasing his quick-tempered little daughter.

"Now we'll take the next indictment in its order," he went on, almost unconsciously falling into his loud, magisterial tone. "So far as I can see, Edie, your cousin's next

offence was presuming to address you as 'little.' 'Little Edie' were the words she used—an expression that is on my own lips at least once in every hour of the day; yet it never enters into your mind to fly into a passion over it, and get red to the very roots of your hair."

"Now, papa, I can't stand this. You are speaking in this way on purpose to aggravate me. You know I hate to be reasoned with. I won't be reasoned with!" And here Edie stamped her small foot on the ground, to show how very much in earnest she was.

"But you are little, my dear; nothing will ever make you anything else. The process of dismantling a young lady five-foot-ten in height would necessitate a great effort on your part. I don't like to say you'd have to tiptoe, Edie. Naturally, Ellinor saw this, and, out of pure kindness of heart——"

"Now, papa, I won't hear another word—no, not one half-syllable. Nothing you can say will make Ellinor Yorke anything but an excessively——"

"Beautiful," interposed the squire.

"Disagreeable young woman. And more than that, nothing you can say will ever make me like her the least bit in the world. Fancy going about paying visits with two maids! I wonder if it's a family allowance, and her mother and sister are travelling about in Italy with four in attendance? Why, if I had two maids, I shouldn't know what to do with them; I should set one to wait upon the other while I dressed myself."

"Ah, but see what scope they have for their skill with Miss Ellinor! what a glorious head of hair to steep their genius upon!" said the squire slyly.

"Now, papa, you did not even see it," answered Edie with decision; "it was all done up tightly under her hat, and she did not once take that off. Perhaps," she added a little maliciously, "it was all in crimping-pins, and she'll let it down in a shower to her feet this evening, to make an impression on the first day of arrival. I wonder if she will come down in court plumes and train to dinner? Those two maids between them ought to achieve something altogether wonderful and remarkable in the way of attire."

And something "altogether wonderful and remarkable" those two maids between them did achieve, if to drape a beautiful figure so as to enhance its every charm, and to arrange a mass of dull, deep auburn

hair in heavy coils round a shapely head without hiding its shapeliness, be a wonderful and remarkable achievement. Edie herself was driven to admit it, when, at nine o'clock precisely, Ellinor made her entrance into the drawing-room.

She did not sit down to the seven o'clock family dinner. A series of messages informed Edie of her cousin's movements.

Gretchen, the German maid, who spoke good English, came down asking to know the dinner-hour.

"Seven o'clock," answered Edie; "half an hour earlier than usual, because it is a whist-night."

In ten minutes another message was brought to Edie.

"Miss Yorke was tired from her long journey, and was lying down. Could she have something to eat in her own room at eight o'clock? She would descend to the drawing-room at nine."

At nine o'clock she did descend. The squire always ate his dinner in a hurry on whist-nights, and was possibly not a little relieved that the newly-arrived guest did not make her appearance at the dinner-table, thereby saving him the expenditure of any extra amount of time and ceremony. He was well into his third game when the clock struck nine, and was so intent on the disposal of his trumps, that he did not so much as look up when Ellinor entered the room.

The library, where whist was invariably played, opened off the drawing-room, from which it was separated by two pairs of heavy curtains. Between these two pairs of curtains was a recess capable of holding a sofa, a small chair, and table. Here in this little nook, commanding a view of both rooms, Edie and Mrs. Rumsey—the vicar's wife—invariably sat on whist-nights, each with some mimicry of work in her hand—one, at any rate, of the two, intent on watching the faces of the card-players, and garnering a whole harvest of fun from their chance words and changes of features.

To the right of the squire, and his most dangerous adversary, sat Phil Wickham, looking occasionally a little bored, but his frank, handsome face never so much as clouded by frown or ill-temper, let the cards go against him as they might.

Opposite Phil sat the parson, the Rev. Charles Rumsey, who had been now close upon twenty years vicar of the church of St. Dunstan's-under-the-Hill. It was one of the most ancient churches in the county

of Berkshire, and, as he delighted to tell every new comer he could get to listen to him, had stood there ages before the present village had been called into existence. "For you must know," he would say, "that Stan Ham is literally a corruption, or rather contraction, of St. Dunstan's hamlet, which, little by little, crept up around the old church."

A cheery old man was this vicar, with a kindly word ready for every person, great or small, in the parish, and a hand ever ready to find its way to his pocket, should help of a more substantial kind seem needed. He had a somewhat portly person, with a ruddy face, a keen eye, and a broad forehead, from which the white hair was brushed back but sparsely. His one weak point was the love of a joke. Joke he must, even should the laugh go against himself, or only a serious moment offer occasion for it.

Opposite to the squire, and his invariable partner, sat Colonel Wickham, Phil's uncle, tall, thin, erect, every inch a soldier, every inch a gentleman. Not a vestige of a likeness existed between him and the fair, frank, blue-eyed Phil. His hair must have been black as night in his youth, for a raven-touche showed even now here and there amid the grey, and his eyebrows were jet-black. His features were of a distinctly high-bred type, his hands long, white, and shapely. His eyes were remarkable; dark, full, expressive, questioning eyes, of the sort one might expect to find set in the head of a poet, an artist, a dreamer; and lo! Colonel Wickham was as far removed from any of these as it is possible for a man to be. Colonel Wickham's one aim, object, and pursuit in life was—figures. He was a fair specimen of an English country-gentleman, an excellent rider, a first-rate whist-player, but over and above all this, or rather in front and before all this, he was a statistician; he had, in truth, become fairly eminent as such, and professional men even were at times glad of his aid in checking and equalising sundry returns and estimates which passed through their hands. The Colonel never gave his help grudgingly. He delighted in nothing more than some puzzle in numbers or returns which refused to adjust itself.

"If I happen to die before my uncle," Phil had been heard to say, "when he comes to take a last look at me, instead of saying, 'Poor Phil, what a handsome fellow he was!' or, 'What an untimely ending to a promising young life!' he'll

set to work counting the nails in the coffin-lid. Then he'll make a calculation out of it: 'If a young man, five feet eleven and three-quarters, requires so many nails in his coffin-lid, how many must be required daily throughout the country? N.B.—Returns must be checked by average death-rate in each county. Also a liberal allowance must be made for Chinamen, who bring their coffins over with them, and die of pleurisy when they arrive.' Yes, certainly my death would suggest to him, before anything else, coffin-nails as a grand item at present unstatistified."

Eddie had scolded Phil tremendously for this little speech of his. To say truth, Colonel Wickham had been from her very baby-days a great favourite with her—seemed, in fact, almost as near and dear to her as her own father. To other people those large, expressive eyes of his might seem to be always appraising, cataloguing, enumerating; to her they seemed to tell another tale—a tale of weariness, of world-sickness, which, put into so many words, would have run somewhat as follows:

"I set my brains to work in order to keep my heart quiet. I garner dry sticks because the grapes and wine of life are denied me."

When, where, and how this notion crept into her head she would have found it hard to say. It might have been years ago, when, as a small child, having given the slip to nurse and governess, she had contrived to find her way to Wickham Place, intending to make the Colonel play at draughts with her—a game in which she specially delighted, and which Colonel Wickham played upon a method of calculation entirely his own. She had crept up into his study, expecting to find him surrounded, as usual, with charts, indices, tables, and, lo! there was he, seated beside his fire, staring into the live coals with folded hands and a tear upon either cheek. Or it might have been later on in life, when he had been called upon to give his consent to her engagement with Phil, and he had taken her in his arms, laid his hand upon her head, looked down into her eyes, and bidden "Heaven bless her!" Anyhow, the notion was there, firmly fixed in her brain, and it would have taken a strong hand to uproot it.

This was the group of four upon which Ellinor Yorke's eyes rested as she paused for a moment at the drawing-room door, doubtful in which chair or sofa to ensconce herself.

Eddie advanced to meet her.

"Mrs. Rumsey and I generally sit between the curtains on whist-nights. We like to watch the game. Will you take this chair? May I introduce you to Mrs. Rumsey?" she said, trying hard to be gracious.

Mrs. Rumsey bowed a little stiffly; then held out her hand.

Eddie's cousin! Yes, it must be the right thing to do.

Eddie's cousin, however, took no notice of the outstretched hand, bowed slightly (not stiffly), smiled condescendingly, sank gracefully into the low chair which Eddie had placed for her, turning her head away from the ladies towards the card-table.

Eddie, looking from Mrs. Rumsey to Ellinor, wondered at the contrast between the two women. Mrs. Rumsey was emphatically a type of the conventional, orthodox, provincial clergyman's wife, now so rapidly becoming a thing of the past. She had on the inevitable black silk dress, plain linen cuffs and collar, neat cap, with a tight wisp of hair showing beneath. She had the prosy, placid, somewhat plump face one is apt to associate with the said cap and cuffs, and she had in her hand the inevitable knitting one is apt to expect as a corollary to the other inevitable attributes.

And opposite to her, scarcely so much as conscious of her existence, sat one of the most beautiful young women that England, in this generation, has produced.

"What is it—what is it?" Eddie asked herself, giving absent answers to Mrs. Rumsey's platitudes, and darting swift, sudden glances at her cousin, while she stitched vigorously at her white lilies on her Roman satin sheeting. "What is it makes her look something between an empress and an angel, for she is no nearer one or the other than I am?"

Then she began to take stock of Ellinor's hair, her features, her complexion, and catalogued them somewhat in this fashion:

"Hair just the colour of autumn leaves, when they are going from red to brown—and such a lot of it!—eyes, same colour, only one shade darker; eyebrows narrow, arched, jet-black—oh, she must use a pencil to them!—long, dark lashes—I can't see whether they curl at the ends. I think they do—yes, they do. Nose straight, very, very straight, a little long, but beautiful nostrils; upper lip a little, little too long; lips very red—oh, she must touch them, I am sure, with *crème vermeille*—chin a little prominent; beautiful small teeth, and

oh, what a tiny, tiny ear, and how perfect in its outline! And her complexion is perfect, too; dead, creamy white, with a delicate tinge of colour, just where it ought to be—I don't think, I am not quite sure whether that is quite natural; her maids, too, ought to have something to do to keep them out of mischief—a long, slender pillar of a throat, falling shoulders, a not too slight figure, and—oh, what has she on? What can it be—silk, stuff, cashmere? And what colour can it be? Nothing, I think, that I have ever seen before."

It took Edie at least five minutes, and three times as many swift, sideway glances to decide these two last important questions.

"It's Rouen-blue," she said to herself at length; "and here it looks quite black, and there it shows a fleck or two of pale blue. It's a wonderful colour; I've only seen it once before in my life, and that was on a ceiling in a cathedral. Why, she must have had the stuff manufactured for her, and it is nearly all soft silk, with wool here and there to give depth to the colour. And how is the dress made? How does she get that long line of drapery, and yet have a waist. What lace, too! It must be worth as much as all my jewellery put together. And a set of black pearls!"

But at this moment the squire awakened to the fact that his cousin had entered the room, and sat surveying the card-party.

"Ah, Ellinor, my dear, you there?" he said, half turning his head; "I hope you are feeling more rested. Now pray don't disturb yourselves, gentlemen; I'll introduce you all when we've finished the rub. Trump to your ace, Master Phil. Another time don't look so cocksure when you are playing your ace second hand."

Ellinor, continuing her calm survey of the four gentlemen, said to herself with an easy smile—a brain smile, if the expression be allowed, for the heart had nothing to do with it:

"Four men seated within half-a-dozen yards of me to ignore my presence for possibly half an hour! We shall see."

SOME LONDON CLEARINGS.

EASTCHEAP.

To take a ticket for Eastcheap by underground railway, is just at this moment a new and startling experience. The thing will be common and trite enough by-and-by, but in the first blush of novelty it suggests an invasion of the City, such as has

scarcely a parallel since Boadicea came down with the Iceni and turned the place inside out like a glove. And for those of us even who know the City pretty well, experience has generally stopped short at Eastcheap, except, perhaps, when, bent on some seafaring expedition, a venture has been made into the labyrinth of narrow streets which surrounded Custom House and docks, and cut them off from the rest of the habitable world. And then Eastcheap was the neck of a narrow gorge, a confused scene of lorries, drays, waggons, and heavy-wheeled vehicles generally; where carmen shouted, and heavy horses struck fire from the granite pavement. On either hand narrow lanes shared in the general block, and added their share of traffic to the confusion; a solid, substantial confusion, altogether different from the whirl and press of the other Cheap to the westward.

And now everything is changed. For if you will trust yourself implicitly to some friendly guide without enquiring as to your destination; blindfolding is needless, for you will learn nothing from the newly-pointed tunnels of white brick, and the great walls of cement; but only come along without asking questions, follow the familiar procession of passengers, give up your ticket at the familiar barrier to the collector in the accustomed uniform and cap; and when you come out into the open air, even dispensing with the three twirls round appropriate to the circumstances; even then, with the traditional three guesses, it is quite probable that you will fail to guess rightly where you are. For apart from the novelty of thus coming up to daylight in the very inner recesses of the City, there is a certain strangeness and unfamiliarity about the scene. Here is the meeting-place of great thoroughfares, with a whirl of traffic from the various converging streams; but there is a feeling of space and roominess which is quite a new sensation in this part of the City. Only the statue right in front seems perfectly familiar, and the inscription upon the base of the statue, "William the Fourth," at once puts an end to uncertainty. Here we are in the very throat of London Bridge, Cannon Street opens out its vista of warehouses and offices, King William Street its thronging omnibuses and pedestrians, while Gracechurch Street suggests in its more varied outline the greater antiquity of its pretensions as a City thoroughfare. But the new feature in the scene is the great

thoroughfare of Eastcheap, which is happily allowed to retain its old historic name; a fine, broad, open way bordered by hoardings and demolished houses, which now leads as a grand central avenue to the Tower.

It is difficult to realise that here is the old Eastcheap—the market-place of the eastern side of the City—of the old walled City, which was divided pretty equally by the Wall Brook, a stream that flowed beneath the Roman wall near Moorgate, and joined the Thames at Dowgate, a stream now buried fathoms deep, and only kept in memory by the street and the ward that bear its name. And we are not much less bewildered in trying to recall the Eastcheap of Shakespeare's times, with its Old Boar's Head, where Dame Quickly was hostess, and which was frequented by Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol, as well as by wild Prince Hal, and the inimitable Sir John Falstaff. Indeed, we are here in presence of a clearing upon a clearing, for part of Eastcheap was levelled to make the approaches for the new London Bridge, and that very statue of King William stands, it is said, upon the site of the famous Boar's Head. The tavern, described by Shakespeare, indeed perished in the Great Fire, but a new one rose upon its ashes, with a finely-carved sign of old oak, which is still to be seen in the Guildhall Museum; and this tavern was a noted one, and still well frequented down to the end of the eighteenth century. We may suppose the tavern to have been well known to the town, and an accustomed haunt of players as well as of men of fashion, and we have a record of a performance given there in 1602 by the servants of the Earl of Oxford and the Earl of Worcester, when it was thought an appanage of high nobility to keep a company of players as well as a number of chaplains.

But to account for this utter disappearance of the part of Eastcheap which contained the Boar's Head, we must remember the changes that time has brought about in the ground-plan of the City since Shakespeare's days. The Great Fire, indeed, made a marvellously small alteration in the general plan. Streets and courts, alleys and lanes, rose again from their ruins in their entirety, and the magnificent plan of Wren, which would have given us a City, grand, indeed, but entirely without local history, was never even attempted. But old London Bridge, which many yet living may remember, stood a little to the east-

ward of the present structure, and the approach to it was by New Fish Street, running in a direct line with Gracechurch Street. Eastcheap formed a cross road which ran into Canning Street, which bearing northwards, the route was continued through Budge Row and Watling Street to St. Paul's Churchyard. An alternative route into the City from the west was then, as now, by Holborn, crossing the bridge over the Fleet, then an open stream, with boats and barges moored to the bank. And this was Sir John Falstaff's usual route—and so probably Shakespeare's—into the City, and to his favourite haunt at the Boar's Head. For the hostess, who knew his habits well, lying in wait with Fang and Snare, the sheriff's officers, to arrest him, leads the officers that way, saying: "He comes continually to Pye Corner (saving your manhood) to buy a saddle," and Pye Corner is otherwise known as Giltspur Street, close by Newgate Prison. And so passing under the gloomy archway and prison-house, where the poor debtors, no doubt, were clamouring for charity behind the iron grating, the worthy knight, all unconscious of how great a risk he ran of joining their company, would press through the busy, unsavoury market, with faithful Bardolph at his heels, and stroll down Cheapside, far more open then than now; past the handsome conduit and the church of St. Mary-le-Bow, so-called because built on arches over the street, and past Goldsmith's Row, with a sly glance at the pretty wives of the fraternity—"The most beautiful frame of fair houses and shops that be within the walls of London, or elsewhere in England." Then he passes by the Poultry into the Stock's market, where the Mansion House is now, for "he's invited to dinner to The Lubbar's Head, in Lumbart Street, to Master Smooth's, the silkman," and just there, with dinner in immediate prospect, and his appetite sharpened by the walk, he is waylaid by Fang and Snare, close by the spot where centuries later, an equally celebrated arrest will be made, and also at the suit of a widow—of Samuel Pickwick, that is, at the suit of Mrs. Bardell.

But to return to Eastcheap—when turning towards the Tower and the great clearance made in that direction, it is rather surprising to see the Monument brought out to the full light of day. The Monument, no longer lost among dingy courts and lanes, but looking as if it

meant to take its share of what is going on in the world, after its long retirement—a retirement that dates from the year 1831, when new London Bridge was opened for public traffic, and the tide of traffic, which had long passed up and down Fish Street Hill, was turned another way. Still, our country cousins have always been faithful to the Monument, and now there is a little knot of people looking up at it, half inclined to immure themselves within the tall column, and half doubtful of the venture. The basso relievo at the base attracts some attention, and excites a little bewilderment. The figures sitting on a cloud are clearly allegorical; but there is a realistic element in burning houses and falling beams, and citizens holding up their hands in horror at the devastation. But the disconsolate figure of a woman might be somebody who has escaped from the fire with very few clothes on; as it happens, it typifies London in her distress, to whom a figure in Roman habit holds out a helping hand—a small boy suggests he is giving her a halfpenny—from some steps opposite. This last is Charles the Second, no doubt, and the Duke of York, afterwards James the Second, stands behind holding a garland, which, perhaps, he has won in sea-fights with the Dutch; and about these is a knot of figures who represent, no doubt, the virtues and graces which are in the habit of adorning both courts and cities.

If we do not go up the Monument now we never shall. It is an enterprise that, if missed in youth, is rarely undertaken in more mature years. And we are here with something of the flavour of novelty upon the scene, and there is a kind of enthusiasm of enterprise in the air. We can see people walking about in the cage on the top, and the sight invites us to join them—just as mice are said to be excited at the sight of other mice looking through the wires of a trap. Even in the business-like neighbourhood of Monument Yard, there is a feeling that the Monument is looking up in popular estimation; were the column in the hands of a company, we should rush to buy Monument shares. Although it is mid-day, waggons and carts are still waiting for their loads from Billingsgate, and a couple of fish-porters, who have just finished their job, doffing the sackcloth that has hitherto draped their shoulders, look doubtfully towards the familiar column. Cries one: "Toss ye who pays for both up the Monymnt." But the other is of the old school, and mutters something to the

effect that a drop of beer would do them more good, and the opportunity is lost for these fish-porters of improving their minds by an extensive survey of the world around.

There is a certain feeling of incongruity in walking into the interior of a classic pillar by an ordinary swing door, and then corkscrewing up the inside of it; but your respect for the Monument grows with each successive twist of the corkscrew; there seems no end to the steps which circle above and below. Every now and then there is a dull, sullen roar through the chimney-like cylinder, from the opening and shutting of the swing door at foot, as some victim enters or escapes. When you are nearly at the top, as you think, and meet some party of laughing young girls who have counted the steps from the top, and have already got to over a hundred, your heart sinks, and you wish you had not come. You may have heard people who have undergone hard labour describe the agonising effects of the treadwheel upon the back sinews of the legs—well, you can feel for them now—for the rogues and vagabonds, that is, and do not wonder that they take things easy when they come out into the world again. But presently the twilight that filters in through the narrow slits here and there is succeeded by the dawning light of day; the noise of echoing footsteps, and of the opening and shutting door, is drowned in the full roar of London, and you come thankfully out on the capital of the column, and into the little circular cage, above which flares the gilded tongue of flame.

The City is below us, with its streets marked out with lines of housetops, and the white towers and spires of churches, while just below crowd long lines of vehicles, and people swarm like ants, running to and fro with as much apparent aim or purpose. All round, a misty, smoky veil bounds the horizon, but the City itself is perfectly clear and free from smoke. From all the myriad chimneys there is hardly a single curl of smoke—no household fires burn among this wilderness of roofs; and over the clearly-defined mass of houses St. Paul's rises majestically with its gilded ball and cross that glitter in the sunshine. But the river looks dark and lowering, with the towers of Westminster rising out of the gloom from which it issues, and then, with its bridges showing bright against its tawny waters, it loses itself among masts and sails in dark, impenetrable distance. As to what lies beyond

the river, it is all concealed in a dense cloud of mist and smoke, but close at hand the Tower shows with the distinctness of a model, its fosse, its walls and bastions, and stern donjon keep; and you can see where new towers are rising in their smooth white stonework, which are to complete its attractions as an ancient show-place. Rising almost against us, with its foundation in the deep valley of Thames Street, where carmen and porters are bustling and pushing, is the handsome tower of St. Magnus, one of Wren's most successful works, but all enveloped in scaffolding—let us hope for repairs, and not for destruction. Everywhere over the housetops is spread a network of wires, and yet hardly noticeable except on close inspection, while the supporting posts on every roof seem to be hung with strings of onions. Here and there, and often where the houses are thickest, shows a patch of green from some churchyard or old-fashioned court, but the general hue is a neutral, dusky tint, cold and subdued, but not uncheerful, with dusky patches at places, where old London, with its dull red-brick and red chimney-pots, keeps a corner above ground.

It is strange to reflect that almost all that we now see, was after the Great Fire a ruin and a wilderness; that people made their way across, with fear and trembling, a desert haunted by thieves and desperadoes who might lurk among the ruins of St. Paul's, or spring out upon the rash traveller from among the broken columns of the Exchange. And here the fire began, just below, as everybody knows, in a baker's shop—the king's baker, if you please, by name Faryner, a name that one suspects must have been connected with his office, as if Farinier or flourman, hereditary bakers, perhaps, whose ancestors had helped in that famous baking that is limned forth in the Bayeux Tapestry. But anyhow, there the fire began late on a Saturday night, or perhaps early on Sunday morning. And with a roaring easterly wind the fire spread and spread till all about Thames Street was a glowing mass of flame, that was fed by the great store of combustible matters thereabouts, pitch and tar, "and warehouses of oyles, and wines, and brandy, and other things," as Mr. Pepys records. Then, by church-time, when the citizens should have been quietly on their way to church, in their best doublets, with wives and children by their sides, everybody was rushing about with

furniture and valuables, piling them for safety in the churches, that were themselves destined soon to succumb to the devouring flames, the very steeples and towers of stone crackling up and burning like so much tallow. More fortunate and far-seeing were those who managed to secure a lighter or a barge, while some recklessly flung their belongings into the river, on which furniture and rich goods floated up and down with the tide, all abandoned and derelict. And so the fire went on burning till Friday, "all up the hill of the City in a most horrid, malicious, bloody flame." And by that time the old City within the walls was practically destroyed. A little patch was left between the Tower and Bishopsgate, including Aldgate, where still bits of old, or at least mediæval, London are to be found; but on the other hand, the fire overleapt the wall by Ludgate and Newgate, and carried all before it as far as Fetter Lane and the Temple, where all, as far as the eye could reach, was a waste of smoking ruins. "A sad sight to see," writes Pepys, "how the river looked, no houses nor church near it, to the Temple."

Once more on terra-firma, and through the swing-door into the street, we are among a nest of taverns and refreshment-houses, which assert themselves mostly as in the way of fish ordinaries and dinners, with facilities in the frying and broiling line for those who only want a snack; and then, as we cross Monument Yard, fruit becomes curiously blended with fish, and a mingled odour of oysters and oranges pervades the air. Here are large rooms, the doors thrown wide-open, and bills posted up announcing public sales, while spread out to view are great boxes of oranges, and lemons, and grapes, and all kinds of fruit from the Mediterranean, while another sale-room is devoted to dried fruits of sorts such as will presently furnish forth the Christmas dessert of paterfamilias. And so, wandering into Eastcheap again, we come upon a corner where demolition and rebuilding are going on, and read upon an ancient label, "Weigh-House Yard." The yard is now knocked into Eastcheap, and only this little corner remains to recall its former existence, of which Strype, in his edition of Stow's Survey, records, "In Love Lane"—and Love Lane is still in existence, only shortened—"on the north-west corner entering into Little Eastcheap"—Little and bigger Eastcheap are all as one by now—"is the weigh-house, built on the ground

where the church of St. Andrew Hubbard stood before the Fire of London. Which said weigh-house was before in Cornhill. Where are weighed merchandizes from beyond the seas by the King's Beam. Over this office, or weigh-house, is a large room, now made use of for a Presbyterian meeting-house." And this was the beginning of the King's Weigh-house Chapel, which has now found other quarters.

And then, on the other side of the great new thoroughfare, which it is to be hoped will be called Eastcheap right through, but on the other side of the Cheap, are those famous lanes, Mincing and Mark Lanes, which are the great commercial centres of the corn-dealers and the produce-brokers. It is pleasant here to plunge into some narrow court, and, trusting to be guided by the stream of passengers, to be carried here and there, along corridors lined with offices, where here and there an open door reveals quite an Arabian Nights' collection of objects—strange gums, and spices, and balsams, all neatly arranged as if in a museum, with a strange, subdued scent, as from Araby the blest; while the names on the whitened glass panels are of all kinds of queer, cabalistic, and crack-jaw character. Sindbad himself, perhaps—who is a merchant, by the way, and not a sailor—is driving up to the distant entrance in a cab, loaded with strange packages; the dark, yellow-eyed man in a fez, with a cheroot always between his lips, who scents the neighbourhood with tobacco and sandal-wood.

But strange it is to find that you may walk miles, as it seems, through corridors and avenues, where people file through in interminable procession, without ever coming under the open sky, except, perhaps, for a moment in some quaint, three-cornered court, where you have a choice of as many of these busily-thronged passages; and so you may go twirling about from one to the other till you lose all notion of orientation, and may come out eventually in Gracechurch Street, or Fenchurch Street, or more likely in Mark Lane.

For it is to and from Mark Lane that the run is most incessant just now, though these cunningly-pierced burrows, and the great corn-market, with its acres of glass roofs, is sufficient evidence of our whereabouts, while the pale, sallow dealers in drugs and gums are replaced by a more stout and ruddy physique, as the country dealers come thronging in from their distant homes. A savour, too, of roast

meats and grills replaces the musky perfumes of gums and drugs. For the nibbling of samples and the weighing of prices contribute to hunger and thirst, and there is a kind of market-dinner feeling manifested about the taverns of Mark Lane which makes the passer-by, for the moment, fancy himself gifted with a country appetite.

Time out of mind, no doubt there has been a corn-market at Mark Lane, which seems to derive its name from the mart, or market, while Mincing Lane, close by, is said to be called after the dainty nuns of St. Helen's, who, picking their way delicately among the miry ways of the City, got the nickname of Minchons, and so passed it on to this lane, which belonged to them, and led up to their convent walls; and Stow records how "in this lane, of old time, dwelled divers strangers, born of Genoa and those parts; these were commonly called galley-men, and brought up wines and other merchandise, which they landed in Thames Street." Now, this old time was, probably, when the Genoese had the trade of the East in their hands, so that the odour of spices and drugs has probably hung about these parts ever since.

Coming into Eastcheap again—or perhaps it is Great Tower Street now—with a fine view of the old keep rising over hoardings and demolished buildings, we are in full sight of the new railway-station, with its neat white brickwork, and the inscription, in the now familiar blue-white glazed letters, "Mark Lane Station." In strict topographical fact, the station is at the bottom of Seething Lane. And there is something strangely familiar in this Seething Lane, for you may remember that hereabouts was the old Navy Office and the abode of Samuel Pepys.

There is nothing very much to remind us of the days of Pepys at this end of the lane, although he may have seen the building of those comfortable-looking red-brick houses which have just escaped demolition by a hair's-breadth. There is one house, looking forlornly over a heap of bricks and refuse, that especially strikes the fancy—a snug, homely residence, with solid sashes and square windows flush with the brickwork, and on the top floor a warehouse, with a crane at the side; where the old-fashioned merchant, in his full-skirted coat and scratch wig, might sit in his parlour over his wine, and watch the full sacks as they swung upwards to his storehouse.

And what histories there have been in these snug red-brick houses, that are not ancient exactly, but only old-fashioned, but with at least a century and a half of human life about them! Children have racketed about the square, solid rooms; lovers have enjoyed soft twilight hours in the cosy window-seats; family feasts have gone on with song and dance; wedding-feasts and funeral baked meats; and now no more shall domestic fires burn in those snug fireplaces, with the tall carved chimney-pieces, for here is an end of it all in a heap of old bricks and some ragged rafters. Here and there on the hoardings are bills that announce sales of old materials—among them one that seems suggestive: Number Nine, Black Raven Court, and with so much lumber and wainscoting, two carved chimney-pieces in wood, and one in statuary marble inlaid. And, as it happens, we can trace the beginning and the end, for, turning to the Survey, we find: "Black Raven Court, an open place, with good new brick buildings, well inhabited." That would be in the first years of the eighteenth century. But what lies between? What unrecorded histories and unwritten romance?

But here, on the other side of the broad, new highway, stands the old church of All Hallows, Barking. Why Barking, it is difficult to see, as there is no such place about here, till we are reminded that the church once belonged to the nuns of Barking, taking us back, indeed, to the days of Bishop Erkenwald and the Saxon kings. There is nothing outwardly to show for this antiquity but a very plain and ugly brick tower, which harmonises, however, well enough with the huge pile of bonded warehouses that shuts it out from a view of the Tower. If somebody would make a clearance of them, he would deserve well of his country. And cheek by jowl with the brick tower, a warehouse, with cranes and hoists, has made an effort to be even with it, but has only been able to get up two-thirds of the way; and then there are some squat, ugly windows and a doorway which a Gothic purist would call debased. But there is a history about the old brick tower which really dates from before the Great Fire, and from the top of which Master Samuel Pepys watched the progress of the flames. And here is the history as Strype gives it: "This church was much defaced by a lamentable Blow of twenty-seven Barrels of Gunpowder that took fire the 24th day of January, 1649,

in a ship-chandler's house over against the south side of the church." The ship-chandler was very busy in his shop that night, barrelling up of gunpowder—by candle-light, no doubt, with the door of his horn lantern left open to facilitate the operation—when away went gunpowder and ship-chandler, the tower of the church, The Rose Tavern close by, and a parish dinner, parishioners and all, in this one "lamentable Blow." Digging out The Rose Tavern, people found the mistress sitting in her bar, and one of the drawers standing by the bar's side, with a pot in his hand, just as it might have been had the blow happened the day before yesterday.

But, the morning after the Blow, was found upon the upper leads of Barking Church, a young child lying in a cradle as newly laid in bed. It was never known whose child it was, so one of the parish kept it for a memorial, and Master Strype, looking round the neighbourhood in the year of the Great Fire, and taking his glass at a neighbouring tavern with the parish worthies, records that he saw the child, then grown to be a proper maiden. But as to the further history of this proper maiden, history is, unfortunately, silent.

Still, in spite of its history, Barking Church is not in any ways outwardly beautiful, so that it is an agreeable surprise on entering, to see such a fine, solemn interior, with a vestibule the whole width of the church, divided from it by a finely-carved wooden screen—a pleasant kind of portico, with seats and tablets, where a good deal of parish business is going on. This is the part, no doubt, that suffered from the Blow, and was happily restored in the taste of the age, for the interior of the church is composed of three ancient bays, with sturdy round columns of the Norman period, and three more of Perpendicular character at the eastern end—altogether, a place worthy of its history, being a very ancient foundation, which shared in its day many of the memories of the Tower, both as palace and prison. The dust of citizens and of courtiers mingle beneath its pavements. Knights, drapers, merchants of the staple, clerks of the green cloth, servants of the King—here were their graves, and some of their monuments have survived to the present day. A fine altar-tomb on either side of the chancel, with some fragments of brasses, are of high antiquity, and bespeak some tenant of more than ordinary dignity, in his lifetime. Here lies Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey,

beheaded in 1546, and there is a doubtful tradition that the heart of Cœur de Lion was buried in the king's chapel, which once formed part of the structure.

But now it is one o'clock, and by an excellent arrangement, for this is the City dinner hour, it is the hour also for week-day prayers. Perhaps not very many of the busy citizens avail themselves of the opportunity; but one or two are seated here and there, and the curate appears in the reading-desk, and so we depart.

And to view these City churches aright, they should be visited on Sunday, when the City is the quietest, most peaceful place in the world; the streets all swept and clean, but nobody walking on the pavement; no cabs rattling by, no rolling waggons, but all the charm of quiet and seclusion. As we stand at Mark Lane Station we hear somebody talking at the end of Seething Lane. We are a little late, and the bells have ceased to ring, so that the hush and stillness everywhere is like that of a city of the dead. And so our footsteps echo up the lane, which was once called Synedun, but has for centuries been known as Seething. On the right is the opening to a court, beneath a tracery of elaborate ironwork. It is Catherine Court, once haunted by Russian merchants, with houses solid and respectable, now altogether offices, the blinds all down and nobody peeping out from behind them. The court, by the way, does not take its name from the saint of the old hospital, and present docks, beyond the Tower, as you might think, but from the Empress Catherine of Russia, by no means a saintly personage. Thus, at least, says Miss Aldridge, who gives a good description of this neighbourhood in her pleasant romance of the "Tower Gardens."

There, near the top of the lane, where the big blank warehouses now stand, was the old Navy Office, where Samuel Pepys was clerk of the acts. The building had once been the site of the priory of the Crutched, or Crossed Friars, and occupied a considerable portion of the lane, with the offices in the centre of a quadrangle, and the residences of the chief officials round about, with plenty of elbow-room in the way of courts and gardens. Mr. Pepys singing in his garden on summer evenings with the poor wretch his wife, and Mercer, her maid, who was more gifted, will be suggested to those familiar with the Diary, and will give us a measure of the changes that have since taken place. And

yet what a cheerful, merry soul it was—chirruping and singing through all that dismal time—the plague; the fire; the Dutch in the Thames and setting fire to Chatham!

And Mr. Pepys had only to step across the way to reach the gate of St. Olave's churchyard—a handsome but dismal-looking gate, adorned with skulls and emblems of mortality, said to be a memorial of the plague. The gate is now closed, but we can see into the churchyard through its bars, with its tombstones of forty or fifty years ago. But the practicable entrance to the church is round the corner in Hart Street, where we come upon signs of active life. There are retail shops in Hart Street, and people live there, stand at their doors and look out of their windows; and the organ booms out into the street, and a little cluster of belated people are standing, half hesitating, at the church-door.

Within is a charming old church, with dark stone columns and pointed arches, and a choral service going on in a brisk and hearty fashion; the seats well filled, and yet with plenty of room; the little charity-school of the parish sitting behind the choir. Everywhere quaint tablets and memorials, and at the east end of the church a range of monuments, exceedingly good and quaint—a circle of dignified citizens of Elizabeth's days and James's, with their red cloaks, stiff ruffs, and stiffer beards. A later memorial that occupies a whole bay of the church, with a bust above of a pleasant, sympathetic-looking female, incites interest, but is too far off to make out. But just above is the recent memorial to Pepys in alabaster—with a medallion of him in his periwig—and we think of him slumbering in his high pew, or, perhaps, whispering the news with Commissioner Sir William Pen, or exchanging affable greetings with his brethren of the Trinity House—our hymn-books are lent us by that august body, at least they have that inscription upon them; and that, too, seems to form a subtle link between our little day and the misty, indefinite past.

THE WOOING OF SENDAI.

AN OLD JAPANESE LEGEND.

FOR ever in the pine clad shore
Of Takasango's Bay
The cold waves dash their crystal heads
In many-tinted spray,
Less cold than she whom Sendai's son
Woo'd for so long and strangely won.

Fairer was she than aught of earth,
Divine in form and face,
Each limb and feature charmed the eye
With more than mortal grace;
Yet naught of earth could move or thrill
Her heart, as marble hard and chill.

Long was the suit that Sendai urged;
Slow years their courses ran,
Yet never dared the immortal maid
Hear love from mortal man.
Sky born, how could she bend below
And e'en a prince's worship know?

And yet she loved him. Day by day,
Beneath one wind-swept pine,
She heard him to his samisen*
Singing her praise divine,
A woman still though goddess, she
Drank in his worship eagerly.

Entranced, enslaved, he saw the light
Burn in her deep-lashed eyes;
No longer thwarted, 'neath the pine,
He clasped his beautiful prize.
Loud thunder rolled; the gods above,
Saw that a goddess stooped to love.

And then, the story says, the gods
Changed each into a pine;
And still with sounds of ocean's voice,
Their love-songs intertwine,
Condemned to sigh and sob in vain,
In storm and sunshine, wind and rain.

THE CLIMBS OF THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

In a previous article we described the climbs of the most interesting English crag—the Pillar Rock in Ennerdale. In the present paper we deal with ascents in other parts of the English Lake District, and among these the precipices and crags of Scafell are second in interest only to the Pillar Rock itself. To describe with minuteness the many climbs on Scafell is impossible in the space at our disposal; the cragsman could well spend a fortnight in clambering about the mountain, and even then its climbs would not be exhausted. To climbers, Scafell is a more interesting mountain than its companion, Scafell Pikes. On the Upper Eskdale side the latter has indeed some fine precipices and crags, which are almost wholly unexplored; but nowhere does it offer such interesting ascents as those to be found on Scafell immediately around Mickledore. To be filled with the sense of the grandeur of the Scafell crags, it is best to approach them from below—that is, from Wastdale. On rounding the low shoulder of Lingmell above Wastwater, and following the course of the stream on the right hand, the stranger will find himself in a grand mountain cove. On either hand are

Lingmell and the low shoulder of Scafell, while the rugged cliffs of Scafell and the Pikes are in front. Between the two mountains is the strange, square, tooth-like gap called Mickledore, and from it the Scafell cliffs rise in a grand serrated curve, like the back of a scaled monster rearing itself in air. From below Mickledore descends for more than half a mile a long, tapering, grassy mound, locally known as Brown Tongue. The resemblance is complete, and the wild mountain cove in which the tongue reposes may well be likened to the cavernous mouth of a giant. The place is solitary, remote, impressive. It becomes more imposing the nearer the cliffs are approached, and when close under the "battlemented front of Scafell," the wildness of the scene fills the mind. It is wholly grim and stern; no touch of beauty relieves the austerity. Whether sun-smitten in the summer noon, or enwreathed with flying mists, the cliffs of Scafell are always grand. They compose the finest rock scenery in England, and there is nothing grander in Scuir-na-Gillian or the Cuchullins.

Mickledore may be reached by scrambling up the steeply aloping "screes" which form its Wastdale slope; but the easier and more romantic approach is by the grassy ledge, which will be seen projecting from the face of the Scafell precipice. This ledge, or shelf, is in but few places less than four feet wide. In places it is composed of shattered heaps of rock, which seem barely to keep their equilibrium; but though there is a precipice of considerable height on the left hand, the passage along the ledge is free from risk, so long as the rock-wall on the right is closely hugged. By one who watched from below the passage along the ledge of some of the early pioneers of Lake climbing, it was christened the "Rake's Progress," and the name appears apt, when it is remembered that the ledge leads from the lower limb of the Lord's Rake to the Mickledore Ridge. Stepping from the Rake's Progress on to Mickledore, the stranger finds himself in what the guide-books call "one of Nature's most savage retreats," and truly the scene is wild enough. The summits of Scafell and Scafell Pikes—the two highest mountains in England—are but one thousand two hundred yards apart in a straight line, but between them is the strange gap called Mickledore. From the summit of Scafell Pikes its rock-strewn sides slope gradually towards Scafell. Presently the slopes steepen on either hand,

* The national musical instrument of Japan, very much resembling our guitar.

leaving a saddle-shaped ravine. The saddle dwindles to a roof-like ridge, which stretches in a gentle curve from mountain to mountain, till it ends abruptly against the wedge-shaped cliffs of Scafell, which rise almost vertically for five hundred feet and more. Though the slopes of the ridge are steep, and the ridge itself is so narrow that it may easily be bestrided, there is no danger whatever in walking along it; yet appalling are the terrors of this gorge as told in the older guide-books. "It may indeed be crossed," says Murray, "but the passage is difficult, and at one point dangerous, and it should be attempted only by experienced cragsmen, or members of the Alpine Club." In another passage the same writer thus speaks of the southern slope from the ridge to the strange solitudes of Upper Eskdale—a slope which is indeed steep, stony, and tedious, but nothing more: "The descent into Eskdale is over terraces of slippery turf, and down slanting sheets of bare rock, which makes the enterprise, even with the assistance of a guide, one of peril. Some have attempted this descent, and turned back in terror at the difficulties before them; but there are places from which a tourist might find it even more difficult to retreat than to advance."

Looking up at the Scafell cliffs from Mickle-dore, the direct ascent appears impossible, as, in fact, it has hitherto proved. But there is more than one way of successfully turning the flank of these forbidding precipices. The routes by the "Broad Stand" and "Chimney," on the left or Eskdale side of Mickle-dore, are now tolerably well known to lake-climbers; they are even described with more or less accuracy in guide-books. The Broad Stand is reached by descending close under the cliffs for twenty-one yards till a cleft, eighteen inches wide, is seen between two small upright rocks. Any man of moderate size can worm his way through the cleft, and climb out at the end on to a grassy corner. From this point there is only one practicable way. It lies up walls and slopes of rocks, and "to any ordinary cragsman it presents," said Professor Tyndall, writing in the Saturday Review in 1859, "a pleasant bit of mountain practice, and nothing more." The Professor admits, however, that "to persons given to giddiness, or lacking sufficient sureness of foot or strength of grasp," the climb is not recommendable. The danger consists in slipping on any of the slopes or walls, when the climber would go bumping down many feet without any chance of stopping

till, with considerable personal discomfort, he reached the base of the precipice. The entrance to the Scafell Chimney (a gully two feet wide running into and up the face of the cliff) is a few yards lower down than the entrance to the Broad Stand. It is impossible to go straight up the Chimney, as the way is blocked by an overhanging slab, and escape must be effected either by the right-hand wall near the top, where the hand-hold is miserably inadequate, or by the "corner" forty feet up the Chimney. The passage of the corner is a matter of stride and balance, as there is no positive hold for the hands. There is a bad drop into the Chimney behind, and a slip in rounding the corner would end in broken limbs, if not a battered skull. A man essaying the corner must apply himself like a plaister to an unpleasant projecting rock, and then by shifting the weight from one foot to the other (for the legs are stretched widely apart) he can creep round. These climbs in the Chimney are very little known, and none of them should be attempted in wet weather, when the Chimney is indeed a mere spout. Even when the escape is made from the Chimney by the routes named, the remainder of the ascent requires care, as the rocks here are smooth, and they slope steeply towards Eskdale, some at as great an angle as fifty-four degrees. Last August a young and active climber, forgetting for a moment the caution that should always go hand-in-hand with daring, attempted to cross one of these smooth, sloping rocks. He slipped, slid rapidly down for twenty-seven feet, vainly catching at the smooth surface and then bounded through the air in a leap of seventy feet, falling full on his face just at the edge of the dry watercourse below the Chimney. Happily the place on which he fell was loose and not rocky ground; and he escaped with a broken rib and some dangerous face and head wounds. The escape from death was almost miraculous; many men have been killed by falling a quarter of the distance. The adventure may serve to remind other climbers that the Scafell cliffs must be treated with due respect.

There is yet another and a more direct way of climbing the Scafell cliffs from Mickle-dore, which, for want of a better name, we may christen the "North Climb." This route is known to very few. It was discovered for himself in 1874, by Mr. George Seatree, the author of a pleasantly-written little pamphlet on the Lake District, now,

unfortunately, out of print. When Mr. Seatree ascended, he was with a friend, and the Wastdale people received his story with incredulity, "auld Will Ritson" declaring that "nowt but a fleein' thing could get up theear." Mr. Seatree, however, was preceded in this ascent by Major J. P. Cundill, R.A., who climbed this way both up and down alone as long ago as 1869. For the benefit of climbers we quote here Mr. Seatree's description: "From the ridge we traversed a ledge of grass-covered rock (the Rake's Progress) to the right, until we reached a detached boulder, stepping upon which we were enabled to get hand-hold of a crevice six or seven feet from where we stood. To draw ourselves up so as to get our feet upon this was the difficulty; there is only one small foothold in that distance, and to have slipped here would have precipitated the climber many feet below. Having succeeded in gaining this foothold, we found ourselves in a small rectangular recess, with barely room to turn round. From here it was necessary to draw ourselves carefully over two other ledges into a small rift in the rocks, and then traverse on our hands and knees another narrow ledge of about eight feet to the left, which brought us nearly in a line with Mickledore Ridge. From here all was comparatively smooth sailing." The "detached boulder" may be identified with certainty by noticing that it is embedded in the Rake's Progress close to the top of a funnel-shaped grassy gully, about ten or twelve yards from Mickledore. None but experienced climbers should attempt the "north climb" from Mickledore. It is unpleasant to stick on one of the higher ledges, for from these the climber looks almost vertically down to the valley many feet below. In these circumstances a sudden seizure akin to sea-sickness may assail the cragsman who has not his nerves under thorough control.

All who have been on the top of Scafell, near Mickledore, must have looked down with wonder and admiration into Deep Ghyll, that vast, almost vertical funnel, which descends from the top of the mountain to the Lord's Rake. It can be descended straight down its whole length, though in one place there is a very steep pitch, and some little danger is incurred from falling stones. But the most conspicuous object at the upper part of Deep Ghyll is a pinnacle rock with some slight resemblance, from certain points

of view, to the celebrated Pieter Botte in Mauritius, except that the stone on the top is much smaller than the knob which forms the summit of the Mauritius mountain. The Deep Ghyll pinnacle is perhaps best named the "Scafell Pillar," for on examination it will be found to have several features in common with the Ennerdale Pillar. Both have a Pisgah rock and a Jordan gap, both have a high and low man, and both have a slanting slab in similar positions. So inaccessible does the Scafell Pillar appear, that it is probable no one ever thought of making an attempt upon it till Mr. W. P. Haskett Smith, whose climbs on the Ennerdale Pillar were referred to in a previous article, looking at the Rock with the eye of a genius for climbing, thought he could see a way to the top. He made the attempt alone in September of this year, and successfully reached the top, being the first man to set foot on the summit of this forbidding peak. A week or two later, Mr. Haskett Smith, accompanied by Mr. J. W. Robinson, a local cragsman of much enthusiasm, judgment, and skill, made another attack upon the rock. Starting from a point about sixty yards from the lower end of the Rake's Progress, and climbing upwards, they soon entered a very long, narrow, almost vertical chimney, the ascent of which taxed their strength greatly. Emerging at last, they reached a steep arête, which led direct to the ridge of the Scafell Pillar, and thus to the top, where they left their names in a glass bottle. Now that the way is known, the Deep Ghyll Pillar will doubtless be attempted by other climbers. On the whole Wastdale side of Scafell there is fine climbing, nor are the minor mountains which buttress the great heights by any means deficient in interest.

Of all the natural features of the Wastwater District, Piers Ghyll is perhaps the most noticeable. No one coming over the Sty Head Pass from Borrowdale can fail to see this remarkable fissure which, after making an almost right-angled bend in the low ground at the foot of Lingmell, suddenly narrows, and runs straight into the face of the Lingmell crags. So far as can be ascertained, Piers Ghyll has never been climbed. It is one of the few places which have resisted the assaults of the present generation of climbers. Of course when we speak of climbing Piers Ghyll we do not mean merely penetrating into the fissure till further progress is barred, and then climb-

ing out up one of the sides. The Ghyll cannot properly be said to have been climbed until all the obstacles in the ravine are overcome, and the climber emerges at the top, under Lingmell crags. In all probability this feat will be soon achieved; but so far, notwithstanding the elaborate attempts which have been made with ropes, ice-axes, and steel wedges, everyone has failed. Anyone may scramble a good way along the torrent-bed in Piers Ghyll. Soon the ravine narrows, the stream is pent in narrow bounds, the walls on either hand rise higher and are almost perpendicular. Daylight is obscured, and after heavy rain the noise of the falling water is deafening. The first difficult place is a smooth steep slab of rock on the left hand. This can be passed; but the difficulties begin at the third waterfall, where there is a vast curving rock shelving towards the stream. Much, of course, depends on the state of the stream. Long ago, when Mr. James Payn, then a young man at college, visited the Lake District, it was his ardent delight to roll huge stones down the mountain-side and hark as they thundered into the Pease Ghyll (for so the novelist spells the name). Mr. Payn tells how a shepherd of Wastdale, collecting his sheep on Lingmell in the snow, slipped and fell into Piers Ghyll. His iron heel caught in some crevice and wrenched off the boot-sole, thus breaking the fall, and the man survived his perilous adventure. There is a rumour too that a hardy climber, resolved on conquering the passage of the Ghyll, passed difficulty after difficulty till he reached a spot from which advance and retreat seemed equally impossible. He lost nerve, and dared not make an attempt. There he remained for twenty-four hours, his shouts rendered impotent by the roaring waters. At last, when starvation stared him in the face, he gathered courage, and flung himself from his resting-place into the deep pool formed by one of the falls. The water broke his fall, and he scrambled back a sound man. But his adventure is not forgotten; and the local guides tell you flatly that Piers Ghyll cannot be climbed. So did the Swiss tell Mr. Whympster that the Matterhorn could not be climbed, and that its summit was the haunt of evil spirits. But the Matterhorn succumbed nevertheless, and so, we doubt not, will Piers Ghyll when the right man appears. To climb the whole length of Piers Ghyll, and then scale the Lingmell crags above, and so

reach the summit of the mountain, is pronounced by a competent judge the hardest and finest climb in the English Lake District, and one which would keep the climber as severely on the stretch as any piece of rock-climbing in Switzerland.

The inexhaustible richness of the Wastwater district, from the climber's point of view, tempts us to linger too long in it, to the exclusion of other districts. We will not speak, therefore, of the chimneys in the north side of Great End, of the "Horn," the "Screen," and "Westmoreland's Chimney" on Great Gable, of the Stirrup crags on Yewbarrow, or of the rotten gulleys in the Screes, but will pass to the consideration of climbs in other parts of the district.

Of these, Striding Edge, on Helvellyn, is by far the best known. Scott's grandiose poem and Wordsworth's exquisite verses have given immortality to Striding Edge. Save for the ugly dam which banks up the shore of the Red Tarn for the convenience of the Glenridding lead-mines, which have almost destroyed the beauty of the upper reach of Ullswater, all is now as it was when young Gough — Scott's Pilgrim of Nature — slipped over, and was killed, in the spring of 1805. The setting of the two poems is there, all except the eagle. If you chance to be on Striding Edge on a stormy day, when the mists are boiling up from the coves of Grisedale, you will say it is a place an English Manfred might choose for his soliloquies. But as for danger, there is hardly any. To the cragsman it is a promenade; for ladies, merely a pleasant piece of exertion. If any persons are rendered giddy by the steepness of the slopes, and on the Grisedale side they are certainly steep, they can be perfectly secure by taking the lower path. Not far from the Patterdale end of the ridge is a small iron cross, set up to the memory of one Robert Dixon, who was killed on Striding Edge while following the Patterdale fox-hounds in November, 1858. The cross is small, and may easily be missed among the rocks.

Far more imposing than the Striding Edge on Helvellyn is the little-known Sharp Edge on Blencathara. Blencathara is one of the very few lake mountains about which legends are told. On the neighbouring Sowter Fall, marching regiments, troops of phantom horsemen, and all sorts of strange apparitions have been seen; and in Scales Tarn, lying at the foot of the precipitous Tarn Crag, the stars

are to be seen at noonday. The Broad, Narrow, and Sharp Edges on Blencathara are among the most interesting things to be seen among the lake mountains, and the Sharp Edge is certainly the sharpest in the district. It is much narrower than Striding Edge, but nowhere does it offer any difficulty to the ordinary climber. The ascent of Tarn Crag, after leaving the ridge, is indeed much more unpleasant. In ice and snow these ridges present real difficulties. In the winter of 1880-81, an overhanging snow-cornice extended for a mile from the first to the second cairn on Blencathara, and so solid was it that it was possible to stand on the cornice well out beyond the edge of the mountain.

In these two papers it has been our aim to furnish the cragsman with a rough guide to the best rock climbing in the Lake District. Space compels us to omit several interesting places, such as Pavey Ark, the climbs from Grisedale Pass up to St. Sunday Crag, and others. A stranger may waste valuable time in finding the climbs best worth doing; for, except in Mr. Prior's convenient little work, he will not find any printed account of them. Mr. Prior is aware of the existence of the Chimney and Broad Stand routes up Scafell; he even gives a vague little diagram of the "easy way" up the Pillar Rock. But with this noteworthy exception, the stranger is unaided by the guide-books. Wherever there are mountains, the climber can always find ascents for himself, but nowhere are the climbs so interesting and so numerous as in the neighbourhood of Wastdale. To see the Lake District properly, it is best to take a certain number of centres, and explore thoroughly the country round each. Let no one be persuaded to strap a knapsack on his shoulders and roam the country. Beautiful scenery is not to be enjoyed by rushing through it with a heavy weight on your back; you must live in it to love it. Bowness, Keswick, Langdale Valley, Wastdale, Patterdale, and Marsdale Green will be found excellent centres. Round each of these places there is scenery of differing character. Few things are more remarkable in the Lake District than the variety of its scenery. The elements are of the simplest; the effects produced are most varied. The district is seamed with mountain valleys, yet no two are alike. Nature seems to have lavished all her beauties on this unique spot of English earth. It is exquisitely compact. The most varied beauties lie side by side, but they never

jostle or compete with each other. There is space enough for each to have its appropriate setting. It is this compactness of the English Lake District which constitutes at once its charm and its danger. A very little work in the way of "railway enterprise" would ruin the district for ever. Already the railways approach perilously near the most sacred solitudes. Between Penrith and Keswick, the railway actually comes within the mountain rampart, and cuts off Blencathara from its fellow peaks. At Lakeside, at the foot of Windermere, there is a station almost on the lake; at Conistone is another; at Keswick the station is only a few minutes' walk from Derwentwater; at Boot, in Eskdale, the terminus is within ten miles of the remotest mountain fastnesses.

In England, with its vested interests and antique rights, we cannot unfortunately adopt the example so worthily set by the United States, in the case of the Yellowstone Park, and keep for the enjoyment of the public for ever the most beautiful spots of our overcrowded island. But with regard to the English Lake District, it should be well understood that any further railways will ruin it beyond hope. In Switzerland, where the distances are much greater, and the heights much vaster, a few mountain railways are almost unnoticed; in Cumberland and Westmoreland they would dominate the landscape. The specious plea of the public good cannot be urged in favour of schemes of railway extension in the lakes. Trains carry tourists to the very confines of the district on all sides. Private gain is the only motive which can prompt to further "railway enterprise." The Lake District Defence Association is doing excellent work. Already it has defeated the Borrowdale and Ennerdale schemes—schemes for mineral railways, which would have absolutely ruined the beauty of the two valleys. But railway interests are very powerful, and fresh schemes are floated every year. Manchester, having fouled with sewage and manufactures all the streams in its neighbourhood, has laid violent hands on Thirlmere, and is only waiting the necessary capital to convert that lake into a reservoir. The example cannot but be encouraging to the promoters of railway schemes. That they will triumph before long seems more than probable, and when that day comes the Lake District will be irreparably ruined.

DAYS AND NIGHTS IN THE
DESERT.

DURING the progress of the greatest of our recent and numerous "little wars," the writer had the lot to be encamped, or rather bivouacked, for nearly a month, at one not very charming point in the desert. The crossing of that wilderness of sand and gravel was found to be an arduous operation for an army; and the enemy had not neglected, by art, to add to the natural obstacles that fell to be surmounted by the invading host. From an historical point of view, the desert in question is, perhaps, chiefly remarkable on account of its having been traversed by the Israelites, in somewhat remote times, and under trying circumstances. And over some portion of its inhospitable surface, Napoleon the Great, at a later date, led his conquering legions. But in our own day and generation, this region has been the subject of general interest from its offering a field for the labours and exploits of a British army; and, it may be added, its barren wastes seem likely to be the cause of still more serious strife in the future.

That part of the wilderness where we were destined for a time to sojourn, is said to have once been covered by the streets and buildings of a populous city. Of the existence of this, or of any of its remains, we were in entire ignorance when bivouacked on its site. The ruins, if there were any such, were effectually concealed by the deep sand. Modern edifices, with the single exception of a small, solitary-looking mosque, there were none whatever; and when the troops left its neighbourhood, but little of that shrine was left save the bare walls. Its appearance was not unlike that of a miniature Norman keep, or, rather, it resembled much one of these ancient "strong-houses," or "peels," one still sees on the borderlands between England and Scotland. It therefore constituted a sort of landmark in the midst of the mostly flat surrounding country. And if the outward aspect of the mosque was forlorn enough, its internal desolation was rendered complete by our men, who stripped it of every inch of woodwork, and were just commencing the demolition of the roof, when we left the place. This species of sacrilege was, of course, owing to the want of firewood—a necessary, but extremely scarce commodity. Some mounds, or low hills, lined the banks of a channel, which was, rather in-

appropriately, termed the "Sweetwater" Canal. A few of the hillocks were perhaps natural formations, but many of them were evidently composed of the material thrown up in the excavation of the canal that bore so enticing a name. Close to it ran a railway; and the remainder of the landscape, as far as the eye could reach, was almost level, and was devoid of vegetation. By the side of the canal, however, were swamps, in which grew and flourished considerable groves of bulrushes.

We arrived on this not very attractive looking scene in the evening of what had been a hot and laborious day. The latter had been passed by us in a pretty long, and, from terrible thirst, a most painful march over some miles of the arid desert. At an earlier hour, a sharp encounter had taken place between the outposts of the opposing armies, the mounds already alluded to forming the more immediate objects of contention. They were liberally sprinkled with the evidences of combat. Broken gun-carriages and slain horses were numerous. Equipments and rifles had been discarded by many of the foe on taking their departure; and in some places the surface was deeply ploughed up by shot and shell. But killed or even wounded men were conspicuous by their absence; and we, naturally enough, concluded that these must have been carried away by the retiring defenders of the hillocks.

The first object of the parched men was, of course, to obtain water. In view of this a rush was made to the canal, where the enemy's mode of disposing of the dead was made quickly apparent. The number of dusky and defunct warriors who lay half in, half out of, the water, was far from a pleasant sight; and the bodies of these unfortunate fellows were suggestive of at least as many more that had probably been more completely immersed. It will be easily credited that, under these conditions, the fluid was scarcely "sweet-water"; but so agonising was the prevailing thirst, that it was eagerly swallowed in helmetfuls—our headpieces being of immense practical value in this respect. Having in this way refreshed themselves after the toils of the day, the men lay down on the sand, and ere long were sound asleep, being well-nigh exhausted with fatigue and anxiety.

Next morning, the sun had hardly risen, before its rays began to wax oppressive, even dangerously so; and it was obvious that some kind of shelter would needs have to be improvised. Digitized by Google A case or two of sun-

stroke during the preceding day's march, showed the necessity of avoiding the action of the sun as far as possible. But, as yet, we had no tents, and had no immediate prospect of getting any; for the transport department was somewhat eccentric in its movements, or was, indeed, in a great degree stationary, about the time of which we are treating. The railway was useless from lack of rolling-stock, though we had heard that several locomotives were enjoying a period of inactivity in the holds of ships a few miles distant. For like reasons we were without provisions. We were, therefore, dependent for subsistence on the waters of the canal, from which proceedings were taken to fish out the dead soldiers. The thing most urgently required, however, was shelter. Wandering a little way along the canal, quite a forest of bulrushes, from ten to twelve feet high, was discovered. Great bundles of these were cut, and with them tent-shaped huts were soon erected, which proved to be admirable protections alike from the sun by day, and from the heavy dews that fell by night. While engaged in gathering these materials, we did not fail to notice that an immense dam had been built across the course of the canal, and that the railway had likewise been obstructed by a huge mound of clay and sand. These great works were the means of detaining us for some time in their vicinity.

Meanwhile the day passed on, night approached, and at length darkness came rapidly over us. We lay down in what old historians describe as "great security," being well aware that the nearest pickets of the enemy were at least two miles distant. But, of course, the usual precautions of guards and outposts were not forgotten. Everybody, with the exception of these vigilant parties, was soon slumbering, and the deep silence, peculiar to the desert, reigned supreme. Not a sound could be heard, unless, half asleep, one lay near where a sentry patrolled, with footfall muffled in the soft, loose sand. But suddenly this quiescent scene was transformed into one that almost baffles description. Amid alarming shouts, a headlong rush was made to the rifles. These weapons had been "piled," or stacked, in long lines between the rows of habitations of bulrushes; and on them were suspended the belts, haversacks, and pouches of their owners. Thus entangled, the arms were overthrown by the impetuosity of the efforts made to

seize them; and many of them were choked up with sand, being thereby rendered—for the time—all but useless for firing purposes. Men were loading their pieces, fixing on their bayonets, and assuming postures of defence not much like those depicted in drill-books, or learned laboriously on the barrack-square. All this would have been extremely ludicrous, but for the apprehension that existed on all hands, and which was not only generally felt, but quite as generally shown. Officers, scantily clad, and having anything but a martial air, began to attempt to restore order. One of these, with a sabre in one hand, and a "six-shooter" in the other, and having his figure enveloped in a rug, surmounted by a helmet, was finally successful in his exertions. Drawing up the men in line, he was endeavouring to get them into something like the semblance at least of fighting trim, when a second panic was nearly induced by another series of sounds. Two or three other regiments lay near, and their drums were beating to arms with extraordinary vigour, amid, as we could hear, great disorder. Confidence, however, began to return, and it was soon seen that the whole affair was a false alarm. Nothing could at the time be ascertained as to the cause or origin of the confusion, and soon all was quiet again; but daylight divulged reasons for these midnight disturbances.

It appeared, from a searching examination of the members of the "barrack" guard—for so it was termed—that a Turk, who was supposed to act as an interpreter, and who was, in that capacity, "attached" to our corps, had been the unconscious means of carrying terror into the hearts of many hundreds of Britain's chosen warriors. Having on a white garment, and nothing more, Joseph, as he was called, came forth from his hut in the condition known as "walking in his sleep." Approaching a sentinel in the course of his perambulations, the man challenged him, and got no reply. In the obscurity, and from the colour of his dress, the soldier probably took Joseph for an enemy. A second summons brought forth no answer; nor did a third. Thereupon the sentry charged the figure in the white shirt, and that with such vigour and address, that its yells and shrieks were uttered with considerable gusto. In a moment the hundreds of adjacent "Tommy Atkinses" were aroused by these supposed war-whoops, and the scene we have tried to describe

resulted. Taking at once to his heels, Joseph ran through the lines of the other troops we have mentioned, and effectually alarmed them also. The chief effect of these nocturnal events, was the issue of these stringent orders enjoining every man to sleep ready dressed for action. The sentries, as well, were directed to be more cautious before adopting the executive measures which in this case had so thoroughly awakened not only the somnambulist, but the whole division. As it was, the sentry had in no way exceeded his duty; for the third challenge being unanswered, he was at liberty to fire upon the erratic Joseph.

Besides the promulgation of these "orders," the day following upon the interpreter's escapade was remarkable for at least two other reasons. One of these was the continued delay in the arrival of our tents and other necessaries. The other was the commencement of a course of hard labour on the monuments the enemy had left on the railway and in the canal. These two subjects of consideration occupied the minds of most of us the whole day; and in the evening we were delighted to see some carts on the horizon, which eventually turned out to be our long-expected supplies.

With the advent of another day, we were beginning to make ourselves more at home, though in novel and rather adverse circumstances. Washing in the sweet waters of the canal was forbidden, and very properly so, though it became a matter of difficulty to secure the great comfort in this burning climate of frequent ablution. Holes in the ground were tried, but the water disappeared as quickly as it could be poured into them. Our helmets, when the ventilators were stopped up, were more efficient for the purpose. Some officers, who possessed waterproof sheets, were fortunate, for by means of one of these articles, a hole could be converted into an excellent bath. But more handy and capacious baths were discovered. These were several sarcophagi, which lay near the canal, at an easy distance from the camp; and they proved a very great boon to us.

The days passed on, and notwithstanding improvements in our domestic life, consequent on the opening of the railway for traffic, a great amount of sickness began to appear. The doctors had their hands full, their tents were besieged at all hours by sufferers from real or imaginary disorders. The medical-chest was of a very portable nature. It was about the size of a lady's work-box, and within it were numerous

pills, of varied colours and dimensions, neatly arranged in little compartments. In these pills, of one kind or other, were panaceas for every ill, from sunstroke to the sting of a sand-fly. So many were the patients of a morning, that a stereotyped set of questions were asked by the surgeon, who, presenting a pill to a particular sufferer, with the words, "Take that," then passed on to the next candidate for a like prescription. Very serious cases were sent to the "field hospital"—a few tents pitched about half a mile from camp. There the treatment was similar, and in addition to an increased allowance of pills, the men got a rest. Some of them found a permanent resting-place in its vicinity, for we left a few melancholy-looking crosses, made from the furniture of the mosque, near the site of the field-hospital.

One dark night, we made a movement in force, which the special correspondent of a well-known "daily" likened to the ancient and well-worn story that "the French marched up the hill, and then marched down again." And this is an accurate description of what did occur; though we represented the "French" in this particular instance, and the hill was supplanted by a wide expanse of sand and gravel. After tramping for some hours in the dark we were ordered, in subdued accents, quite appropriate to the gravity of the situation, to "lie down." Having for some time so reclined, we were told to rise, and then we started on a heavy journey home. Nearly the whole night was consumed in this (apparently) aimless walk; and the men got back to camp just in time to begin the day's labours in the canal.

Before our residence near the mosque had terminated, the details connected with cleanliness and brightness of arms and equipments, which are characteristic of soldiering in peace-time, had sadly fallen into desuetude. The abundant dew of the night was very injurious to the rifles, or at all events to their appearance from a military point of view. It covered them with a layer of rust, for the removal of which we were unprovided with oil. But for this purpose—as for many others—a "make-shift" was forthcoming. We had all, on leaving the mother-country, been supplied with boxes of grease—technically called "dubbin"—for application to boot-leather. Though not extensively used for its legitimate end, the dubbin was simply invaluable as a substitute for oil.

But with the opening up of the railway,

and, subsequently, of the canal, our sojourn around the desecrated mosque came to an end—to the undisguised delight of most of us.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. ROSES.

DEERHURST LODGE, the house where Theo had been so happy one rainy day in autumn, had an odd little charm of its own, which she felt more and more, day after day, when she began to live there. She and Gerald stayed in London most of the spring, and came down to Deerhurst at the beginning of the beautiful summer, bringing Ada with them. That year the summer was wonderful for its heat and beauty; the calm, serene, glowing sunshine almost reminded them sometimes of Africa.

The little house lay surrounded by green sloping lawns; its rough-cast walls had a dark trellis running along the lower part of them, and seemed to be planted in flowers of many colours, running up and shining brightly among their green leaves. It was like a little old house in a picture-book. Inside, the old oak rooms were full of dark, cool shade, and sweet and gay with bowls of roses; the lower garden was full of roses. On the smooth turf all about, soft breezes sometimes stirred the shadows of the wych-elms and the beech-trees. The sloping bank in front of the house was shaded by three large, old trees, and the roots of one of these—a sturdy, wide-branching ash—made a natural arm-chair, where Theo used to spend many hours of those summer days, watched solemnly by Wool and Toby, lying side by side.

She was weak, and tired, and languid, and very dreamy, though the life was coming back to her by degrees; and Ada, as she sat at her feet and watched her, perfectly happy in taking care of her while Gerald was away, wondered a great deal about the country and the life that had taken all Theo's strong, young energy away.

They did not talk very much through those long afternoons; sometimes she liked Ada to read to her out of old favourite books, not much caring for anything new; sometimes Mrs. Goodall came and brought her children, and little fat Johnny rolled about on the grass, and Ada played with him, while the cousins sat together under the tree. Ada was always shy of Helen, and not very fond of her; she wondered a little at the happy look which came into

Theo's eyes when she was there. Ada had very different feelings about Captain North, who came down once early in the summer. She thought of him with a happy little enthusiasm, the hero who had gone to that dreadful Africa, and had brought Theo and Gerald home. One day he gave her such a description of Kimberley and the journey there that she could not think of it afterwards without horror, and admired him, and pitied her two darlings more than ever.

Theo herself never talked of Africa, except to Gerald. Towards evening, when he came home, Ada used to go away into the garden with a basket to gather roses, leaving them together. Away she went, the little, lonely figure, past the thick, old apple-trees, where there was only a narrow, shady path between the orchard and the yard wall; down the hill, where the old walnut-tree, a little tired of life, was already scattering yellow leaves upon the walk—down among the roses, which grew in wild profusion among laurel, and laurustinus, and honeysuckle, and ivy climbing over low, old walls, and clustering everywhere. There she wandered up and down, and filled her basket, and laid her face caressingly against the loveliest roses, as if she asked them to forgive her for carrying them away.

The long, pretty walk of this garden, where primroses bloomed in spring, and roses, and pinks, and lilies in summer, was bordered by a thick hawthorn hedge, with honeysuckle and elder breaking out here and there. One may say, in passing, that this garden was very full of trees and hedges, and thus it was a paradise of birds, who sang there night and day all through the spring, and lived on strawberries and currants all the summer, to sweeten their voices for the following year.

But on the other side of this hedge just mentioned, there was a steep grass-field rising up—a sort of sheep-walk, with little paths and ledges about it, with great patches of gorse and blackberry-bushes, and old thorn-trees, and wild crab-trees, and low oaks scattered here and there along the upper slope, where grew that group of Scotch firs which bordered the lane towards Woodcote—those same firs that Theo used to see dark against the sunset from her window in Mr. Goodall's house, so very long ago.

This field belonged to Deerhurst Lodge, and the yard and garden opened on one end of it, where there was an old ice-house, and a stack of wood, and one or two hayricks between the buildings and

the lane. At its far end the field had another gate, opening into a steep bit of lane which ran into the other lane, under a row of tall oaks. It was only a grass path this way between the house and the meadows; but anyone coming by the field-road from Mainley could find his way to the house by it, instead of by the upper lane, though it was not generally used, and was not, in fact, a public path at all. A narrow track ran along between the gorse-bushes, not far from the foot of the slope, but yet so high above the garden-hedge that a man could look over it, and see everything and everybody in the garden. So it happened that Ada Fane, peacefully gathering roses in the long walk, was not so entirely alone as she fancied herself.

Her face was grave, for, when she was not with Theo, and thinking of her, she could not help thinking a great deal of that poor baby, left behind in Africa. The idea of him had been so very attractive, poor dear little delicate thing. Ada used to fancy herself nursing him for hours, loving him all the more for his weakness and need of comforting. She could only talk about him to Combe, who told her histories enough. Gerald had mentioned him once or twice, but with such pain that Ada carefully avoided the subject in future. Theo never said anything about him at all, but her little sister knew that he was never out of her thoughts. After she first heard of his birth, Ada had learnt one or two lullabies, and funny little songs that she thought he would like. Nobody must hear them now, except the birds in the garden; but Ada often sang to them in a low voice, and she thought they stopped their own songs to listen to her; probably their taste was not more classical than little Gerald's would have been. She was singing that evening, but not, as she imagined, to the birds alone. A stranger had come along the path between the gorse-bushes, walking on the soft grass noiselessly; and when he had passed a tall holly-bush which marked the corner of the garden, he looked over the hedge and saw all the flowers growing, and a slim girl's figure, dressed in pale blue, with a fair, flushed face, and a head of gold-brown curls, stooping amongst them, and heard a sweet, plaintive voice singing some venerable nonsense of nursery-rhyme—"A pie sat on a pear-tree," or something of that kind.

He stood quite still and watched her; she had no idea of him, but went on filling her basket with roses, while the evening

sun shone softly over the garden, where the thrushes pecked away at the ripest strawberries, hopping in and out and enjoying themselves without fear. The stranger pulled his hat over his eyes, for the sun shone straight into them, dazzling him provokingly.

"It can't be the right house," he said to himself. "They can't have anyone like this belonging to them. I should have known, somehow. This is an adventure."

He walked on very slowly, keeping parallel with Ada as she moved along the path. At last she began to climb a little, and he to descend; she was coming up the hill under the walnut-tree, and the thick hedge stopped here, changing into a rough paling, so that they were no longer hidden from each other. Ada glanced up at him in quick surprise, with almost a start of fear; she had a kind of dread that Mr. Warren might appear again, and though she was now quite safe from his persecutions, the idea was very disagreeable. But this was a stranger, and the pleasantest-looking man, Ada thought, that she had ever seen. He was more sunburnt even than Gerald, and had a light beard, which made him look older than he was. There was something particularly delightful in his manner as he took his hat off, and asked whether this was Deerhurst Lodge. Ada's experience of young men had been very small; her idea of perfection had lately been Captain North, of whom, however, she was very much afraid, and whose manner, even when he meant to be nice, was always cold and indifferent. The admiration she had had, poor child, had been of a sort to make her shrink and shudder. She stopped politely in the path to answer this stranger's questions, smiling, and holding her basket of roses.

"Thank you," he said, "I'm very glad," when she had assured him that this was Deerhurst. "But I am afraid this is the wrong way in, and people don't like one to storm their back-doors. I have made some mistake, certainly."

He stopped, for he was almost puzzled by the look in the girl's face; it seemed as if she knew him already, and was glad to see him.

"Do forgive me," he said, after a moment's pause; "but you are not anybody I knew before I left England?"

"Oh no, certainly not," said Ada, blushing and smiling.

"I thought I couldn't quite have lost my memory. Only it almost seemed as if you were kind enough to recognise me."

"Yes," said Ada with deeper blushes;

"I think I do. I have seen your photograph. I think you are—Mr. Stirling."

"But you don't know how delightful that is," cried Bob enthusiastically. "Why, the other day, when I went home—walked in like this, you know—my sisters didn't know me a bit. And I can't ever have seen your photograph, or else, of course, I should have recognised you."

"Did you never see it at Kimberley? My brother had it," said Ada.

"Well, I don't know; at any rate, it wasn't like you. May I suppose, then, that you are Gerald Fane's sister?" said Bob with a sort of gentle eagerness.

All this time he was in the field, and she in the garden, but now they walked on and reached the gate, and he joined her in the path. Here she gravely shook hands with him, and said that her brother and sister would be very glad to see him.

"Poor dear Mrs. Fane! how is she?" said Bob. "Is she getting like herself again?"

"She is still very weak and sad," said Ada. "Oh no, she is not like herself, and she never mentions the baby."

"What a dreadful business that was!" said Bob. "Gerald ought never to have come to the Fields, you know; he wasn't half rough enough for the sort of life—and bringing his wife there was simple madness. It was a shock to me, really, when I first saw them there. I thought they were travelling about to amuse themselves. What a beautiful garden you have! I never in my life saw such roses."

"I was so dreadfully sorry when Gerald went," said Ada. "It is very nice to have them at home again. I think they are under the trees near the house."

"I hope the sight of me won't be a shock to Mrs. Fane. What do you think?" said Bob, lingering at the gate. "Do you know, Miss Fane, I think you gather roses in such a funny way. I saw you over the hedge. You left several behind that I thought the prettiest in the garden. There was one particularly—a beautiful pink bud. I don't often want things that don't belong to me," said Bob, lifting his eyes for a moment from the roses; "but I thought at the time that I wanted that bud. I dare say Mrs. Fane has told you wonderful things about the flowers in Africa, but I assure you that flowers in England beat them hollow. I thought so, especially when I saw that rose, and you left it."

"If you want it so much," Ada said, smiling, "would you like to go and fetch

it? I'll go and tell them that you are come. Here are my scissors."

Bob drew back with a little air of alarm.

"Please don't leave me alone in this garden," he said; "somebody might take me up for trespassing, or I might lose my way. And I dare say I couldn't find the rose after all. Have you any idea where it is?"

"Oh yes; I know it quite well," said Ada.

And so this conversation ended, as Bob meant it should, by their going down again together into the garden to look for that rose. Ada thought she had never met anyone before who was so fond of flowers. Bob Stirling seemed to care for them as much as she did herself. Neither had she ever met anyone who was so delightful to talk to, so perfectly kind and sympathetic about Theo, so bright, happy, and unprejudiced. And then there was the mysterious but most pleasant feeling that this charming stranger, much as he cared for the flowers, was a little absent among them, and often forgot to look at something especially lovely, when he was talking to her. He might have made all the long journey from Africa with no object but that of talking to her; yet this was impossible, because he did not even remember her photograph, and not taken in the idea that Gerald Fane had a sister at all.

While this new friendship was being made in the garden, Gerald and Theo were sitting under the ash-tree in front of the house, very happy in their own way. They had been talking a little about Ada and her future, expecting every moment to see her come round the house with her basket of roses. But the sun sank lower, and the shadows grew longer and longer, and Ada did not come, so at last Theo asked Gerald to go and look for her, and he strolled down into the garden whistling. Then quite innocently along the rose-path came Ada and Mr. Stirling, and Bob had evidently not forgotten to take care of himself; for he was wearing the prettiest pink bud in his button-hole.

THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1884.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER IV.

"OLD Mrs. Hodges," began Mrs. Rumsey, addressing Edie, "has lately taken to coming to church. You know, as a rule, she attends the Baptist Chapel."

Mrs. Rumsey seemed afflicted with a slight though perennial huskiness. One never heard her speak without feeling tempted to clear one's own throat out of pure nervous sympathy.

The squire was dealing at that moment, Phil making the cards, the vicar enjoying a brief leisure.

"Ah, my dear," ejaculated the last-named individual blithely, "old Hodges has an eye to the future in her spiritual arrangements. Don't you know Christmas-tide (flannel-petticoat-tide, as it might be called) is approaching. Hodges prefers, naturally enough, the church to the chapel flannel, seeing we give a penny a yard more for it than the Baptists do. She found it out, sly old fox, when she was gossiping at the draper's the other——"

"Your lead, parson," interrupted the squire. Those three words might have been paraphrased somewhat as follows: "The game begins once more. In the name of common-sense have no eyes, ears, tongue, for anything but hearts, clubs, spades, diamonds!"

Ellinor rose from her chair, and walked slowly to the farther end of the drawing-room.

"Does she feel faint?" thought Edie; "is this corner too hot for her? But what a walk she has! as stately as a peacock, as graceful as a swan on the water!"

"Charlie loves a joke," said Mrs.

Rumsey mildly and huskily. She had been in the habit of saying this as a sort of cheerful Amen to her husband's attempts at facetiousness all through her married life, on an average some twenty times in the course of the twenty-four hours. Edie, having heard the remark before, knew it did not require an answer.

"Ha, ha! we did that splendidly, Colonel," laughed the squire, packing up his six tricks, and starting for the seventh. "Very neatly you managed that, upon my word!"

Soft and low at that moment there came a full minor chord from the grand piano.

Heavens and earth! There was Ellinor seated in front of it with fingers on the keys.

The knitting-pins fell from Mrs. Rumsey's fingers.

Edie rose from her sofa, made one step towards the piano, then paused in uncertainty, looking from the piano to the card-players, from the card-players to the piano.

The squire, half turning his head, gave one loud, irritable cough.

"Draw your card, partner!" he said, bending across the table towards the Colonel, in a voice that had something of a Vesuvian rumble in it.

All three gentlemen seated there felt as though the cushions of their chairs were stuffed with gun-cotton. They had known the squire not a few years. Phil alone of the three showed any presence of mind, for he packed up his cards, and laid them on the table. It was all up with the game now, he felt convinced.

The squire, turned upon him furiously. "What the——" he began; but the angry word that trembled on his lips was quenched by a long, low trill from the farther end of the drawing-room, somewhat resembling that of an early nightingale,

getting up its notes in a dim twilight it mistakes for night.

So, then, this young beauty was endowed with the voice of a prima-donna as well as the step of an Empress, and the face of an angel. Nature must have been in an uncommonly generous, not to say prodigal, frame of mind when Ellinor Yorke was laid in her cradle.

The three other gentlemen followed Phil's example, and laid down their cards. The squire leaned back in his chair, getting red and redder in the face.

"He must wait till she has finished," thought Edie; "and then—oh, then, Etna would be a smoky chimney compared with what will follow."

But as the song went on, a change came over the old gentleman's features. It was an Italian love-ditty evidently, for "caro" and "amor" seemed to occur pretty often. Not one person in that room was a proficient in the liquid, love-making language, but not one person there but would have sworn they knew all that the singer was saying of vehement love and passionate tenderness. It was not a song that would make men go back in memory to their boyish days, and the tender-hearted mother they so quickly "grew out of" kissing, and who, only too soon, was laid where neither loving hands nor loving lips could reach her; it was not a song that would bring to women's eyes an aching, a scorching pain, and a vision of a baby face and form lying, like some broken waxen lily, in a white befrilled nest they dared not think of as a coffin. No, it was rather a song that would startle, amaze, set one wondering first, trembling afterwards with a whole unknown world of feelings aroused within. As it came to an end, and died away in a series of low, half-suppressed passionate iterations, Edie said to herself, giving one long, curious look at Ellinor:

"I know now why Phil called her 'Lady Lovelace,' and I think I know, too, what manner of man Lovelace was."

As Ellinor played her final chord, Colonel Wickham put his hand to his forehead, as though some sudden sensation of pain had struck him there. The vicar leaned forward a little uneasily.

"I don't think I ever heard anything quite like that before," he said, for the first time in his life without a joke at command, an experience that was altogether new and strange to him.

As for Phil, he simply fixed his eyes on the girl, and never lifted them till the song

came to an end. He looked, and looked, and looked, as though looking were the whole business of his life, and required the absorption of every other sense and faculty. If a thunderbolt had struck him there and then as he sat, he would have passed away into eternity with his eyes full of Ellinor Yorke; nothing, no one else.

The squire, still leaning back in his chair, with an odd, tamed, "brought-to-reason" sort of expression on his face, noted Phil's look, and said to himself:

"Oh, that's it, is it? I see I shall have to get between you and danger, Master Phil."

The Colonel noted it also, and said to himself, still with his hands across his forehead:

"Ah, Phil, you and I must have a talk together as we walk home through the park."

And Edie noted it, and said to herself as she put a tremendously long stitch in her white lilies:

"What a good thing it is I have given Phil back his liberty! It would have been quite too dreadful if he had found out after we were married that—that—"

But here there seemed to come a mist before her eyes, and her thoughts grew incoherent.

Ellinor rose slowly and gracefully from the piano, and surveyed her audience. Her eyes rested first on the squire benignantly; secondly on the Colonel approvingly; thirdly on Phil with a look so comprehensive, so full of meaning, it would take a sentence to express it, a page to analyse it.

It might have been with such a look as this on her face that the fair Elaine answered Gawain "full simply": "If I love not him, methinks there is none other I can love."

It possibly was with such a look as this on his face that the old Kaiser Wilhelm surveyed the plan of the fortifications of Paris, and said to Bismarck: "How now, Count? How long think you this city of soldiers will hold out? Here is metal worth our hammer."

Edie, Mrs. Rumsey, and the vicar, she simply overlooked and ignored.

Ellinor's movement seemed to restore common-sense to the party. Edie murmured a word of thanks. The squire crossed the room and began an elaborate acknowledgment.

"Although so unexpected—ah yes, of

course, on whist-nights one could not expect such a pleasure—we have none the less enjoyed your song, my dear. And now that the game is broken up—yes, of course, we're all in a fog all round as to how we leave off even—I do think you might sing us something else—eh, Ellinor?" he said in his usual loud, mellow tones.

Ellinor smiled graciously at him.

"Another time I will sing to you, not now; I am rather tired, and will say good-night," she answered with a little bow that might be taken to be a good-night to the company generally.

The squire opened the door for her; the squire rang the bell for her candle, and to make sure that her two maids were in attendance; the squire conducted her to the foot of the stairs for fear she might lose her way crossing a hall twenty-four feet by twelve. Then he went back to the library, where the other gentlemen by this time had become engrossed in various topics of local interest—the next meet of the staghounds, the resignation of an M. F. H. of long standing.

He shut the door very carefully behind him.

"I think, gentlemen," he said in very magisterial tones, "if it is all the same to all of you, it would be as well for us to meet for whist at Colonel Wickham's house through the winter, if he has no objection."

Phil went over to Edie's side and tried to make her lift her eyes from her white lilies. If they had been magnetic, and her eyes metallic, they could not have been more attracted one to the other.

"I say, Edie," he whispered, "I heard a piece of news this afternoon just before I came out. Old Lord Winterdowne died last night in Florence; the new lord (his nephew, you know) will be down here in a few days taking stock of the place. It seems the old man was given over about ten days ago—just precisely at the time your cousin wrote to you. Now do you see any reason for Lady Lovelace's visit?"

And meantime Lady Lovelace herself, seated in front of her dressing-room fire, was submitting to the tedious process of hair-brushing which a yard and a quarter of thick auburn hair necessitates. Gretchen was performing the duty with the slowness, precision, and thoroughness of a German maid. Only once she paused in her task, and that was to give utterance to a Teutonic "So, madame," in reply to a remark from her mistress.

Ellinor, after sitting silent for about ten minutes, had suddenly looked up, and said:

"I think on the whole, Gretchen, I am disposed to like my winter quarters. I can see I shall find plenty to amuse me here."

CHAPTER V.

EDIE came down the next morning full of condolences for her father on his interrupted rubber.

"If I had only known what she intended doing, papa, I would have locked the piano and taken away the key," she said in her softest and most sympathetic tones; "O Mrs. Rumsey and I would have taken our work into the morning-room. She could not have sat in with you all by herself; her effrontery must have stopped short of that."

"Ah, never mind, my dear," answered the squire cheerily. "It's all over now, and for the future we will run no risk of interruptions. We shall all meet at Colonel Wickham's through the winter, and, as he is a bachelor, of course no ladies need be invited. Not even you, little Edie, to make eyes at your Phil. And, after all, the song was uncommonly well sung, and uncommonly well Ellinor looked at the piano, too!"

"Why, papa, I should have thought you would rather have seen her at the treadmill than at the piano on a whist-night!"

"At the treadmill! Lord forbid, my dear! A fine young woman like that!"

"Well," said Edie philosophically, after a pause, in which she seemed feeling about for a logical solution to this mystery, "I suppose it is because she is 'a fine young woman' that you take the thing so calmly. I remember when John came in and said that Farmer Twentyman had shot a fox, you jumped up and called him a 'Jackass.' Yes, you did, papa—that was the very word you used."

"My dear, to convey such news as that to a man in the middle of a rubber was the very essence of Jackassness, and if you compare the killing of a fox with a young lady singing a song, you will, perhaps, see what I mean. Why, Edie, if it were only my grandmother shot I shouldn't like to have the news brought to me till I had finished the rub."

Edie made no reply for at least three minutes. Then she said very slowly, very meditatively:

"I think, papa, for the future, whenever you are quietly settling down in the library, and particularly do not wish to be disturbed, I'll go to the piano and begin singing——"

"No, no, no, Edie," interrupted the squire hurriedly, flurriedly—for he knew the young lady was quite equal to carrying out her threat. "You mustn't do anything of the sort, or I shall——"

"And I'll open the top as high as it will go, and I'll have the loud pedal down, and I'll get the names of all Ellinor's songs and sing them, one after the other," Edie went on calmly.

"No, no, no, Edie," again iterated the squire. "Her songs wouldn't suit your voice, you may depend; and, my dear, it's the sort of thing—take my word for it—you mustn't attempt. Why, child, you wouldn't like me to have to throw up a thick wall between the drawing-room and library, would you?"

"The sort of thing I must not attempt," repeated Edie slowly, "and which Ellinor may, as often as she pleases! Papa, do you mind telling me why Ellinor may do things I must not attempt?"

"Ah, she's a different person altogether—altogether, don't you see, my dear?" answered the squire somewhat uneasily, for Edie was going a little too deeply into the reason of the thing to please him. "Don't you see, you may do things she cannot, and—*and vice versa*."

"I think," Edie went on, half soliloquising, half addressing her father—"I think it must be the combined efforts of the two maids which make her such an altogether superior person. Papa, I think I must establish a new routine in the house, from top to bottom, and, in the first place, go in for two new experienced maids."

"My dear!"

"One shall be French, one shall be German. You see, I have had my old Janet ever since I was six years old, and she has no idea of anything unless I first put it into her head. Now, the new maids I will have shall put things into my head, and tell me where to have my dresses made, and how to pencil my eyebrows, and 'make up' my complexion."

"Edie!" was all the squire found breath to ejaculate.

"Yes; and there's another thing—they shall tell me where to send to have the stuff of my dresses made for me any colour I please, whether it's Lyons, or Coventry, or anywhere else. And one of them shall

do nothing else but attend to my dresses, and the other shall think of nothing but hairdressing from morning till night. I'll send her away immediately if she dares to have a thought in her head for anything else, even her bread-and-butter."

"Edie, Edie, you'll drive me mad if you rattle on in this way!"

"Well, papa, Gretchen does not dare have a thought for anything but hairdressing, so why should not my new maid be equally restricted? Gretchen told Janet, only this morning, that her one business in life is to provide her mistress with new styles in hairdressing. Ellinor never wears her hair, the same way two nights running. Gretchen has a model, a plaster cast of a head, and whole boxes of false hair, and every spare moment she is plaiting, and curling, and twisting, and trying it on the model."

"Now, pussy, this is all wretched gossip from beginning to end. I wonder you condescend to lend an ear to it."

"Oh, papa, I am obliged to lend an ear to everything Janet chooses to tell me, as you know, or might know, if she undertook to brush your hair for half an hour night and morning. Ah, I forgot," this with a comical upward look at her father's sparse locks; "five minutes might very well do for your hairdressing."

"Now, Edie, you are growing personal. It's time we broke off. Will you ride this morning? I am going over to Brentmere about that cob I was telling you of the other day. I wonder if Ellinor would like a canter. You might run up and ask her, child."

Miss Yorke had not as yet made her appearance, although it was close upon eleven o'clock.

"Thank you, no. I'll send up a message, if it's all the same to you, papa. I've paid my first and last visit to Ellinor's dressing-room," said Edie, ringing the bell as she spoke.

An answer to her message came back quickly enough. Miss Yorke begged to be excused. She had letters to write, and could not come down till luncheon. Also, she would like to see the horses before she put on her habit.

"There, papa, did you ever have such a message as that sent down to you before from a visitor?" exclaimed Edie when the servant had departed. "Like to see the horses, indeed! As though we were livery-stable people, with a few miserable hacks waiting her high mightiness's commands!"

I wonder if she would condescend to mount my mare! I think, papa, instead of riding over to Brentmere about a cob, you had better go up to Tattersall's, and see if they have any thoroughbreds on sale just now! Like to see the horses, indeed!"

"Now, now, Edie, you are going at express speed again, and, as usual, stopping at nothing. Don't you see, Ellinor's message may be taken in quite another light? It may be, she has not been riding much lately, and is consequently out of practice; or possibly she is naturally a timid rider, and is afraid we have nothing but hunters in the stable. Don't you see, my dear!"

"Yes, I see," said Edie with a little curl of her upper lip. "It's exactly the sort of message a timid person would send down, is it not?"

PLANT-LIFE—MORAL, SOCIAL, POLITICAL.

DOES the sundew enjoy the fly out of whom it squeezes the life-juices, after having enticed him with that drop of bright liquid which gives it its name? Does it discriminate between flavours, preferring thrip to ant, and moth to either? And when the scientist, for his own selfish ends, has fed it day by day with little shreds of raw beef, does it get to feel like a man-eating tiger, careless of any other kind of food? It is a clever creature, that sundew. Do not you know it? Well, the next time you go to Wales, or Dartmoor, or Bournemouth, or to any place where there is poor, boggy land, look carefully at one of the pale-green patches that look as if delicately-tinted "art flannel," steeped in soapy water, had been drawn over them. You cannot imagine any more unlikely soil for anything to grow in, and yet that is the home of the sundew, and it is the exceeding poverty of the ground which has made it into the devouring cannibal that it is. Plants want nitrogen, and they want potash, and there is little of either to be got out of a bit of green, slimy bog. But animal matter is rich in nitrogen and potash salts; therefore the sundew has become carnivorous. Its disposition may have been bad to begin with. Other plants are condemned to the same habitat, as the botanists call it. The water-buttercup, for instance, has lost its footing in the fat meadows, and has for ages lived in the thin, innutritious element, but, instead of taking to animal food, it

has solved the difficulty by dividing its leaves into a vast number of hair-like threads. This is a common device of such water-plants as have not (like the water-lilies) a good hold on the rich mud below. The threads go hither and thither in search of food, and, being many, manage to scrape together enough for the needs of the plant. For the same reason, ferns, and hedge-parsley, and such like, growing under trees where there is little sun, and, therefore, only a scanty supply of plant-food, or else on banks where the hedge-roots take all the nourishment out of the ground, have their leaves minutely divided, in order that each little leaflet or frondlet may bring in something to the common stock. The sundew has preferred baser courses. It has taken to insect-eating, turning the tables on the hereditary foes of the vegetable kingdom, and those tufts of brown, pink-fringed leaves, with a little spike of small white flowers rising out of each, which are crowded on the pale-green, unwholesome-looking patches of bog, are so many traps, the fringes having developed such a discriminating sensitiveness as to close in at once on nutritive food, but to care no more, if a bit of wood or a grain of sand is placed on the leaf, than they do for the pattering of the rain-drops. Thus they are much sharper than the sensitive-plant, which acts just the same whether you touch it with your finger or tickle it with a straw; but, just as clever people often overreach themselves, so the sundew has one weakness. It is a glutton, and does not know when it has had enough. An American lady naturalist, Mrs. Mary Treat, of New Jersey, found it easy to cause the reckless feeder a fit of indigestion. Nay, she was able to give leaf after leaf a fatal surfeit. "Several leaves (she says) caught three flies successively, but few were able to digest the third. Five leaves, however, digested each three flies, and closed upon the fourth, but died in the attempt to digest it." These sundews are found pretty nearly all the world over—in China, Madagascar, the Cape—and Kingsley tells how delightful it was to come upon one in a West Indian swamp. Those to whom something has been revealed about that deepest of all mysteries, the great ice age, tell us that the sundew really belongs to the southern hemisphere—no fewer than forty-one species of it have been found in Australia alone, and the Cape kinds have splendid purple flowers, which put our little chickweedy blossom quite to shame. It got across the line during one

of those swingings of the earth's axis which have brought the ice at one time down from the North Pole, and at another up from the South Pole to near the equator; and it has gradually moved northward, we are told, picking out the spots where nothing else will grow, preferring to hold to its unplant-like appetite rather than accommodate itself to a richer soil, in which it could have no excuse for such practices.

I doubt if you will be able to transplant a sundew and make it live in your garden or greenhouse. Nothing is harder than to acclimatise weeds in general. Geraniums, which grow from the stem-joints, and, by their immense vitality ousting our old-fashioned garden-plants, avenge on us the killing out of their compatriots, are likely to deceive us in this respect. But most plants will not grow if the tip of the main root is injured. You do not know what a delicate organ it is, made like the tentacles of a zoophyte for feeling about in search of food, and provided with a case to keep it from getting hurt as it moves through earth and stones. Look at the weed you have pulled up; why, you have actually skinned this root-tip, torn off the protecting-sheath; and then you expect the poor plant to take root and live. Why, you might almost as well expect an Ostend rabbit to live if you took it off a salesman's stall and put it into a warren.

However, try the sundew; it is not the root that will be your difficulty so much as the atmosphere in which the fly-catcher lives. Stagnant water, rotting moss, and hot sun—it takes some trouble to imitate that combination, either in the open air or under glass, in a London suburb. Yet the place where I used to find the sundew has almost become a London suburb. I was pretty sure of it in out-of-the-way nooks on Wimbledon Common; but if that failed, Walton Hurst never deceived me. They were making a cutting for the South Western, and I was divided between my delight in plant-hunting and my boyish joy in watching the navvies and their works. In those days there was cotton-grass to be found, by those who knew where to look, on Hampstead Heath; indeed, the neighbourhood of town had more rare plants than you would find in half-a-dozen commonplace Midland counties.

But if you cannot get a sundew or a butterwort—which, with its rosette of greasy, yellow-green leaves, is also said to be carnivorous—nor a bladderwort—the bladders of which are found to be not

really floats but traps, on the plan of an eel-trap, easy for water-beetles to get into, hard to escape from—you can study plant-cannibalism in any hot-house where there is a pitcher-plant.

This strange creature is found all over the Southern Archipelago. On the mountains of Borneo are plants with pitchers that will hold two quarts of water; and the thirsty traveller, fresh from his Bridgewater Treatises, and full of the idea that everything in the world is arranged for man, especially for English man, thought these pitchers due to a beneficent care for his comfort. He even called the plant "Nepenthe" (pain-assuager) out of gratitude for its bountiful water-supply. Unfortunately, the pitchers have a cover, arranged to prevent their getting anything like full; and they usually contain a mass of putrid animal matter—flies, ants, and other soft, easily-digested creatures whom the latest research "proves" (so far as such a thing can be "proved") to be victims, not of accident, but of design. The sundew and the Venus's fly-trap of Carolina are cleaner feeders; they garotte their prey and suck its juices, flinging off the carcase when no more can be got out of it. The pitcher-plants keep theirs in a sort of liquid manure-heap, the juices on the inner wall of the pitcher always making the water it contains slightly acid, and giving it the properties of pepsine, so that in three days it will turn cartilage into jelly; and they want it, for they sometimes catch small birds.

The American pitcher-plant (*Sarracenia*) has a less elaborate contrivance than that of Borneo. Instead of a regular pitcher at the end of the leaf, the edges of two of its leaves grow together, forming a water-tight tube sometimes three feet high; and Professor Asa Grey draws an edifying parallel between the way in which flies are decoyed farther and farther in till there is no escape, and the enticements which lead young men on and on along the downward road.

Well, no doubt several plants are carnivorous because "'tis their nature to," but this fact does not help us to answer the question, "Do they enjoy their meal?" Is a pitcher-plant more delighted when it gets hold of a good fat fly than a rose is when, in dry weather, you give it a good watering? It all depends on what you mean by consciousness. And here, as in other cases, we have to enlarge our definitions. The cut-and-dried answers

of the old primers, which gravely settled all the great problems of existence in a dozen questions and answers which a child could learn in an hour, would not satisfy us, who, at any rate, have come to feel our own ignorance, and to feel something of the mystery of existence. Instinct, for instance, we used to be told, is something wholly different from reason; but now instinct is held to be the result of the experience of the race, just as reason in you or me comes of our personal experience. But the race is made up of individuals, and, therefore, reason is always tending to become instinctive; and there is, as one sees in dogs, a gradual shading off from the one to the other. In insects this instinct is said to grow, as it certainly does in birds. Mr. Bates found that the bees on the Amazons have not yet discovered that hexagon cells give the largest amount of accommodation in the least space and with the least expenditure of material.

Are plants, too, gaining experience and transmitting it? And have they any notion they are doing so? Oh, but plants have no specialised nerves along which sensations can travel, and where they can be registered. In fact, they have neither ganglia nor brains, but a great many of the undoubtedly animal group of *Cœlentera* share in the deficiency. The amoeba is undoubtedly an animal, yet Herbert Spencer calls it "a speck of jelly having no constant form." Structure seems no sure test, and as for intelligence, I will back that of the onion, which manages somehow to extract sulphur from the very same soil and air from which the carrot in the next row extracts sugar and potash, against the reason of the human animal, who out of good, hard-earned money gets little but doctored beer, and yet more doctored gin; and the stupidity of the horse, which has never, through all the ages, learnt that yew-leaves are unwholesome.

Plants have their likes and dislikes; they are given to stealing, to make-believe, to driving the weakest to the wall, to decking themselves out as fine as Jezebels for their own purposes. Plants grow, like animals, by multiplication of their cells, and their cells are made of the same protoplasm—jelly-like substance, composed chiefly of carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen—of which animal cells are formed. The protoplasm is to the plant what the brickmaker's prepared clay is to the house. As for the want of a heart, plants get over that by capillary attraction, while

their leaves are lungs, only that, instead of giving out carbonic acid gas, they give out oxygen. This solves the bedroom difficulty, which used to give trouble in the less ventilating days of our forefathers. Green leaves do no harm, but good; flowers, on the other hand, breathe as we do, sucking in the oxygen and giving out carbonic acid. The leaf is the real individual; flowers are leaves "aborted" for the purposes of reproduction. As for growth by buds, that goes on among insects as well. The biological books give us, side by side, three "colonies of organisms"—a plant with bud at every joint; a sea-fir, with hydra-polypes at the joints answering to the buds in the plants; a chain of tree-lice (aphides), holding closely together, and multiplying by a process of budding. The winged aphides, which appear, like flying ants, once a year, answer to the seed-producing flowers, and are only produced when there is a need for founding a distant colony.

There is no reason, then, in the leaf and bud arrangement, for classing vegetables in a kingdom apart, if we will look on a plant as a body corporate. Some of its members are for defence, its soldiers; others for trade and accumulating wealth, the roots and leaves; others answer to the ornamental spending classes, the flowers; others, the seeds, emigrate. How much is the cost of a flower is seen in the case of lilies; the bulbs are storing up for the flowers, and a gardener who wants to have an extra fine lily-spike, nips off the buds for a year or two, that the store may be larger. All this expense is for a purpose, to attract insects, and so to ensure cross fertilisation. So with one voice say the scientists, and yet the case of the lily seems to tell the other way, for lilies seldom seed, reproducing themselves mostly by bulbets, and hence the flowers, on which so much stored up nutriment is lavished, seem, from the reproductive point of view, pure waste. What a storing up there must be for the aloe, to nourish that huge spike, half as high as a house, which, naturally enough, so exhausts the plant that it can only be produced once in a lifetime. This storing up, by the way, is the reason why our early-blooming plants, crocuses and the like, are mostly bulbs; they are ready to blossom, while other plants in general are not till the sun has enabled them to take in a store of starch. Our autumn flowering bulbs are either, like the Guernsey lily, foreigners, which still keep their antarctic habits, or like the meadow-saffron, natives of such poor, dry soil, that all

their energy is needed to keep life going.

Of course, in the main, however it may be with bulbs, flowers are produced for reproductive purposes. In-breeding is bad for plants as well as animals; and the plants that have got crossed have, by natural selection, outlasted the self-fertilising ones. Hence plant instinct has led most of them to aim at crossing; and hence the bright colouring of flowers, to attract bees and butterflies. Yellow they say (I cannot tell on what grounds) was the earliest colour, appearing as soon as there were any insects to enjoy it. Blue is supposed to be the last developed (there is hope of a blue rose yet); bees love it, and bees are the best of cross-fertilisers. Dr. Müller, however, tells us that the change of colour, from red to blue, which comes over the blossoms of bugloss and several other of our wild flowers, is a sign to the bees that they need not trouble to come, the blue flowers being found destitute of honey, and having, therefore, been already visited and presumably fertilised. How is the cross-fertilisation managed? You know the yellow dust, pollen, so abundant in wheat that it weighs fifty pounds to the acre? Farmers always like a good wind when the wheat is blooming, for wheat is one of the wind-fertilised flowers that are independent of insect-visits. Look under a sweet chestnut-tree at flowering-time and you will see the ground thickly coated with yellow dust; and under the Jamaica Cabbage Palm it looks as if there had been a heavy fall of snow; while in Canada the lakes get crusted and the hollows of the ground quite filled with pollen from the pine-trees. Well, this pollen sticks about the hairy bodies of bees that have been attracted by the bright colour and then drawn in by the honey. Then when a fresh flower is visited, some of this pollen gets rubbed off on the sticky surface of the "style" or prolongation of the seed-vessels; and thus the seed of one flower is fertilised by the pollen from another.

The devices by which, while hairy bees are encouraged, smooth, useless flies are kept out or even caught and killed are very curious. Look at the asclepiads in your greenhouse, and you will see most of the flowers grasping dead flies, not killed for food, like the sundew's victims, but because they would eat the honey without carrying round the pollen. This is the reason why the tubes of so many flowers are beset with small hairs, strong

enough to keep out a fly, but giving way to the attack of a bee. A case in point is the bog-bean, whose lovely pink petals have their surfaces turned into veritable chevaux de frise to keep off "unbidden guests." Then there are devices to baffle ants; and a kind of acacia, the Bullhorn thorn, is said in Belt's Naturalist in Nicaragua to adopt the plan of maintaining a colony of peculiarly savage ants who are allowed black-mail on condition of keeping at bay their leaf-cutting cousins.

Fertilisation, then, is the reason of the existence of coloured flowers; it also accounts for the tendency of flowers to grow in masses, especially where insects are few. On the edges of the glaciers there are only a few butterflies, and they need directing, being purblind as compared with bees. Hence the fields of blue and rose blossoms which form one great charm of the Alpine landscape if you go earlier than the ruck of tourists. The seed being fertilised, the next thing is to get it dispersed. Hence it must in some way commend itself to the birds, which are to seeds in much the same relation that insects are to flowers. Hence fruits are made attractive, when ripe, either to eye or taste, or to both; while, on the other hand, when unripe, and therefore not ready for dispersion, they are full of citric or malic acid, which is liked neither by bird nor beast. There is a large class of showy fruits, poisonous to mammals, but harmless to birds, as if the plants preferred a wider dispersion than that which a slow ruminant would give it. Hazel-nuts, and such like, which are too large to be carried about by birds, are, on the contrary, carefully protected. While unripe, they are wrapped in casings just the colour of the leaves; when ripe, they take the hue of the ground on which they fall. And some are said to kill even birds. Thus, Mr. Grant Allen, who is full of pleasant Darwinistic fancies, says that the red berries of our little arum (lords and ladies) have grown so brilliant that they may entice to their doom the birds, whose carcasses will form a manure-heap to nourish the plant. This, Dr. J. E. Taylor, whose Sagacity and Morality of Plants is a very storehouse of curious facts and suggestions, denies. The birds (he says) would long ago have got inured to the poison, as Carinthian peasants do to eating arsenic, or else would have learned to eschew the fruit. I suppose the thing can be proved one way or the other simply by

"observing" a sufficient number of arum-tufts.

The selfishness of trees has been the theme of everyone who has seen a tropical forest. Our ivy is good and kind compared with the lianas and Bauhinias of the South American forests, whose huge lattice-work remains after the tree about which it was formed has wholly rotted out through the interstices. An equatorial forest, with its bush-ropes, and parasites, and epiphytes, shows a struggle for existence that an armchair botanist can hardly realise. "We have," says Dr. Taylor, "no vegetable Thugs like the Sipo Matador of the Brazilian forests;" but we have our blood-suckers. Look how the dodder, with its tangle of red threads, plays the cuttle-fish with a poor gorse-bush; and see how that impudent knave the broom-rape fastens on the roots of the clover. In a grove of Scotch firs we see a good instance of successful tyranny. Why is there no undergrowth, no carpet even, of moss or lichen on the dead fir-needles below? Just because those needles, so full of silica, prevent even mosses from getting a foothold. A few plants have got used to living under trees—the rhododendrons, for instance, have been trained to live under thick foliage, such as clothes the sides of the Himalayas. The butcher's broom, sole representative in England of the palms and other woody monocotyledons so common here in earlier geological ages, has lost its leaves in the struggle to live under trees. This strange shrub, kin to the lilies (my Handbook places it between the asparagus and the lily of the valley)—lily-like in that it has only one lobe to its seed—breathes through the flattened ends of its stems, which, like the leaves of ordinary plants, are covered with carbon-feeding mouths. "With leaves," says Dr. Taylor, "it could not make both ends meet; and so the branches took on themselves the work of supply. . . . What a story of quiet suffering and struggling does this fact tell us!"

But, while every tree—and not the equatorial liana only—is ready to strangle its neighbour, while even the humblest weed is on the watch to starve out its fellow-weed by appropriating every scrap of nourishment within reach, there is (if we please so to interpret it) a vast amount of self-sacrifice in plants of the same family. You know that the outer florets of the daisy and of all such flowers, or rather, colonies of flowers, are barren. So it is again with the wild guelder rose. In the

garden variety all the florets have become barren, as is the rule with "double" flowers, each head forming what we call a "snow-ball;" but in the hedgerows the inner florets are still seed-producing, and comparatively inconspicuous. The outer ones have denied themselves, and used their whole energy in developing those large dead-white petals, which are so conspicuous even in the dark that they must be wonderfully attractive to the very numerous tribes of night-feeding moths. Co-operation among such plants is as much a fact as storing up or thrift is among the bulbs. Plants, too, have their poor relatives; the little "Lady's Mantle" belongs to the same family as the rose.

In a word, if we like to look at things from the modern scientist's point of view, plants are our fellow-creatures; most of them engaged in doing what they take to be the best for themselves, some few giving up their own enjoyments for the good of the common weal. Everything depends on your point of view. These are the facts, explain them as you will. The sundew does catch flies; is it as much a conscious agent as a spider? The sipo does kill out any tree it can get hold of; is it (as its name implies) a remorseless butcher? In Mrs. Gatty's Parables from Nature the trees are made to talk. Grant Allen's trees, and Darwin's, and Wallace's, and Dr. Taylor's, do not go quite so far as that, but they act, and very decidedly too. Are we to believe that they mean what they do, and have reasons of their own for so acting apart from any law impressed on them from outside? Some scientists delight in talking of insects as automata, as a first step towards proclaiming that human beings also have no control over their actions, no free will, but are forced to move along certain grooves. To talk of plants as exercising will and choice (though the will always moves in a certain direction) is just the opposite way of looking at things. Which is the right way? We had better boldly say, we do not yet know. Anyhow, the facts are there, and the study of them has changed botany from the driest and dullest into the most interesting and suggestive of the natural sciences.

A CHAPTER OF BLUNDERS.

PASS, Certificate, and Competitive Examinations are, no doubt, all sufficiently serious affairs to examinees, and

sufficiently trying ones to examiners. To the outer public, however, to those "who have no son or brother there," such "exams." are, as a rule, nothing if not a source of amusement. The "results" aimed at in examinations are, for the most part, admirable; but in the course of the processes, in the answering of examination questions, the unexpected constantly happens, and it is the unlooked-for results, the "surprises" of the occasions, that make sport for the Philistines. The situation on this head is easily explicable. It is a natural result of the modern system of preparation for examination—the cram system. Examinees bent only on "getting through" will answer questions on the hit-or-miss principle, while others, whose brains have become more or less addled under the pressure of "memory work," will evolve from their unbalanced inner consciousness replies fearfully and wonderfully made.

Some of the "exam." stories current in educational circles, though characteristic, and possibly "founded on fact," have an air of belonging to the too-good-to-be-true category. A number of these are told against—and, if invented, were probably invented by—undergraduates. Thus—so the story goes—an undergraduate was asked to name the minor prophets, and, not having "got them up," neatly and politely replied that he would rather not make invidious distinctions. Another University man, called upon to give the parable of the Good Samaritan, did so correctly enough until he came to the passage where the Samaritan said to the innkeeper: "When I come again I will repay thee," to which he added, "This he said, knowing that he would see his face no more." Perhaps, however, the examinee upon this occasion was a conscious humourist, and had in mind the worldly-wise saying, that there are a great many people willing to play the part of the Good Samaritan, less the oil and the twopence.

Something of the same stamp must have been the candidate for a degree, who, asked to state the substance of St. Paul's sermon at Athens, said that it was "crying out for two hours, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.'" With variations, that is the substance of a great many sermons, and of other discourses beside sermons.

Such stories as the above may or may not be rather broadly illustrative than strictly true, but in any case they can be pretty well matched by others, about the

truthfulness of which there is no doubt. Every year a certain proportion of the children of the London board-schools enter into a competitive examination in Scriptural knowledge, for the "Peek Prizes," which consist of handsomely got-up Bibles and Testaments. They are "paper work" examinations, and the following are a few of the many curious "hash" answers that have at various times been put in at them.

"Abraham was the father of Lot, and ad tew wives. One was called Hishmale and tother Haggar, he kept wun at home, and he turned tother into the desert where she became a pillow of salt in the day time, and a pillow of fire by night."

"Joseph wore a koat of many garments. He were chief butler to Faro and told is dreams. He married Potiffers dortor, and he led the Gypshans out of bondage to Kana in Gallilee, and there fell on his sword and died in sight of the promised land."

"Moses was an Egypshion. He lived in a hark made of bulrushes, and he kept a golden calf and worshipt brazen snakes, and he het nothing but kwales and manner for forty year. He was kort by the air of his ed while riding under the bow of a tree and he was killed by his son Absolon as he was hangin from the bow. His end was pease."

Of the numerous stories told in connection with diocesan inspection "exams." in public elementary schools, the two following are perhaps the best known and most worth quoting. At one of these exams, a boy, asked to mention the occasion upon which it is recorded in Scripture than an animal spoke, made answer: "The whale when it swallowed Jonah." The Inspector being something of a humourist, maintained his gravity and asked: "What did the whale say?" To which the boy promptly replied: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Another Inspector, finding a class hesitating over answering the question, "With what weapon did Samson slay the Philistines?" and wishing to prompt them, significantly tapped his own cheek, and asked, "What is this?" and his action touching "the chords of memory," the whole class instantly answered: "The jawbone of an ass."

A good example of the manner in which students who are "in" for several "subjects" at the same time get their ideas mixed, is that of the youth who having to answer the question, "Who was Esau?" replied: "Esau was a man who wrote

fables, and sold the copyright for a bottle of potash." Here the confusion thrice confounded of Esau and Æsop, birthright and copyright, and pottage and potash, is really admirable in its way.

As might be expected, the examinations of medical students afford some good stories—true or otherwise. As might also be expected, some of them are wittily impudent. For instance, a "badgering" examiner asked a student what means he would employ to induce copious perspiration in a patient, and got for answer: "I'd make him try to pass an examination before you, sir." The most frequently cited anecdote of this kind is that of the brusque examiner—said by some to have been Dr. Abernethy—who, losing patience with a student who had answered badly, exclaimed: "Perhaps, sir, you could tell me the names of the muscles I would put in action if I were to kick you?" "Undoubtedly, sir," came the prompt reply; "you would put into motion the flexors and extensors of my arm, for I should knock you down." On the same lines as this was the retort made to M. Lefebvre de Fourcy, a French examiner, celebrated, not only for his learning, but also for his severity and rudeness. He was examining a youth, who, though well up in his work, hesitated over answering one of the questions put to him. Losing temper at this, the examiner shouted to an attendant: "Bring a truss of hay for this young gentleman's breakfast." "Bring two," coolly added the examinee. "Monsieur and I will breakfast together." Of such alleged answers by students as that the pancreas was so named after the Midland railway-station, that the bone of the upper arm (humerus) was called the humorous, and was so styled because it was known as the funny-bone; or that the ankle-bone (tarsus) was so called because St. Paul walked upon it to the city of that name—of such alleged answers as these it is charitable to suppose that they must be weak inventions of the enemy.

Many of the comicalities in the way of examination answers recorded by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, the Examiners in the School Board Scholarships competitions, and other the like official personages, go a long way to prove that in examination blundering, as in many other matters, truth is sometimes stranger than fiction. At least, it seems to us that no invented story—supposing examination stories ever are invented—could equal for

"nice derangement" the following written answer which was actually given at an examination in the "specific subjects" in a public elementary school within the metropolitan area. The specific subject taken was physiology, and the children "presented" in it were asked to "describe the processes of digestion," which one of them did in this wise: "Food is digested by the action of the lungs. Digestion is brought on by the lungs having something the matter with them. The food then passes through your windpipe to the pores, and thus passes off your body by evaporation, through a lot of little holes in your skin called capillaries. The food is nourished in the stomach. If you were to eat anything hard you would not be able to digest it, and the consequence would be you would have indigestion. The gall-bladder throws off juice from the food which passes through it. We call the kidneys the bread-basket, because it is where all the bread goes to. They lay up concealed by the heart."

Domestic economy, as nowadays taught to "children of the elementary school class," embraces a good deal of physiological knowledge, or rather, as applied to such children, physiological jargon. It is a subject which affords hosts of amusing answers, though, from considerations of space, two or three must here suffice for specimens. Thus, in reply to the question, "Why do we cook our food?" one fifth-standard girl gives the delightfully inconsequent reply: "Their of five ways of cooking potatoes. We should die if we eat our food roar." Another girl writes: "The function of food is to do its proper work in the body. Its proper work is to well masticate the food, and it goes through without dropping, instead of being pushed down by the skin." A third domestic economy pupil puts in her examination-paper that "Food digested is when we put it into our mouths, our teeth chews it, and our tongue roll it down into our body. . . . We should not eat so much bone-making foods as flesh-forming and warmth-giving foods, for if we did we would have too many bones, and that would make us look funny." On the subject of ventilation, one student informs us that a room should be kept at ninety in the winter by a fire; in the summer by a thermometer; while a classmate writes: "A Thermometer is an instrument used to let out the heat when it is going to be cold." Another girl sets down: "When

roasting a piece of beef place it in front of a brisk fire, so as to congratulate the outside." But an answer—still in domestic economy—that better, perhaps, than any of the above illustrates the jargonizing that comes of the cram system, is the following: "Sugar is an amyloid, if you was to eat much sugar and not nothing else you would not live because sugar has not got no carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen. Potatoes is another amyloida."

The definitions sometimes given by children in reply to examination questioning, are, to say the least of it, original. After a reading of Gray's *Elegy* by a fourth-standard class, the boys were asked what was meant by "fretted vaults," and one youth replied: "The vaults in which those poor people were buried; their friends came and fretted over them." Asked what he understood by "elegy," another boy, in the same class, answered: "Elegy is some poetry wrote out for schools to learn, like Gray's *Elegy*." A class of girls, who had read a passage from *Evangeline*, were told to write out the meaning of "the forge," and these were among the answers: "A firnest in a blacksmith's chop." "A firnest in a blacksmith." "The village smithy's anvil." "The dust that rises from the floor of a blacksmith's." A teacher, giving a reading-lesson to his class in the presence of an Inspector, asked the boys what was meant by conscience—a word that had occurred in the course of the reading. The class having been duly crammed for the question, answered as one boy: "An inward monitor." "But what do you understand by an inward monitor?" put in the Inspector. To this further question only one boy announced himself ready to respond, and his triumphantly-given answer was, "A hironclad, sir."

A few years back there was published, as a curiosity in its way, the subjoined transcript from Cowper's poem on Alexander Selkirk, written (from dictation) by a fifth-standard boy at a Government examination of a public elementary school. "I Ham Monac of hall I searve, there is none here my rite to Dispute from the senter. Hall round to the sea I am lorde of the fowls to the Brute all shoshitude ware are the charms that sages have sene in thy face better Dewel in miste of a larms than in this moste horibel place. I am how of umity reach i must finish my Jurny a lone never hear the swete music of speach i start at the sound of my hone

the Beasts that rome over the place my forme with indrifice see they are so unocent with men such tamess is shocking to me."

The Examiner for the School Board Scholarships competed for in 1882, gives the following among other equally strange answers on historical matters. "When Commonwealth comes to the throne it is called Oliver Cromwell." "The treaty of Utrecht was fought between the Zulus and the English." "Lord Clive captured the Fiji Islands in 1624." "Cardinal Wolsey was a great warrior." "Walpole translated the Bible." "Walpole was another favourite of Henry the Eighth. He was the chief man in helping Henry to get a divorce." "Chaucer wrote *Æsop's fables*." In another of these scholarship examinations, Jack Cade was described as "a great Indian conquerer," Sir Christopher Wren was set down as "a discoverer" and "an animal painter," and Mr. Gladstone as "a great African traveller." The battle of Crecy was stated to have been fought in the reign of George the Third, between the Britons and Romans, and "The Wide, Wide World" was named as Shakespeare's greatest work. This last, however, was not so bad as the history of a pupil-teacher, who informed the examiner that "Shakespeare lived in the reign of George the Third, discovered America, and was killed by Caliban."

A schoolboy habit of placing upon a question some literal meaning other than that intended by the examiner, often leads to answers as curious as unexpected. Thus an Inspector, testing a class upon their knowledge of the succession of the kings of Israel, asked the boy to whose turn it had come to be questioned: "And who came after Solomon?" To which the youngest answered: "The Queen of Sheba, sir." Asked what were the chief ends of man, another boy replied, "His head and feet;" and a third, questioned as to where Jacob was going when he was ten years old, replied that he was "going on for eleven." One specially unimaginative juvenile, called upon to say for what the Red Sea was famous, answered, "Red herrings!" but, perhaps, the most startling answer of this kind was that of the boy, who, when asked what was meant by an unclean spirit, responded: "A dirty devil, sir."

To the type of answers here in view, belongs that of the little girl, daughter of a watchmaker, who, having repeated

that she "renounced the devil and all his works," and being asked, "What do you understand by all his works?" answered: "His inside." Something akin to this was an answer given by a boy whose father was a strong teetotaler, and upon whom it would appear home influence had made a stronger impression than school lessons. "Do you know the meaning of syntax?" he was asked. "Yes," he answered; "sin-tax is the dooty upon spirits." An Inspector, who had been explaining to a class that the land of the world was not continuous, said to the boy who happened to be standing nearest to him: "Now, could your father walk round the world?" "No, sir," was promptly answered. "Why not?" "Because he's dead," was the altogether unlooked-for response. As little anticipated, probably, was the answer made to another Inspector, who asked, "What is a hovel?" and was met with the reply: "What you live in."

Another peculiarity of the schoolboy-mind is to put things negatively. As for example, a fifth-standard boy was asked to write a short essay on pins by way of an exercise in composition, and produced the following: "Pins are very useful. They have saved the lives of a great many men, women, and children—in fact, whole families." "How so?" asked the puzzled Inspector, on reading this. "Why, by not swallowing them," was the immediate reply. On the same lines was the essay of another schoolboy, on the subject of salt, which he described as: "The stuff that make potatoes taste bad, when you don't put any on." A prettily humorous examination story is that of the little Scotch boy at the Presbytery examination. He was asked: "What is the meaning of regeneration?" "To be born again," he answered. "Quite right! Would you not like to be born again?" He hesitated, but being pressed, said that he would not, and asked why not, replied: "For fear I might be born a lassie." Alike astonishing and amusing was an answer given by an adult-examinee, who was "sitting" for a certificate as acting-teacher. In the examination to test general knowledge, he was asked, "What is the Age of Reason?" and answered: "As many years as have elapsed since the birth of the person so named." It was also a certificate candidate who, in reading, rendered two lines from Goldsmith's *Edwin and Angelina*, thus:

The wicket opening with a latch
Received the armless pair.

GERALD.

BY ELIZABETH C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXXIX. BOB.

GERALD and Theo agreed that the friend Bob Stirling's proceedings were more colonial than anything they had seen since they left the colonies. If it had been any one but Bob, Gerald would certainly have been angry with him. To come in one's house the wrong way, storm one's garden, steal one's roses, almost make love to one's sister in the first half-hour of the acquaintance—these free and easy ways would have been rather hard to bear, Bob had not been himself; but he was one of those happy fellows who may steal what they choose, while other men may not look over the hedge.

Bob's frank devotion to Ada was apparent from the very first moment; he had instantly lost his heart to the little rose maiden, with her gold-brown hair and laughing eyes. As for Ada, all the little plaintive sadness had vanished from her manner since Bob arrived. Suddenly, unexpectedly, appearing out of space on the green hill above the garden, without any mention of trains, or sound of wheels, or sight of luggage, Ada's fairy prince had come as such a person ought. He and Ada were both quite capable of feeling the romance of it all; it was a small extent of satisfaction that their first meeting might have happened in a story-book.

Theo and Gerald had welcomed Bob with the warmest friendliness. That evening they talked for a long time about Africa, and it seemed to Ada, who was listening, that Theo liked talking about it; she asked with interest for so many people, and looked with a sort of eagerness at a *Diamond Fields* newspaper which Bob gave her. Ada came and looked over her shoulder, but could see nothing but strings of odd advertisements, a great deal about the sale of "claims," which she did not understand, and accounts of various fights and rows, and consequent law-cases.

"What a horrid place it must have been," she said in a low voice.

"Yes, a horrid place," said Mr. Stirling. "I never wish to see it again. And yet do you feel that, Gerald?"

"No, I hate it," Gerald said.

"I know what you mean," said Theo, lifting her eyes from the paper, and looking at Bob. "And yet—Africa is splendid. The life has gone out of life since we came home to England."

Gerald looked at her a little gloomily.

"Oh, Theo!" Ada whispered in her ear.

"I didn't mean to go nearly so far as that, you know," Bob said, in a sort of apology. "No, I always liked England best, and this time I like it better than ever, and I don't mean to go away again. But there is something—there's the endless feeling, and the colour—Mrs. Fane, of course, feels all that more intensely than we do."

"Yes; and it was all very well at first," said Gerald. "You wouldn't like to go back again, Theo?"

"Yes, I should," said Theo dreamily.

There was a little pause. Her words seemed strange to them all; none of them quite understood her; to Gerald and Ada she gave a slight chilling pain, and Bob was surprised; but no one could ask her why, or what she meant. In the silence Bob looked at Ada, and she met his eyes for a moment, and then looked rather shyly away. Then Bob began to talk again, and the shadow passed.

That night, as the two old friends were smoking together, Bob told Gerald all about his affairs: how he had wound up everything at Kimberley, selling his interest in the claim to Slater and Cumming, who were not yet satisfied with their gains, and were working on there still.

"I've got about two thousand a year," said Bob. "And to tell you the truth, I feel thoroughly unsettled. For the last two or three weeks, you know, I have been at home, going with my mother and the girls to tennis-parties. I met a great many people I used to know, but nobody knew me again, and when they found me out, they gave me to understand that I was awfully gone off. And the girls are always being surprised at everything I say and do; they are very well set up themselves, with a nice little lot of ideas and opinions on every subject. They play tennis rather well, and read novels, except Mary, who goes in for science, and free thought, and the church of the future, and a few more subjects which make a young woman horrid to talk to. I do hate educated women. But I am almost more afraid of the very orthodox fashionable sort, who know nothing, and are contemptuous."

"Don't be rude to your sisters; they used to be very pretty, at any rate," said Gerald.

"They will never marry," said Bob with decision. "I see it; they're getting stereo-

typed. But I have not told you the worst thing of all. My mother wants me to marry one of their greatest friends. She is rather good-looking, and rather clever, and she knows exactly what is right on all subjects. She has no money, and no relations to matter much. What were you going to say?" asked Bob a little nervously.

"I didn't know you had any idea of marrying. Well, you are wise to have waited till now."

"I hadn't much idea of it. I came away here to escape—because, you know, it becomes rather dangerous, when your mother and five sisters have made up their minds about a thing."

"Poor chap! I should think so," said Gerald kindly.

"Till to-day," said Bob, stroking his beard, and looking thoughtful, "I had never seen anybody I admired as much as Mrs. Fane."

"Thank you," said Gerald.

"But, of course—well, I don't know whether you will be surprised—I have at last seen the girl I want to marry. She—I say, your sister is more perfectly lovely——"

Bob broke down and laughed; then he went on more reasonably:

"I hope you will tell me if there is anything that makes it useless to think of it. If so, I'll go away to-morrow."

Gerald did not at once reply. Bob looked at him nervously; it now occurred to him for the first time that there might be some obstacle; of course, after all, was it quite likely that Ada Fane in her loveliness would have waited for him! For a minute Gerald sat looking on the floor; then he remembered his friend's anxiety, and said with rather a puzzled smile:

"I'm very much obliged to you, Bob."

"Well, then, it's all right, isn't it?" said Bob eagerly.

"There is nothing that would make me more glad for Ada," said Gerald; "but——"

He stopped, evidently embarrassed.

"You think she won't?" said Bob. "You think there is somebody else in the way?"

"No, I don't."

"Then what do you mean?"

They were sitting in the study, the small old room, with its long window and low walls. Ada's picture did not hang there now, for Theo had put it in her own room; but as Gerald listened to his friend's

talk, certain scenes in his own life, in that room, one of them connected with Ada, came back to him very vividly. He could see Clarence walking up and down, could hear him saying that Ada should marry Warren when she was seventeen. And then the temptation of the next day, and Theo at the gate, his angel, turning him back. And then those other moments with Clarence, when his brother had so calmly told the story of his own disgrace, which, to Gerald's feeling then, banished him from England, and Theo, and all his hopes for ever. And even now, the shadow of that disgrace seemed often to fall upon him; in spite of all Theo's love, and trust, and pride, he felt himself still involved in Clarence's shame. Ada knew nothing of it; he hoped she never would; but he could not let his friend marry Ada in ignorance of it. Bob saw that there was some struggle going on in Gerald's mind. He was very fond of Gerald, whose morbid fits grieved him, without making him at all angry, for he was a patient, good-tempered man.

"There is something wrong, old fellow; what is it?" he said, after waiting for a few minutes silently.

"I am glad you spoke to me first," said Gerald, "because I must have told you this, anyhow, and it may make a great difference. You may wish to withdraw what you have said, and I shall not have any right to be surprised."

"You would be surprised, however, wouldn't you?" said Bob. "I can't imagine anything—"

"Stop. Don't commit yourself any further," said Gerald, smiling a little. "I have got a horrid story to tell you."

Bob stared at him in astonishment.

"Is it necessary that I should be harrowed like this?" he enquired.

"Yes; if you mean what you have said about my sister, it is necessary," said Gerald; and sitting in the same attitude, with his eyes bent on the floor, he told Bob what Clarence had done.

"And so, after I heard it," he ended his story, "I gave her up and went out to Africa; but she wouldn't—unhappily for her—and I asked her to come, and she came, and the rest of it you know."

"I know that you are a lucky fellow," said Bob, "for you have two of the most charming women in England for your wife and your sister, and in their different ways the most beautiful too. But you are discontented still—and you have a friend,

but you won't trust him; you rake up a painful old story to tell him, and think that he will shake off the dust from his feet and disappear, because you have a half-brother in South America who has not always been as good as the rest of his family. Look here, Gerald, you will have to give your sister to me, because I shall take better care of her than you will."

"Thank you, Bob," said Gerald quietly.

Theo had a great deal to do the next day in comforting Ada, who came to her whenever she could escape from Bob, to ask whether she was perfectly shocked; whether they had behaved too badly ever to be forgiven; if such extraordinary haste had ever been heard of before? To meet a man for the first time one evening at sunset, to be followed down into the garden early the next morning, before breakfast, when she had stolen away quite quietly to think things over and gather a rose, to return from the garden in half an hour's time, having promised to marry that man! Was it wonderful that Ada quite declined to face her brother and sister, and, instead of coming in to breakfast, fled back to her own room. Theo went to her there, Mr. Stirling having confessed his crime, and found the child crying; but she was soon comforted, and whispered to Theo that it was dreadful to be so happy.

That evening Theo was very tired. Gerald pulled her sofa forward to the drawing-room window, close to all the flowers in the balcony, and the stars began to shine in the quiet evening sky. Somewhere away in the garden the two happy lovers were wandering; and these two old married people had been talking about them, as they sat together in the window.

"Bob is so boyish; they are like happy children," said Theo.

"Things are very differently arranged for different people," Gerald said, looking at her. "Isn't it unfair! Here's Bob—no anxieties, no doubts, no fears, no suspense—when I look at him, and think what I had to go through, Theo, I pity myself—don't you?"

"Foolish boy!" said Theo. "You and I could not have been like that. We had to have patience, and to find each other out."

"I didn't want to find you out. I knew all about you on Helen's wedding-day."

"Did you?" said Theo. "But, Gerald, this engagement would be a frightful risk for almost anybody. It is only because these two are so transparent and childish

and nice, without any dark depths, my dear, like you and me. Of course one sees they will be perfectly happy together."

"There's something that comes over me sometimes," said Gerald, after a long pause. "I feel as if I had spoilt your life, Theo. Since you married me you have had nothing but trouble and sorrow. When I look at them it makes me think of it—because I know Bob will never have to say that to Ada."

Theo did not contradict him. He was sitting beside her on the low window-seat, holding her hand, and she was looking out past the flowers, into the soft depths of sky.

"I know you feel that," she said presently, drawing him nearer; "but, my darling, you ought to trust me more. We should never have belonged to each other so perfectly as we do, without our sorrow. I have looked at them to-day, and thought I would rather have my sorrow than all their happiness, present and future too. Do you believe me, Gerald?"

CHAPTER XL AND LAST. THE OLD FAIRY.

"YES, very true; it was all my doing, all my fault; I quite acknowledge that," said Lady Redcliff.

Hugh North did not exactly know what he had said to bring out this acknowledgment; Lady Redcliff was, perhaps, answering her own thoughts, rather than his. Of course they had been talking of Theo, their one subject in common.

"But I never pretended, you know, to be a good grandmother," Lady Redcliff went on, almost angrily. "I never understood young people—I hate them, especially girls. Theo, of course, was an exception, but then she was different from ordinary girls."

"I should think so," said Hugh in a low voice. "I always thought there was something so—so perfectly fine about her."

"Ah!" Lady Redcliff gave a sort of sigh. "I know what you mean. And poor Gerald—I thought he had it too, when I saw him first; I fell very much in love with him. But there always was a strain of weakness in the Fanes. Well, I suppose they are as happy as other people, so far. Theo will get tired of him by-and-by, but I dare say she will be too generous to let him see it."

Hugh was silent; it did not give him any particular satisfaction to think that Theo would presently be tired of her

husband. However, he did not believe it was likely.

"If the child had lived, it might have been a different thing," said Lady Redcliff. "Then Theo would have had something to look forward to. The death of that child broke her heart; she told me as much, after she came home, and I saw it in her face. But now—Gerald will get lazy and selfish, and lose his good looks, and she, of course, lost hers in that abominable climate—and, in fact, poor things, I see nothing but deadly dullness before them. Well, I did my best to prevent it, with just the contrary effect. It was my interference that sent Theo out to Africa."

"It is very difficult to guess the result of what one does," said Hugh thoughtfully. "I left them very cheerful yesterday," he went on, looking up. "All the preparations for Miss Fane's wedding seemed to amuse Theo, rather."

"A pack of fools!" said Lady Redcliff. "Did you see the digger? What is he like? Does he go about in his shirt-sleeves, and wear a hat in the house?"

"No, he is quite civilised; a nice sort of fellow, rather talkative," said Hugh. "I knew him out there, you know. He is a very good specimen of a digger."

"That is not saying much, I suspect. You are very good-natured and charitable, Captain North. Were you always like that, or has your temper improved lately?"

"I believe it has," said Hugh. "I have been cultivating indifference, as a good preparation for India."

"Why on earth are you going to India?" asked Lady Redcliff.

"The regiment is ordered there, and I don't want to leave the army."

Lady Redcliff remained silent for a minute or two, watching him with her sharp black eyes. Hugh had altered very much in the last two years; he had no longer the air of calm self-satisfaction which used to enrage her. He looked like a man who had gone through a storm of trouble; his face was thin, his eyes were hollow and grave, and he stooped a little as he sat.

"Will India agree with you?" said Lady Redcliff suddenly.

"No, I believe not; the doctors say it won't," he answered, smiling.

"Then how foolish to go!"

"I don't care much, you see. My life is of no value to anybody."

This was a very desperate speech for Hugh, and he, perhaps, felt a little

ashamed of it, for he got up and came towards Lady Redcliff, holding out his hand.

She took no notice of this, however.

"You have made your will, I suppose, and left everything to Theo," she said.

Hugh lifted his eyebrows, and smiled.

"Has my lawyer been confiding in you, Lady Redcliff?" he said. "Yes; I did that before I went out to Africa."

"Poor man—good man!" said Lady Redcliff, looking at him with a smile, and almost a sort of dimness over her eyes. "I am sorry I used to hate you—but to a wicked old woman like me, you are rather hard to understand. Why didn't you ask Theo to marry you years ago—ages ago, before Gerald Fane was seen or dreamt of?"

"Because I did not know, then, how much I loved her," said Hugh very quietly. "But it would have been no use, even then. She would never have cared for me."

"She might have married you, though, before she knew what it was to be in love," said Lady Redcliff with a small laugh. "I should have raged, but that would have been very much in your favour, as she always opposed me."

Hugh stood looking out of the window for a moment.

"I think it is best as it is," he said.

"I think that would have been worse than this, do you know?"

"Oh, really, do you!" said Lady Redcliff with a sneer.

Her good moments were only moments, and she had not had many of them in her life. Suddenly her pity and liking for Hugh seemed to have passed away; he was, as she said, beyond her understanding. She wished him good-bye coldly enough, and let him go, and walked up and down her room for an hour afterwards, like a little caged tiger.

A few days after Hugh had sailed, Bob Stirling and Ada Fane were married in the little church at Deerpark, which was all decorated with roses for the occasion. It was very different from Linwood Church, with its great chancel and stately windows, where Helen Fraser was married to John Goodall, and where Gerald Fane and Theo Meynell had first seen each other. It was an odd contrast, too, to St. George's Cathedral at Cape Town. Theo stood dreaming, as she looked at Ada, perhaps the loveliest and happiest bride of all. She thought of these things, and then she thought of the

lonely place where she had left her baby with those great plains outstretching to the mountains, and the low marble cross with his name, the one memorial a Kimberley of their sad months there.

And then Theo lifted her eyes, and waked from her dream once more to find Gerald looking at her, and smiled in answer to the look he gave her, remembering that after all she was happy.

THE BLACK ART.

THE recent hunger for instantaneous photographs has almost succumbed to the undermining influences of an irresistible coalition of public indifference and self-exhaustion. The Derby, the Boat Race and the Great Western Express have still their (photographic) admirers, who perpetuate the handiwork of their ambitious year after year, in the windows of hole-and-corner print-sellers' shops, etc.; but, a obtaining amongst the crowd whose special-art-leanings culminate in the products of the camera, the desire for speed is sensibly diminishing in favour of quality.

Muybridge, the Californian enthusiast with his marvellous but fantastic illustrations of what the camera, in the smallest attainable atom of time, reveals the motion of men and other animals to be, succeeded in casting completely into the shade the achievements of those whose vocabularies have long been prodigal of "fifths" and "tenths" of seconds, and even lesser—o greater—fractional innovations. Few people, beyond the meagre circle of experts, could—or, indeed, can—tell an instantaneous picture from one that has received half a minute's exposure. Want of thought, and ignorance of primary essentials and conditions, cloak their perception, and, as a result, they are a long time discovering any difference between haystack and a steamboat, as subjects for the camera. Then, again, it takes somebody of practical acumen to appreciate instantaneousity. The cardinal fault of all quick pictures is lack of life. An instantaneous photograph of a busy group of people is suggestive of nothing so much as the representation of some bit of a "dead city." The late demonstration in Hyde Park furnishes a cogent case in point. The crowd was operated upon by a friend of ours, who fell into rhapsodies over the amount of vigour, detail, and sharpness of the resulting negatives. The

prints were the gloomiest of studies—full, it is true, of people, but all looking as immovable and stony, as dull and apathetic, as the Alexandrian obelisk. The public can never accurately grasp the precise point of instantaneous photographs. With it, newspaper illustrations are infinitely more popular. They are, it may be, deficient in that faultless detail and irreproachable fidelity which the camera alone can give, but they possess what the latter never yet has succeeded in catching—viz., animation, and the “naturalistic.”

What is an instantaneous photograph? is a question that has been propounded more than once. It is commonly supposed that so long as the picture of a moving body does not show signs of that movement, an instantaneous photograph has been secured. The essence, but not the totality of the proposition, will pass muster; for Muybridge claimed to have obtained his galloping horses in one five-thousandth part of a second; and a yacht in full sail was recently exhibited that had received an exposure of one second, whilst a misty crowd of race-horses, an indefinable flock of rooks, and a stretch of mournful surge were also shown, the exposures of which ranged from one-fiftieth to one five-hundredth of a unit of time. It will be seen, then, that the term instantaneous is a very elastic one.

Broadly, photography is little more than forty years old; and it is only within the past decade or so that it has attained to even the apparition of artistic excellence. But the old photographic order has indeed changed, and given place to a more exalted new one. It was not until very recent days that a passable pose and judicious lighting could be obtained; as to the accuracy of this charge, the best evidence we can produce, viz., old portraits of the Royal Family, gives eloquent testimony. After the Franco-German War, however, the invasion of a crowd of continental artists altered all this, and in consequence we have, up and down the country, innumerable studios where one can rely on a picture that shall possess, at least, visible indications of taste and discrimination on the part of its executors. Most of the operators in the principal London studios are either French or Italian, commanding handsome salaries. One of the largest and best known firms pays an “artist” seven hundred pounds a year for simply posing sitters, and flanks it with an annual continental vacation of some weeks,

in order that he may study new poses and ideas.

With the advent of the dry plate, some seven or eight years ago, the palmy days of professional photography may be considered to have received a permanent shock; coincidentally, an impetus was given to the amateur contingent, the momentum of which is still apparent. The operations of the dark room—formerly a highly unclean and disagreeable martyrdom—are now rendered ridiculously easy and not unpleasant. The silver and collodion baths received their dismissal from the majority of studios, although they are not, we fear, wholly extinct yet, being doubtless tenderly cherished by a few black-stocked old fogies. As implied in the now universal appellation, the sensitive plates are quite “dry,” looking when seen in the daylight, like glass coated with a creamy substance. When exposed it is not necessary that they should be developed at once, experience proving that the exposed plate, if kept perfectly safe against light, etc., may be developed two, three, or even four years afterwards with absolutely no loss of image. As a result of this extreme simplification of the process, far less money is made by professional photographers than formerly. Some twenty years since, a certain firm located in Baker Street, in the enjoyment of august patronage, counted their sitters by hundreds daily, at fees which would be considered magnificent even to-day. The two partners amassed an immense fortune in an incredibly short time. The business was subsequently removed to a suburb, where the surviving partner recently died worth—nothing. He had set his face against the new-fangled dry plates, and paid the penalty of prejudice.

Amateur photographers may be met with in every grade of society, for, given an eye for the beautiful, as distinguished from the absolutely prosy, the remaining operations necessary to the production of a picture are simply mechanical—requiring, of course, as all mechanical operations do, some little care and forethought in their application. The cost of a complete set of apparatus ranges from two to twenty pounds; all superfluous weight is carefully avoided, and this, with the additional advantage accruing to the dry plate in that immediate development after exposure is not needful, has helped to raise up a whole army of amateur photographers. The butterman knows as much about focussing as the baronet,

and a retired marine store dealer discusses "wide-angle lenses" and "over-exposures" with the same confidence and authority as a marquis. It is imagined that the professional is profoundly jealous of the amateur. No such thing. Again, he does not even attribute the increasing depression of his receipts to the indirect influence of the amateur. He neither fears nor anathematizes him. He is his very good friend, for the amateur as a rule has neither prowess nor patience, and the exceptions (lamentably few) soon lose what little power they acquire in a melancholy maze of scientific chemistry and abstruse optica. So the professional, in return for the amateur's condescension in fraternising with him at society discussions, encourages him to the utmost, doling him out little crumbs of information, and emphatically (but suavely) inviting him to write to the papers, which the amateur does, as the subscribers to the professional journals can testify. In a little time he draws blood with a rival artist; they quarrel, haggle, or dispute over a straw, experiment, make discoveries, and communicate them to the world. And, if these discoveries are practicable, or worth anything at all, the professional calmly adopts them with a smile of complacence, and devoutly wishes that all his amateur friends would follow his disinterested advice.

His Royal Highness of Edinburgh studied photography some years since, and the deceased Duke of Wellington was a thorough proficient. Military men and clergymen give the greatest proportion of votaries to the art-science, as some busy-body with a mania for the coinage of terms expresses it—the former profession deriving wide benefits from photographs, whilst the latter's efforts are obviously useful at bazaars and so on. The wife of one of our youngest bishops turns out presentable prints. The extent, indeed, to which photography is indulged in as a pastime by the members of the liberal professions is quite beyond the conception of the outside world. The bench, the bar, both Houses of the Legislature, literature, and the drama, all have their photographic amateurs—more or less capable workers. The latter, as will have been already inferred, outweigh the former in a proportion too great for the barbarity of comparison, the truth being that not one in a hundred has the requisite stock of patience (a large one) before anything creditable can be arrived at. Of the two, a retired buttermaker and

a Queen's counsel, the first-named would succeed as an amateur photographer before the second, because he can afford more time for it; and time, after all, is the most important factor in many things.

"EDELWEISS."

A STORY.

INTRODUCTION. "THE DREAM."

THE great mountains reared themselves in an imposing mass nearly six thousand feet above the blue waters of the Vierwaldstätter Sea. Snow still crowned their mighty brows, though base and sides were clothed in leafage, and beautiful with curtaining boughs, and fronds of young green ferns, and new up-springing grasses. The last warm sunrays lingered on the heights, and lit up the blueness of the sky and the crests of the different altitudes. But in the valley below the soft dusk crept along with noiseless steps, folding the pretty villages in tender arms, and hushing every sound with the spell of its own restfulness.

A man was resting half-way down the mountain side, watching, with dreamy eyes, the changing colours of the sky, and the magic of the gathering twilight.

He was a poet, and poets have strange fancies; and he had had many in his time, and had written beautiful things, and the world called him great. He had been to the topmost point of the Rigi that day, and was fatigued, and weary, and so he sat there now to rest himself, and his hand played idly with a little sprig of edelweiss he had gathered in a cleft of the mountain.

Below him was a deep gorge, its steep sides clothed with firs—a rocky, dangerous precipice spanned by a frail, little bridge. Beside this bridge had been erected a little wooden cross, and on that cross was carved a name—the name of the flower he held in his hand—"Edelweiss."

He wondered what was the story of that little cross? He was given to making stories for himself out of all sorts of odd materials, but sometimes he liked to hear a real one, and he thought there must be a real one appended to this.

"Edelweiss!" Just the name of the little Alpine flower he held in his hand. The little, hardy, simple thing that grows among the snow-heights, with nothing green or fragrant to share its solitude, unlike its sister flowers of wood and field.

"Edelweiss!" Was it the name of anyone? Had it any meaning—any history—any legend of these great cold

peaks which towered above him now with the golden sunrays for their crown ?

The twilight crept on apace, the valleys and the waters turned from dusk to dark. A faint grey mist crept up the leafy path, and clung about the pine boughs and the deep gorge into which he gazed. He watched its strange, soft, intangible beauty clinging in ghostly fashion to the outstretched arms of the trees, shrouding the precipitous descent; and as he watched he saw it part, and gliding through its filmy curtains came a slender figure—the figure of a girl with rippling golden hair that clothed her like light, and on her brow the star-like flower of the edelweiss.

She came up that steep and stony precipice with feet that scarcely seemed to touch the ground. Nearer and nearer he saw her advancing, and his curiosity deepened into wonder, and his wonder into awe, for it seemed to him that never mortal foot could tread that frightful path, or mortal form be borne along its perilous ascent with such winged speed as this.

By the little wooden cross where he was seated the figure paused. A white moon had shown itself in the sky above, and its clear light fell upon the slender girl's form, and the wealth of hair, and the deep and mournful eyes. Surprised, yet not alarmed, the poet raised himself upon his elbow, and spoke.

"Who are you?" he asked. His voice sounded muffled and far away—he felt like one in a dream.

Then it seemed as if the moonlight grew dazzling, and a flood of liquid silver poured itself over the white and cloud-like draperies, and the mantle of shining hair.

She stood by the cross, and her hand rested on it.

Her lips parted, a glow of life and colour seemed to quiver through face and form like a flame that shines behind alabaster.

"I am Edelweiss," she said sadly. "Here I had no other name. I used to think the mountains gave me birth, even as I know they gave me death."

Her eyes drooped, her curved mouth grew sorrowful. But sweeter than any music was the voice that once more raised its plaintive tones:

"I was young to die—oh yes!—but not too young to love. I can remember it all so well, and how for his life I gave my own. I think, sometimes, that will keep me in his memory, and then—some day—when we meet again, he will know me and thank

me for some years of happiness given to him at the cost of mine. He put this cross here—here where I found my death. Sometimes he will come and look at it, and remember. That is enough for me. I am only 'Edelweiss.'"

The moon was covered by a heavy cloud. The grey mists grew more dense and chill. There was a faint sigh among the pine-boughs, and the radiant figure seemed to grow indistinct.

"Stay!" called the listener. "Tell me your story, if you can. I will weave it into words and it shall live, and the world shall hear of it, and of you who were brave enough to give life for love—child as you seem."

The faint voice stole back through the misty shadows, fainter, sweeter than before.

"Love alone outlasts life; it is stronger than death, or hate, or all things that men cherish, and deify, and adore. I have no story but that. I loved, and for love's sake I perished. This cross bears my name. He who placed it here—remembers. For me, that is enough."

THE AWAKING.

THE moon looked down upon the white snows of the mountain-crests. The mists had faded like a dream. A fresh wind moved among the pine-boughs, and blew the lake-waters into lines of rippling silver.

Below all was darkness and silence in the sleeping villages of Waggis and of Vitznau, and the night air had grown chill with falling dews.

The poet roused himself and stood upright, his eyes turned wonderingly to the bridge, the ravine, and the cross.

But there was no cross there, and in his hand lay only a spray of edelweiss.

Yet it seemed to him that something more than a dream must have peopled those misty shadows, and made them thrill and quiver as with a living presence. The presence of a love faithful unto death, and, like death, silent.

He took his way down the steep, rough path, with only the moonrays to light it. His brain felt dizzy and strange. A crowd of thoughts, sorrowful, perplexed, bewildering, kept time to his restless feet, and set themselves to the rhythm of a hundred fancies.

When a man has the eye of a painter, and the soul of a poet, and loves the wild solitudes of mountain and forest, and the

music of wind and waters, and the change-ful beauty of the wide heaven, and all and everything that makes earth a wonder, and life a joy, it is no marvel if from these sights and sounds he draws the hidden music of sweet dreams, and weaves them into histories that seem to him real.

So the poet placed the edelweiss in his breast and took his way down the tourist-haunted mountain, to the little, grey, sheltered village set amidst its flowering chestnuts by the blue lake-waters.

And resting there, through the bright spring weather, and idling the hours away between the mountains and the valleys, he gave the rein to his fancy, and wove into words the following romance.

Whether it holds in it some grain of truth, matters very little now, only be assured that if you go up the Rigi by foot, and stand beside the craggy wilderness of the Schnürtobel Bridge, you will see the little wooden cross and its simple carved device, and learn its history for yourself just as accurately as the poet learnt it. But be equally assured that if you make your pilgrimage thither in a matter-of-fact, or cynical, or simply curious spirit, you will no more see the cross or gather the edelweiss than did the poet when he awoke from his dream.

CHAPTER I. THE SNOWFLOWER.

THAT was the name old Hans Krauss had given her. His Snowflower—his little white foundling, discovered by him one sunny April morning, half hidden in a nook in the mountains.

How she had come there was a mystery. It was too early in the year for tourists, and the mountains around and about Vitznau still wore their snow-coverings, though in the villages below, and on the sloping sides of those great heights, the trees were budding into leafage as the sun daily acquired more power.

On that eventful April morning, now fifteen years back, old Krauss had left his little cabin, and begun the steep ascent that leads to the Rigi-Kulm.

It was very early; grey mists still floated overhead. The birds were scarcely awake among the fluttering leaves; the bleat of a kid in the distance had an odd, little, muffled sound, and the tiny water-runnels were chasing each other down the steep ways as if in a mighty hurry to make up for the time they had lost while the Frost King had locked them into their frozen winter sleep. Over the peaks of the

Rigi, and the Jungfrau, and the Wetterhorn, the day was breaking in all its golden glory of sunrise, and old Krauss had halted for a moment as he climbed the steep ascent, and looked at the familiar scene with his glad and honest eyes, as if its beauty were still new and still wonderful.

He had lived among these scenes ever since he could remember—a child, a youth, a man—and he loved them with that steadfast, dogged love that is born of the soil and the constant association with one spot, round which cluster all the memories of life. His life had been a hard one, and often enough rough, toilsome, full of fatigues, and struggles, and difficulties, but not an unhappy life for all that. His nature was too simple, his heart too tender and honest, his temper too cheerful and gay, for any demon of discontent to find entrance.

That April day, fifteen years back, had been a sorrowful one, it is true, for he had only come up the evening before to the little cabin on the high, steep mountain sides, and for the first time for many years he had come alone. His wife had died, and he had buried her in the little churchyard at Vitznau, and, lonely and childless, he had come to his summer nook and his summer work with a great sorrow to weight his heart, and a great shadow to darken his life.

It was too early for tourists, unless chance led some restless or adventurous spirit thither, as sometimes happened, but Hans Krauss had thought he would make his way to those familiar spots on the heights where he had been used to look for edelweiss. In heart Krauss was a pure mountaineer. He loved to see the grey mists of daybreak roll away before the touch of the first sunrays; he loved to feel the breath of the cool, rich air as he climbed upwards and upwards to the summits of the great peaks; he loved, above all, that intense and breathless solitude that thrones Nature in a majesty of its own that no presence can overthrow, and no civilisation dares to desecrate.

He had the mountains all to himself. His compatriots had not troubled to come here yet, and he plodded on—on through the beautiful rosy daybreak, and amidst the breath and sounds of spring, feeling his heart grow lighter at every step, though he could have given no reason for the feeling.

Perhaps if he could, the sensation would

have lost its grace and beauty. Self-analysis is the outcome of an over-refined and morbid civilisation. It dissects every feeling and emotion with merciless precision ; it peers and pries into the delicate mechanism of the mind ; it puts the heavy brake of persistent explanation on the more subtle flights of intelligence, and, cumbered and weighted and oppressed in this fashion, the spirit vainly tries to soar into the purer ether of fancy and feeling.

Hans Krauss was only a simple peasant with few needs and fewer ambitions. Sun-light, beauty, the sense of strength and freedom—these were in themselves blessings he could appreciate and value ; he did not trouble to explain why.

It was chill up on those mountain heights in the early morning, even though the sun was momentarily gathering power and the snows were melting fast. Here and there were little nooks softly carpeted with mossy grass, or bright with peeping flower-bells, but he saw no edelweiss ; and he went on farther and higher, until quite suddenly he stopped and stared like one in amaze, for there, in a nook where the snows had melted, and wrapped warmly and closely in a rough goatskin cloak such as shepherds wear, lay a little child some few months old. It was sound asleep. The little downy head, and rose-like cheeks, and dimpled hands were peeping out of its rough coverlet, and Hans Krauss stood and stared as if he could not at all reconcile the fact of its presence to his startled senses.

Having at last satisfied himself that it was a living creature, he bent down and tenderly raised the little bundle. The child slept placidly on. He forgot all about the edelweiss and his intention of spending the day on the mountains. He made his way back to his little cabin, and the child never woke till he reached it. When she looked up at last and the blue eyes smiled at him, a strange emotion rushed through his honest breast. He had so mourned his loneliness, and surely the saints must have sent this companion as a consolation ! Otherwise, how could she have come to that mountain nook and lain there safe and unharmed ? He kept the child there, and in company with the kid she shared the milk of his solitary goat, and thrived and grew and became the joy and delight of his eyes. She was always with him, and her helplessness and beauty and sweetness made her dearer day by day.

The spring advanced, and the summer brought autumn tourists and travellers to the mountains, and the little steamers from Luzern plied merrily over the blue lake-waters, and it seemed to Hans Krauss as if never had he been so fortunate or strangers so generous, and he attributed such unusual luck to the presence of his little foundling.

His neighbours and friends laughed at him and wondered at him, and speculation was rife as to the child's parentage and inexplicable appearance among them ; but Hans troubled himself no whit about what they said. The angels must have sent her—that was his opinion, and to that he kept.

He named her Edelweiss, and when the old priest at Vitznau rebuked it as heathenish, and gave her baptism and a saint's name sacred to the day of her discovery, he accepted it all without a murmur, but never changed his own appellation.

So time passed on, and years brought changes in their train, and the child grew and flourished in that pure, beautiful air, and now was tall and slender as a young fir-tree, and had a face beautiful as the morning, and was the very core and centre of all delight to old Hans Krauss, whom she believed to be her father, and always called so.

The winter months were always spent at Vitznau. Hans Krauss used to do wood-carving or any odd jobs that were thrown in his way, and the child went to the village school, and learnt to read and sew, and spin and knit, and was altogether so quick, and so pretty, and so industrious, that again and again her foster-father thanked the saints for sending him such a treasure.

But Edelweiss loved best that time of the year when the snows melted and the noons grew warm and bright, and she and Hans Krauss took their way to the little cabin perched high up in a sheltered nook of the mountain, there to stay till the days grew chill and the autumn tourists had gone, and the scanty harvest that could be gleaned from them had been gathered in. Sometimes ladies would come and sit at the cabin to chat and rest themselves, or drink a glass of goat's milk, or bargain for a chair to carry them to the highest points, where they might watch the sunset ; and they were always generous to the pretty child, and many a mark or thaler would be put into the little brown hand as payment for the

milk, or the wild flowers, or the edelweiss that she sold them.

But this was in her childish days, and before the advent of that triumph of engineering skill, the Rigi Railway, or the building of that monster hotel which brought hundreds where once scores had only come.

Both these innovations had been a source of great trouble to Hans Krausa. He saw in them only a prospect of ruin and an utter desecration of the beauty and solitude of the mountains. True, guides had never been needed very much, for the Rigi is not like its famous and difficult Alpine sisterhood. Still, he had always found opportunities for his services, and could point out the quickest and easiest modes of ascent, and the best views; and having, in a way, become known as useful, and honest, and intelligent, he had managed to make those summer and autumn months very profitable. Now all would be changed. At first he had thought people must be mad to talk of making a railway up a mountain, and believed it an impossibility; but, as time went on, he found it was steadily progressing, and all the beautiful solitude was disturbed by sounds of axe, and pick, and snorting engines, and hiss of steam, and rough voices of workmen, and the incessant din and traffic necessary for so great a work.

To Edelweiss it was a source of constant wonder and interest. She was a tall, slender girl now, of sixteen years, with the same frank, beautiful eyes, and golden hair, and tender, serious smile of her childhood—a girl as innocent and pure as the flower whose name she bore, and with a nature as simple and content as that of Hans Krausa himself.

One June evening, towards sunset, she was sitting by herself some distance off the line of operations, watching the men at work.

Before that autumn was over the line would be complete; the following year it would be opened.

As her grave eyes followed the movements of the men, she saw a figure approach which of late had attracted a good deal of her attention and interest. She had heard he was a young Austrian, an engineer, who was a friend of the superintendent of the men.

The superintendent had often spoken to her, and even explained many things about the new wonder, and the ingenious

method to be used for working it. She had rather a confused idea of leverage, and grooves, and cog-wheels, and machinery, and the working of brakes; but it seemed to her very wonderful—almost supernatural, in fact—and she tried often to explain it to Hans Krausa.

On this particular evening she was waiting for the old man, who had gone to the top of the Rigi to show a stranger the best point of view. She had a bunch of wild flowers in her hand; her head was uncovered, and caught all the last brightness of the sunrays among its gold; her earnest eyes were fixed in grave observance on the group of men who had left off work, and were talking to the young engineer.

Some difficulty seemed to have arisen respecting the nature of the ground. One of the men at last pointed to the girl.

"Ask her," he said in his rough German; "she knows every step of the way between Vitznau and the Kulm. The line must curve here; it's not possible to take it straight."

There was a little more talking, then Edelweiss saw the stranger approaching, and, colouring with some sudden access of bashfulness, she rose to her feet.

He looked at her with surprise. Her dress was only a peasant's dress; her head was bare, her hands brown from exposure, and rough with hard work; but yet there was an indescribable air of refinement and delicacy about her aspect and manner which seemed to speak of something not akin to a peasant's nature. He put his questions to her, and she answered them briefly and simply, even though her colour came and went, and her heart was beating nervously beneath its linen bodice at the deference in the young man's tone, the involuntary homage of his eyes. She did not know that he was artist enough to feel the picture she made, standing there in the glow of sunlight, with the poppies and grasses in her hands, and the wind softly stirring the loose gold hair above her brow. Having gained the information he wished, he went back and gave some orders to the men, then strolled off, and followed in the track she had taken among the pine-trees and firs.

He came up to her as she halted by a rough seat, put up by Krausa himself. She raised her hand to her eyes to shade them from the sun, and looked up the mountain as far as she could see. The old man was not yet in sight.

As her hand dropped she heard a footfall, and looked round. The young Austrian was just beside her.

"May I sit here a while and rest?" he asked softly; "and will you tell me where you live, and all about yourself? Surely I have seen you somewhere before. Your face is strangely familiar."

"I am always here," she said in her grave, simple way. "No doubt you have seen me often."

"And your name?" he questioned. "The men over there called you Edelweiss; is that really your name?"

"Yes," she answered, her colour deepening a little as she met his eyes. "My father, who found me there in the mountains, called me that. I say my father, for I have known no other. I think I could have loved no other—better."

"Found there in the mountains!" he echoed wonderingly. "Who could have left you to such a fate?"

"I cannot tell. I shall never know," she answered simply. "It was not kind, I think. I might have died so easily. Few people ever come to the Rigi in that season, and the snow was still on the ground and upon the higher clefts. My father found me in one."

"And that is all you know of yourself?" he asked in surprise.

"Yes. It is enough, is it not? I have lived here or at Vitznau all the time. The people love me and are kind to me, and I am happy."

"Happy!" he echoed somewhat vaguely. "Ah yes—no doubt. They know you; they would think no worse of you for your story; that is the best of being poor."

"Why should they think worse of me? I have done nothing wrong," she said, looking up at him with her frank blue eyes.

An odd little smile came to his lips.

"My child, if you were a little less innocent, you would know well enough that we have to carry other burdens besides our own, and suffer for other faults besides those we have committed. You are right. Why should they think worse of you? There is no reason whatever. And so you live here in these mountain solitudes all the year round, and are happy! Do you know I envy you that confession?"

"Is it so rare to be happy?" she asked, a little puzzled by his tone.

"Very," he answered. "In the world, at least."

"Ah," she said softly, "but then I don't know the world; it never troubles me. I have lived here always; I hope I shall live here always. Sometimes I think I should like to know a little more. They teach us so little at the school. But the priests say too much book-learning is not good; and, after all, what use would it be to me?"

He looked at her again with that close and earnest regard that puzzled and in a way troubled her.

"What use— Well, perhaps you are right. No one can be more than happy. You said you were that. But you are only a child yet. How old are you?"

"I am sixteen—so my father reckons."

"Sixteen, and you live in a cabin, and eat black bread, and work all the year round, and your life contents you?" murmured the young man musingly. "That seems odd!"

"Does it?" she said, and smiled frankly as she met his eyes—beautiful eyes they were. Dark, and earnest, and full of a strange soft light. She thought she had never seen any like them.

"Perhaps you are rich and great," she went on in that pretty pique that was neither Swiss nor German, but yet which he understood easily enough. "Then it must seem strange to you, of course."

He laughed a little harshly.

"I am not rich," he said, "or great. I wish I were."

She would have liked to have told him what in some way she dimly felt—that perhaps by very reason of that discontent, he had missed the road to happiness which she had found so easily.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VI.

THE third day after that proved whether or not Ellinor Yorke was a timid rider. On each of the two previous days she had not made her appearance till luncheon; on this day, however, she came downstairs about eleven o'clock, and meeting the squire in the hall, expressed a wish to go through the stables with him.

"Ah, delighted, I am sure, my dear! Come along, Edie," cried the squire, going back a step, and calling to his daughter through a half-opened door.

The Hall stables held a goodly stud—hunters, hacks, carriage and saddle horses—some twelve or fifteen all told. The first five or six Ellinor passed by with scarce a glance. At the sixth she half paused.

"This is the horse I should like to ride," she said; "no, on second thoughts this;" and she laid her hand on the neck of a glossy, straight-limbed roan, with beautiful, if rather restless, eyes, and a good deal of red about the mane and tail.

"Ah, that's Edie's Coquette," said the squire uneasily, not feeling at all sure whether Edie's opinion on the matter would coincide with her cousin's. "It's a difficult creature; all right when started, but apt to be skittish at being mounted."

"All the same, it's the one I should like to ride," said Ellinor with great decision and a look right into the squire's eyes which made opposition all the more difficult.

The squire turned appealingly to Edie. "Ellinor would like to ride Coquette, my dear," he said hesitatingly.

"How ill-tempered I must be growing," thought Edie; "why, a week ago I would have lent Coquette to anyone who asked

me politely, but now!" and she mentally shrugged her shoulders at herself, and curled her upper-lip.

It was only a moment's pause; then she said aloud, a little ungraciously it must be owned:

"Oh, Ellinor is quite welcome to do so—that is, if she can." The last clause was added sotto voce.

"Thanks, little Edie," said Ellinor, with that sweet smile of hers which always made Edie feel as though she were composed of tinder, and a match were being applied to her.

When the horses were brought round, Ellinor soon showed what she could and would do.

Coquette was a splendid little blood-mare, all right when set going, but, as the squire had said, hard to start. She had two or three inveterately bad habits which Edie had made no effort to break her of, in fact, had rather encouraged than otherwise, telling the pretty, whimsical creature that she was true to her name and nature—nothing more. When she felt Ellinor's hand on her neck she started, snorted violently, and threw back her shapely head; when she felt a new rider on her back, and the man had let go her head, she reared till she nearly sat upon her haunches, then plunged forward just as vigorously, and finally set off at an altogether startling speed down the avenue, and out into the road beyond.

"For Heaven's sake, my dear, be careful!" shouted the squire as he set off at a rattling pace after the young lady.

The south wind brought back Ellinor's reply clear and distinct enough:

"She has not been properly managed—I would break her of this in a week."

Edie felt as though a lump were rising in her throat. "Had not been properly managed!" Well, then, by inference, she

Edie Fairfax, who had ridden ever since she got out of her high-chair, did not know how to manage a horse; why not tell her at once she could not walk, talk, read, nor write? As well say that as that she could not ride. Of course she did not pretend to think for a moment that she sat her horse as Ellinor sat hers; Ellinor, of course, did everything better than other people. There was also something different in the cut of her habit, the shape of her gauntlet, the way she held her elbows; no doubt she caused a sensation in the Row every time she went out riding.

Now Edie had never once troubled the Row with her presence. Although for the past ten years she had gone regularly every season to London with her father "to do the theatres and that sort of thing," she had carefully eschewed the Park, naturally enough considering the riding to be had there a mere travesty of the delightful canter she was accustomed to over the Berkshire heaths and hills; but, nevertheless, she felt it would be as true to say she could not breathe as could not ride. Why, she could not live without a horse to pet and fondle, and tease and talk to! They never gave themselves airs of superiority, or wounded people's feelings as—as some human beings did. Here a big tear fell into the mane of the chestnut she was riding; she slackened speed, leaving her father and Ellinor to go ahead at their will.

At Wickham Place they came upon the Colonel and Phil starting for a morning ride.

The squire reduced his pace; he had been going thus rapidly in order to keep up with Ellinor, not feeling at all sure of Coquette's behaviour under her new rider.

"Well, Colonel," he shouted, "what's the latest thing in figures you've accomplished? Have you found out what reduction in oat-fields may be expected in ten years' time if bicycles continue to increase upon us at their present rate? You must know," he added, turning to Ellinor, "Colonel Wickham here is as great at reckoning and calculating as the Yankees themselves—I can't say more."

Ellinor smiled round graciously at the Colonel. He naturally enough rode up to her side. They soon fell into light talk. Possibly he thought to himself: "I am more likely to be young-lady-proof than Phil. Edie would have been wiser not to have slackened her hold on him just now."

Phil waited behind for Edie.

She came along at a snail's pace, her

eyes a little downcast, her lips a little tremulous. She felt ruffled and put out with the universe generally; with a few persons particularly. With Ellinor for her altogether superior ways; with herself for being inclined to cry instead of laugh over them. With Phil, even, for pulling up his horse to wait for her instead of riding on with the rest. Had he forgotten already what she had said to him such a little, little while ago? Did he mean to behave just as though they were still engaged, and were bound to walk, talk, ride with each other, and no one else? It was altogether ridiculous of him! she would take care and show him what she thought of his conduct. So she said till she came up with him, and then, somehow, all in a flash, her ill-temper seemed to vanish, and her usual bright smile came back at his very first words.

"How now, Edie?" he cried. "What has poor Coquette done to be punished in this way? You know how she hates a new rider; you know no one ever manages her as you do."

Edie, brightening more and more, felt as though she must tell him all her troubles.

"She can't hate a new rider more than I hate a new visitor. Oh, Phil, I am quite ashamed of myself, but I have been wishing and wishing all the morning that Ellinor had never come into the house. I didn't know quite why I sighed when I first told you she was coming, but somehow I felt as though she would upset everything, and she has."

"And I wish, too, she had never come into the house since she upsets you so much, dear," answered Phil. "But why allow it? Why take things so much to heart—why not laugh them off as you generally do laugh off annoyances?"

"Oh, but she says and does things that one can't laugh off very well, and always with such an air of superiority, one feels oneself to be the culprit, not she. Of course, she is a lady—I know that, but—well, yes, of course, she is a lady; her father was Colonel Yorke (he died out in Afghanistan, you know); her mother was a Fairfax."

"And, therefore, a lady. But, lady or not, I'll tell you one thing she is, Edie, and that is a most dangerous woman!"

Edie felt triumphantly glad to hear Phil say this. She did not intend, however, to let him see her gladness.

"Now, Phil, I really think you are going too far. What can you know of Ellinor to speak of her in this way?"

According to your own showing, you did not meet her half-a-dozen times in London, scarcely spoke half-a-dozen words to her. Yet anyone to see your face when you called her a dangerous woman just now, would have vowed you were afraid—positively afraid of her."

Edie said all this slyly, demurely, playfully enough. There was nothing in life she enjoyed more than a right-down, good argument with Phil. Let him take the one side in any matter, small or great, and she was nearly certain to take the other.

But Phil answered gravely and straightforwardly at once, as in a matter that did not admit of playfulness :

"So I am afraid of her—downright afraid of her, Edie; I won't attempt to deny it. I am as afraid of her, with her beauty, her talent, her grace, as I should be of any lunatic who was allowed to go about with a firebrand or loaded gun among unarmed or defenceless people. If I had my way with such women as Ellinor Yorke, I would—well, never mind, what I would do; I am not likely to be able to do it."

"Oh, Phil, and after the way you looked at her the other night when she sang! Why, you looked, and looked, and looked; as though you would look away your soul!" exclaimed Edie, still bent on teasing.

Phil answered even more gravely than before :

"A man's eyes may be fascinated, Edie, while his heart remains untouched, and his brain condemns. Don't you understand?"

"No, I don't understand," laughed Edie. "I'm not clever enough to be able to divide you into quarters like an orange, and say this quarter has nothing to do with the other. Come, let's ride on after the others. Remember, we're not engaged now, and you've no right to monopolise me in this way. I won't be condemned to your society for the whole morning. And oh, dear darling Phil"—this added very coaxingly, very winningly—"do—do be merciful and take Ellinor Yorke off my hands as much as possible. I know I shall quarrel outright with her before another week is over our heads if she and I have much to do with each other."

CHAPTER VII.

IN the next few days that followed, however, Edie had not the remotest chance of seeing too much of Ellinor; nor had Phil the opportunity for "taking her off Edie's hands," for the simple reason that the squire himself performed that duty.

Performed it too, ably, thoroughly, and, if one might venture to say so, as though it were less of a duty than a pleasure to him. Did Miss Yorke desire to walk, ride, or drive, he invariably offered to be her escort; did she choose to sit indoors, he would suggest a comfortable sofa or lounge, and take care that a small table laden with magazines, society journals, or the latest novel from Mudie's, was ready to her hand. The evenings he seemed specially to revel in. He had a great fondness for *écarté*; Ellinor was a skilful and rapid player; *tête-à-tête* in the library over a small card-table they spent those two after-dinner hours which, truth to tell, had at times hung rather heavily on the squire's hands.

Edie began to feel herself somewhat forgotten and ignored.

"Really," she said to Phil, "I think if I were to go away on a visit just now neither of them would miss me. It seems a little odd to see papa so attentive to a young lady visitor; he generally either forgets all about them or else treats them as if they were still in pinafores."

Phil grew suddenly serious. To Edie's fancy he always grew serious when he spoke of Ellinor.

"I don't quite understand it," he answered; "I hope she doesn't mean mischief."

And then the next moment he was sorry he had used such a word. Edie looked so startled and puzzled, he could have thrashed himself for frightening her and setting her mind on possibilities which, after all, might never come to pass.

These two young people were on an odd, and not altogether comfortable, footing just then. Alone with each other, they unconsciously relapsed into their usual familiar, easy style of talk and manner, but before strangers, or even friends, their way of speaking, looking, moving, seemed restrained, sudden, abrupt.

People at Stanham were beginning to talk and wonder whether things were going quite smoothly between the squire's daughter and the Colonel's nephew.

Ellinor's dark eyes, in appearance so languid, downcast, restful, in reality so keen, observant, scrutinising, noted how, as the days went by, the two seemed to grow more and more ill-at-ease in each other's society, set her brains to work on the matter, and finally hazarded a question or two.

"Mr. Fairfax said you and Mr. Wickham were engaged to be married," she began

one day, when, by an unusual chance, she found herself alone with Edie.

"Did he?" was Edie's laconic reply. But her hands began to tremble over the flower-vase she was filling, and she carefully turned her face away from the light.

"I shouldn't be ashamed to own to such a thing if I were you, little Edie," continued Ellinor who was a ruthless, unblushing questioner, and would have interrogated Royalty itself as to private family arrangements had the opportunity been given her.

"And I would not be ashamed to own to such a thing if it were true; but it is not," answered Edie, with a face grown crimson. Then she huddled her flowers together into the jar, and left the room in hot haste.

"I am very sorry it is not true," said Ellinor just before Edie had time to shut the door. If she had spoken out all her thoughts, she would have added: "By-and-by, Miss Edie, it is my intention that this young man's homage shall be transferred to me. It would add special zest to the whole thing if I thought it of right belonged to you."

Ellinor did not pause to ask herself why the fact of Phil Wickham being no longer Edie's lover should take a shred or two of interest from the game for which at that moment she was sorting her cards and focussing her faculties. The "why" of a thing mattered to her far less than its "how," "where," or "when." An all-sufficient reason she saw for the subjugation of Phil Wickham, for the winning of his heart (and perchance the breaking of it afterwards), in the fact that the young man was distinguished from his fellows by better looks and bearing, a suave manner, a tolerable fortune. Had he been poor, undersized, insignificant in figure and feature, she would undoubtedly have let him alone. Also had he fallen at once a worshipper at her shrine, the chances are she would have laughed in his face, told him not to make himself ridiculous, but to go back and make love to his little Edie.

As it was, however, the man's personality in the first instance attracted her; then his indifference piqued her.

"He despises me," she said, drawing herself to her full height in front of a mirror, and surveying a face that an Emperor might have been proud of in his bride. "I saw it in his eyes last night while I played *écarté* with the old squire; I felt it in the touch of his hand when I first met him in company with Rodney

Thorne in London. Yet he is fascinated while he shrinks from me. I could see that in his face the other night when I sang. Very good, Mr. Wickham. By-and-by you will be more than fascinated—that is all. To think of little Edie keeping such a man as that at her side when I beckon him away!"

These were Phil Wickham's best days as regarded health, strength, good looks, happiness. Up to now he had enjoyed an unbroken run of good fortune and good temper. Those who knew Phil intimately were apt to say he had never been known to lose his temper, save on one memorable occasion, when he had, as a boy of fifteen, half-strangled Lord Winterdowne's game-keeper for shooting a favourite lurcher of his. It showed how few crimes of graver kind could be laid at Phil's door, that this one youthful escapade should be remembered and recounted for some ten or twelve years afterwards. It is true there were one or two fault-finders a little fond of saying that Phil's serenity of temper was not to be wondered at, seeing that things had always been made smooth and pleasant for him from boyhood upwards; that Harrow and Oxford had been made as delightful places of abode to him as wealthy friends and plenty of pocket-money could make them; that an easy, happy temper surely might be the one thing expected to be found in company with a man who possessed a good stud of horses, who enjoyed a yearly three months of fishing, yachting, canoeing, or mountaineering in any quarter of the globe he pleased; who owned a nice little independent income derived from his mother's property; and who looked forward to the possession of Wickham Place, with its park, woods, and pasture-land, at a not very distant period; and then they would wind up with hinting their fears that Phil's temper might be qualified by an additional adjective appended to the "good"—viz., indolent.

Now, this was altogether a mistake. Phil had too much muscle in him—mental and physical—to be downright hopelessly indolent. He was a little disposed to take life easily—that was all. He did not go out of his way to hunt up troubles; he did not beat the bushes in search of annoyances. The wind was blowing, and filled out his sail; what wonder if he laid aside his oars, and went with the current, more especially when that current was setting in exactly in the direction of the haven "whither his soul would be?"

THE UNSEEN POOR.

FOR some time past public attention has been much directed towards the condition of the abject poor. It is certainly well that the richer half of the world should learn something of the way in which the poorer half live; but worked-up agitations and popular philanthropic movements frequently involve a good deal of wasted and certainly misdirected energy. It were well if the charitably disposed paused for a while, and reflected whether those whose poverty is so patent to the eye really suffer the most deeply from the stings of pauperism.

It is forgotten that while to the lowest scale of human life poverty is a hard lot somewhat tempered by habit, to higher grades of society poverty is really a crime. They dare not show to their neighbours and acquaintances any outward evidences of their poverty—they dare not reveal the terrible pinchings and struggles they go through to keep their little home together, or the anxiety they suffer in raising the little rent they have to pay weekly for a humble lodging in a respectable house and neighbourhood. The poor gentleman, the poor lady, the poor clerk out of employment, must maintain their respectability, for their pecuniary ruin means also social ruin. There is a point in certain grades of human existence where respectability becomes a burden and a tax. It is all very well to say, "there is menial labour open to them." There is no greater cant abroad than the affectation that menial labour is a disgrace; but menial labour requires skill, and unless a man or woman be reared to it, he or she is valueless in that capacity. To be a competent navy or labourer requires a certain muscular development and training. To be a skilled carpenter or bricklayer requires as much knowledge, skill, and nicety of touch as many callings of higher repute. I am purposely putting aside all considerations of the natural and actual horror and pain felt by all refined natures at contact with sordid surroundings and coarsely vulgar associates. But to the well bred and educated man or woman all this means trial and suffering, and it is a species of trial and suffering quite unknown to the inhabitants of a slum. The deserving poor, the poor who get no sympathy, do not all live in slums. The popular journalist can make no sensation articles on the lives of men who conceal their sufferings under decent black coats and nearly starve in

dingy two-pair backs. The suffering is silent, it is not advertised. In the privacy of their poorly-furnished rooms, the tears may be bitter, the sighs heavy, but the world knows nothing of all that. The poor tradesman, ruined, perhaps, by no fault of his own—crushed by competing with huge capitalists—who will set him on his legs again? A careful study of the annual statistics of suicides will show that nearly all the "cases" found are respectably dressed. The inhabitants of slums seldom commit suicide. The most powerful incentives to suicide are shame, anxiety, and mental suffering.

To suffer mentally one must have a mind; a large portion of the inhabitants of slums have no minds—they are animal, they grovel; they do not really wish to be clean, decent, or respectable. But the poor man, who has been decently reared, who has come to poverty through family misfortune, who is willing to work, but perhaps has no practical trade though he may possess fair average abilities—how is he to get a living? Who will help him? There are hundreds and hundreds of decently-clad men about who are on the verge of starvation. They are intelligent, respectable; but they cannot find channels of occupation. They would willingly take any labour they could do to get a pound a week, and they know not where to look for it. These are the deserving poor—none the less deserving that they are "unseen" by the public eye. The want of food and comfort is not the least of their pain—they suffer hourly agonies of shame and wearing anxiety.

Would not it be well if some of the energy which is now being directed towards petting the denizens of the slums were used in founding some responsible institution, conducted charitably but on strict business principles, which should undertake to find "openings" for respectable men and women in want of work, and to assist unfortunate tradespeople with loans on easy terms, but strictly business principles? The difficulty would be in getting the unseen poor to reveal themselves, they so shrink from parading their sufferings. But if they could feel assured that they would be treated kindly, and their affairs investigated without patronage or unfeeling arrogance, they would apply, and such an institution would be the means of saving many a valuable member of society from despair. For, be it remembered, it is the respectable

and educated men and women who are valuable to society. A man who is manly and a woman who is womanly should not be allowed to perish. It is no more than the truth to say that many of the people who infest the slums, are not only useless but dangerous to society. Cleaning their homes and relieving their necessities will not eradicate their vicious propensities and their low tastes. But it is a crying shame to the country that many hundreds of individuals, who are refined by nature and have no vices, are cut away, not only from human assistance, but even from human sympathy.

Take the case of a widow who has been left in poor circumstances by the death of her husband. She has been reared respectably; she is not capable of hard work. She is just able to take a small house and to let lodgings. She is burdened with rates and taxes; she, perhaps, has difficulties with her lodgers, who take advantage of her if she have not that shrewdness and certain hardness which belong to the professional landlady. She has hard work to make both ends meet and to keep herself from the parish. If she gets into difficulties, who is there to help her, to save her at the critical moment when circumstances become too hard for her?

Take again the common instance of a lady by birth and education, who is left nearly destitute with an only child to rear, who is her pride. She cannot let this child be dragged up. People in the slums are often reckless in the matter of children, because they care not if they disport themselves in the filth of the gutter. It is no shame to them that their young children learn to swear as soon as they can talk. The lady strives to educate her child out of her small income. She is friendless; she has no knowledge of the world; she is victimised by all sorts of people—servants, tradespeople, agents, and even lawyers. She cannot beg; she cannot work at anything practical. If inadvertently she gets into debt, she is "sold up"; she must bear all in silence. Average humanity does not realise her position, because average humanity does not see her in rags. No journalist proclaims her case. No subscription is raised for her. She deserves help, but she does not get it. She must die of shame or starve.

Those among the unseen poor, who occupy the saddest positions of difficulty, are the poor gentleman or the poor lady thrown upon their own resources for a living, the struggling author, and the poor

artist or musician. The prospects of these in life are more hopeless than those of the clerk out of work, because the latter, if he have already occupied a post of trust, may get another if he try hard enough, and he probably belongs to some club or benefit society, and if he have been wise enough to remain single, he may tide over a bad time.

But the gentleman of birth and breeding who has been left without means is in a terrible position. His training renders him inadequate for practical business purposes—his lack of experience closes every avenue to him, and he is lucky if he find a chance to earn eighteen shillings a week. Thus we know of two young men, sons of a Colonel in the army, who are earning a pound a week apiece as salesmen in a co-operative store, and think themselves fortunate to have the chance of doing so. Some time since a certain hospital advertised for a secretary. The result was two hundred applications from gentlemen unable to find employment. But putting aside the difficulty of practical inaptitude, the legitimate labour-market is so overstocked, that a chemist in Oxford Street, who recently advertised for a light porter, received by one post upwards of forty letters all from men over thirty years of age—the remuneration offered being fourteen shillings a week.

If practical people cannot get work, what chance is there for a man who is accomplished, but has no practical knowledge of any one trade or calling. In nearly all departments of trade or mechanics the skilled labourer can find work—it is the mediocrity which fails; but if mediocrity fails, what is to become of utter incompetency? And it can hardly be said to be a man's fault if he have no special calling. The case of the poor gentleman is far more pitiable and hopeless, if less sensational, than the squalid misery of the slum-pauper. He dare not write a letter for relief to anyone of wealth and importance, because he will be confounded with the abominable begging-letter swindlers, all of whom ought, when discovered, to be very heavily punished, as they not only defraud the benevolent, but turn charity away from the doors of the deserving. If he have acquaintances they are sure to cool towards him when his poverty becomes self-evident. His friends, if he have any, are sure to be as poor as himself, and are, therefore, unable to help him.

The case of the poor lady, who is refined and sensitive, is equally painful. There

are more fields open to women now than of yore; but then women cannot go about and "hunt up" work as men can. We know of one poor lady now, intelligent and accomplished, who is working at drudgery in seclusion, for a wage that a parlour-maid would sneer at. The monotony of her life is terrible. Two more well-educated women we know also, who, being clever with their needles, took to dressmaking, and were "cut" by all their relations in consequence. They do only fairly well, though skilled in the business, because they lose by bad debts, and must make a certain outlay during the year to keep up their connection. Another most patient and respectable young woman supports herself solely by her needle; she is too weak for menial labour; she has one sister who earns a living as a servant, but who never visits her. She has two other sisters gone quite to the bad, as so many orphan-girls do go in cities. She lives quite alone, and dare not go about much, for fear of losing her character. Her life is terribly monotonous. Her health is feeble, and she is threatened with loss of sight. She rarely earns more than fifteen shillings a week. Yet she always dresses nicely, and keeps her small room clean and tidy. Indeed, the most striking thing about the lives of these deserving poor is the patience and resignation they exhibit under their hard lot, and their resolution in maintaining to the last their respectability of appearance and behaviour.

We know of a mother and two daughters, all accomplished and highly educated; the two girls are clever actresses, and have had professional engagements, yet they cannot earn a living, try how they will. Once, when the elder girl gave a dramatic recital, she had to go round and deliver her own hand-bills and window-bills. Often they have hardly enough to eat, and yet must dress with care and taste. This is partly owing to the rush of educated people on to the stage. But the stage is a hard career to a sensitive woman, unless she have sufficient talent and enthusiasm to set against the weariness of rehearsals, the worry of travelling, and the vulgarity of too many theatrical associations. Natural aptitude is more important than high education for the stage. No amount of technical education will make an actor of a man, or an actress of a woman, if he or she be not naturally a powerful mimic. But who will save inadequate talent from starvation?

It is said to be a law of nature that the

"weakest goes to the wall," and the beneficial result of this arrangement lies in the "survival of the fittest." It is doubtful, however, if this law can be said to work fairly under the artificial conditions of modern life. Nowadays, it is not always the morally or physically weak and degraded beings who succumb. The modern standard of strength is the possession of money. Intellectual or physical power will avail little without some money, or unless they can be readily turned into money. But nothing makes money so readily as money. "Nothing succeeds like success." In the fate of too many of the unseen poor is seen the fact that the fittest do not always survive. The terribly overcrowded state of the labour-market shows that in one direction the balance of nature has been upset. Somewhere about half a century ago, the warning note in this matter was struck by the Rev. Mr. Malthus. Like all true prophets and thinkers, he was cried down, and abused by the false sentimentalists. But the truth is revealed, when we find willing labour useless because in excess, and the most able and the most willing workers not always those who get work to do. We may well be alarmed at statistics, which show that in New York alone, eighty thousand workers are out of employment, and twenty thousand of these destitute. If your field of labour will only employ eighty thousand labourers, and you have one hundred thousand, then twenty thousand must starve. This is incontrovertible. Supposing you can transfer these twenty thousand to other fields, you are only postponing the ultimate famine a generation or two.

Take the case of a young author, or journalist of talent and energy, if he be entirely without means and dependent upon his pen for his living. What is his position? Mr. Gladstone, we believe, once stated that the value of mental labour was decreasing. This is a certainty, which the establishment of the School Board has not tended to lessen. It may do no great harm in the long run if it tend to prove to people there is no disgrace in manual labour. As Mr. Ruskin says: "There is no reason why a ploughman should not know Greek." But a man who has been trained to work with his head, cannot readily or successfully take to physical labour.

Notwithstanding the great literary activity of modern days, it is not possible for a writer of ability to make a living unless he obtain regular work

upon an established journal, or unless by some striking effort he, as it were, "knocks the public between the eyes," and so brings himself into notice—even by this means he is likely to obtain more fame than fortune. The golden age of periodical literature was five-and-twenty years ago, or thereabouts. Then editors were keenly on the look-out for new talent. Now the supply is greater than the demand; the crowd of writers is largely augmented by many who do not depend on their pens for their living. These can work with more ease, and have more leisure for study. Editors are so worried by a mass of correspondence, that few of them care to sift the matter offered to them, mostly preferring to lean on known names. Then the competition in periodicals is so great that one only gets half-a-guinea for matter which, twelve years since, was worth a guinea. The struggling author now may send out twenty manuscripts, and fifteen will miss fire altogether, and of the five accepted perhaps three will not be paid for. Half of the rest will not be returned to him, but go into the waste-paper basket. The struggling author works hard, and most of his work goes for nothing. He lives on hope, and the postman's knock at his door more often brings a pang than a joy to his heart. Let him be ever so clever, if he have no name, or no regular engagement on a journal, he cannot make a living by mere fugitive writing. If he is at all a good writer, he is unfit for any other work; from the years of study he has had to perfect himself in an art that brings him no return, he has been unable to gain knowledge of any other trade or profession. Even if capable of quickly mastering details of business, no one will engage him, because he has no experience. If his pen fail him, what can he do? Only some luminous idea, or lucky chance, can save him from starvation. If he can write stories badly enough for some of the penny journals, he will get, perhaps, eight pounds for one which takes him a month to write. For a three-volume novel, which no man can invent and write in less than six months, he will get thirty pounds, perhaps. And as for dramatic authorship—no one will read the play when it is written, much less produce it. If he writes a five-act melodrama, and likes to hang about after the managers of outlying theatres, he may get an offer of five pounds for the entire right of the work, and then be asked to pay for the cost of the all-important "posters." These are

facts. There is no harder career than letters. Even men who have had money have taken years to establish their reputation. Disappointment, despair, and starvation are all that await the poor author. He is one of the most pitiable figures in the pathetic group of the unseen poor. His higher talent and greater sensitiveness make him suffer the more keenly. Let no man, however talented, think to earn a living by writing alone. If he must earn a living by letters, let him rather be a postman.

It is an unfortunate fact that many of those occupations in life which require the most education and the longest period of what, for want of a better term, we must call apprenticeship, yield the slowest and most doubtful monetary return.

The inadequate remuneration of curates in the Church has long been proverbial. But they hold a better social position than either artists or musicians who are poor.

It is well-nigh impossible for the unknown artist to earn bread in these days unless he can use graving-tools, or possess a skilful facility in designing in black and white. By this means he may become attached to the staff of one of the numerous comic journals or illustrated newspapers. Some artists imagine they can eke out an existence by scene-painting; but this is a huge error, for scene-painting is an art by itself, extremely difficult and very laborious. "Pot-boiling" art, as it is called, is rapidly becoming extinct as the spread of art education increases. Most of these "slap-dash" productions are shipped to the colonies, and the price paid for them by the dealers is simply one remove from starvation price. To be a successful painter of "pot-boilers," it is essential that one be a very bad artist. It is quantity, not quality, that is wanted, and to make a decent living, the painter must become as much chained to his easel as the average clerk is chained to his desk.

The poor musician is in an equally bad plight, and the only chance he has is by obtaining a teaching connection. While a curate will get, perhaps, forty pounds a year, an organist will probably only get twenty pounds. To be an efficient organist and choir-master, a man must know music thoroughly, and be a man of taste and feeling. The organist is supposed to eke out his living by teaching; but he cannot always obtain enough of such work.

Now with all these artists, who must be men of education and gentlemen, who must

maintain a certain appearance in accordance with the social position they hold, what is to become of them when competition drives them out of the field of labour, as it does in these days? What charity is there to relieve their absolute necessities? What means can they appeal to to find a field for their labours?

A poor man looks around him, and sees huge advertisements of quack medicines, exquisite soaps, new plays, and new periodicals; but nowhere can he find a guide to indicate to him a possible field of employment. Advertisements he will find offering him inducements to part with money if he has any; but nowhere can he find a direct offer of that needful commodity in return for his labour, without previous disbursement on his part in the shape of fees, or securities, or guarantee funds, and such like. Indeed, often when he is in most need of funds himself, because his address is in the Court Directory he will probably receive an appeal for money. We know a starving author who, on one of his birthdays, found himself with no money and no means of getting a dinner on credit. The morning post brought him an elaborate appeal to subscribe to the funds of the Ragged School Union. If one be in rags, one may obtain parish relief; but if one have a good coat, one dare not apply for it, and, worse than all, one dare not pawn the coat.

Surely some scheme of an institution might be practically devised, which would undertake to aid the pauper in broadcloth to find work, or small capital. A man in a strait would not object to pay a fee of five shillings if he knew that some real aid would be given him, some practical advice and kindly sympathy by some benevolent yet practical men, who would make it their business to try and remedy a social grievance, which is so pitiable as almost to become a social evil. Thus the working expenses of the institution would be paid. Real good would be done to society, because men and women calculated to be ornaments to it would be saved from despair, employers might obtain workers at once honest and intelligent, and the deserving poor would be no longer hidden, but gradually become "unseen," because non-existent.*

* The Editor of ALL THE YEAR ROUND does not adopt the responsibility of all the statements and opinions set forth in this article, which must be taken as expressing the views of its author, and not necessarily those of the Editor.

AN INLAND SEA FOR AFRICA.

LAND and water, astronomers say, are much better distributed in our outside neighbouring planet, Mars, than on our own native sphere, Terra. Although their land-surface is a trifle in excess of their seas, the Martians have the wet and the dry, the fat and lean of their globe, like first-rate bacon, so pleasantly and fairly interlarded, that they would not believe either in our oceans or in Asiatic and African deserts, unless they saw them with their own eyes, of course through extra-powerful telescopes.

Instead of islands here and there, emerging with a struggle above the waters, their continents seem rather to reduce their oceans to the condition of inland seas—veritable Mediterraneans. They need no Columbus to discover their America, for, having neither an Atlantic nor a Pacific, they might almost walk dryshod round their little world, whose seas are cut up into long-drawn gulfs, like our own Red Sea or Adriatic. Of their supposed canals, not less than one hundred miles broad, all we can say at present is, that if they really are the results of manual labour, they beat Ferdinand de Lesseps and all his works—and all his projects too—hollow.

We Terrestrials, on the contrary, with three times as much water as land, have not always the water where we want it. True, Europe itself is so environed by seas that it may almost be considered as an overgrown peninsula, while its numerous inland lakes, small and great, must have a beneficial effect on its climate. The same may be said, to a certain extent, of the much vaster area of North America. But take the great Asiatic continent. Would it not be an excellent thing if we could cut out a good piece of its sterile centre—which might be utilised as an island somewhere off its south coast—and fill up the hole with water, salt or fresh? This is what it is proposed to do for North Africa—except that the hole is ready made, and only requires filling.

The matter would be made clearer if the reader had before him a good map of Algeria and Tunis, on the east coast of which latter province he will note a large bay called the Gulf of Kabes, or Gabes, and westwards, in Algeria, the province of Constantine.

Now, south of the provinces of Constantine and Tunis, there exist vast depressions

in the soil which extend from the meridian of Biskra to the Gulf of Gabes—namely, about two hundred and fifty English miles. The bottom of these depressions—called by the natives “chotts”—is occupied by surfaces which have been levelled by the action of water, and are now covered with a crust of crystallised salt of various thickness.

There are three principal chotts; the chott Melrir, the chott Rharsa, and the chott Djerid, which last is the nearest to the Gulf of Gabes. A most important fact is that the altitude of these is at present known with great precision. From 1873 to 1883, one thousand seven hundred and twenty kilomètres (one thousand and seventy-five miles) of geometrical levellings have been executed, in sections of from something more than one hundred to one hundred and fifty yards each.

The level of the sea at low water in the Gulf of Gabes was taken as the point of departure for these surveys, whose absolute exactitude has been admitted by the Académie des Sciences. If any doubts about the question were still entertained, they would be dispelled by the survey recently made for a line of railway from Biskra to Touggourt. The level of the Mediterranean at Philippeville was taken as the starting-point for the levels obtained on that occasion. On reaching Mraier, on the western end of the chott Melrir, the level was found to coincide, within a very few inches, with that resulting from taking the Gulf of Gabes as the starting-point.

Two out of the three above-mentioned chotts, namely, Melrir and Rharsa, are below the level of the sea. If therefore they were put in communication with the Gulf of Gabes by means of a sufficiently broad canal, its waters would rush in and form an inland sea whose level would be practically the same as that of the Mediterranean. The new sea resulting from inundating these two chotts would have a total surface of eight thousand two hundred square kilomètres, or from fourteen to fifteen times the size of the Lake of Geneva, which covers only five hundred and seventy-seven square kilomètres. And as the bottom of the chotts is flat and horizontal, the inland sea would have nearly the same depth throughout its extent, namely, an average depth of water of twenty-four metres, or seventy-eight English feet and a fraction.

Were this herculean project once

executed, there is little doubt that not a few consequences would ensue from it which at present are unexpected and unforeseen. But there are also not a few desirable results which may very fairly be reckoned upon. For instance, the chotts, in their actual condition, are no better than muddy, saline, swampy hollows, which, at certain times of the year, under an African sun, become centres of every form of marsh disease. Thus, in the northern part of the chott Melrir, the streams known as the Oued Djeddi and the Oued al Arab widen into broad deltas and spread their waters over the swamps called Farfaria, covering a surface of about one thousand square kilomètres. This vast region, inaccessible in winter, overgrown with reeds and rushes, becomes partially dried in summer, and is thereby converted into a source of pestilence. As soon as the month of March arrives, the natives avoid its neighbourhood.

The chotts Melrir and Rharsa are the receptacles of the waters of an immense basin which, by the valley of the Igharghar, reaches as far as the Djebel Hogghar, situated nearly one thousand kilomètres to the south, and, by the valley of the Oued Djeddi, to the Djebel Amour, four hundred kilomètres to the west. What possibility is there of draining these fenny depressions? How can the waters that run into them be got rid of, either superficially or underground? If they were above the level of the sea, the problem would be capable of solution; but in consequence of their inferior altitude, they must remain for ever in the state of pestiferous bogs, unless they can be again covered with a deep stratum of water; that is, unless they can be restored to the previous condition which has been changed by some natural accident; in fact, unless they can become once more an inland arm or gulf of the Mediterranean.

The chott Djerid, like the chotts Melrir and Rharsa, is a depression enclosed by higher ground in all directions, and continually kept in a muddy state by a considerable mass of stagnant water. But this chott, being above the level of the sea, can easily be drained and made wholesome to dwell in. All that is needed, is to put it in communication either with the Mediterranean or with the chott Rharsa, by opening one or two efficient cuttings or trenches. The stagnant water will thus be carried away; the soil will rapidly be drained and dried; the salt which saturates

it will be gradually washed out; and the grounds of the chott Djerid, which consist of exceedingly fertile mud, will not only cease to be dangerously unhealthy, but, after thorough drainage, will be all that the cultivator can desire. Visions of cotton, sugar-canes, and other valuable tropical crops, will at once present themselves as future probabilities. And historical facts confirm those expectations. In the time of the Romans, when the chotts were full of water, Tunis and the south of Algeria were incomparably more fertile than at present. The sterility of the adjoining regions has been the consequence of the drying-up of the chotts.

If, therefore, contrary to first expectations, the chott Djerid cannot be inundated—if the surface of the inland sea will be less extensive than had been hoped—still, the completion of the project will result in restoring to cultivation one million two hundred and thirty-five thousand acres of excellent earth, which at present is in such a permanently swampy condition that it is impossible to venture upon it without danger. An additional important circumstance is that the sea-water, once introduced into the basin of the chotts, will exert so considerable a pressure on the bottom of those immense cavities, that the fresh water, which now oozes into them, will be stemmed and driven back, and will consequently increase the yield, and even the number, of the wells and springs which give fertility to the neighbouring oases.

The engineering details of this gigantic project—how many years it will take to fill the inland sea by means of a canal of given breadth and depth, conducting to it the waters of the Mediterranean; the nature of the difficulties to be surmounted, and other practical speculations—may be learned from a pamphlet of great ability and completeness* by Le Commandant Roudaire, with illustrative maps, and a preface by M. Ferdinand de Lesseps. It gives the reader, who takes any interest in the scheme, a mass of information which evidently cannot be more than alluded to here.

The realisation of the new inland sea will cost, of course, a considerable sum, which is estimated at six millions sterling; but it will be infinitely better spent money than the thousands of pounds wasted on

Arctic expeditions, for instance, with scarcely any other end or object to boast of than the danger, almost the certainty, incurred of condemning successive crews of brave and able men to cruelly prolonged torture and miserable death.

It will be worth paying a trifle of cash (if an invitation is not to be had) for a ticket to the grand-stand, which ought to be erected at the point where the water from the Mediterranean first gushes and pours into the chott Rharsa, and gradually floods it, if only to witness the surprise and consternation caused amongst the unseen, and perhaps unsuspected, inhabitants of the swamp. The salt, to which they are acclimatised, will not kill many of the creatures belonging and peculiar to the fauna of the chotts, but a continuous deluge of water most certainly will, unless they speedily shift their quarters. It will be everyone for himself, and a ducking take the hindmost. What a capital opportunity it will offer to zoological collectors! Only those spectators who are afraid of creepy-crawly, of snakes and lizards, frogs and toads—nay, of rats, mice, and unknown wee beasties—will be wise to secure a seat well raised above the path of the startled emigrants; for there will be such a scampering "sauve qui peut" as is not often seen at a sitting. But the true zoologist is afraid of nothing. He will handle a porcupine as coolly as if it were an eider-down pillow, and face a laughing hyena with a defiant smile.

And when the sea is filled up to high-water mark, what a capital fishpond, winter sanitarium, and yachting station it will make! Too far distant from its parent, the greater sea, to be resorted to as a harbour of refuge, it is sure, nevertheless, to be frequented by trading vessels to carry off the produce of its banks, which will eventually be dotted with groves of date and cocoa-nut palms, clumps of olive-trees, patches of bananas, and other tropical fruits. Hotels, perhaps towns, will spring up on picturesque and eligible sites; luxurious house-boats will float in its most sheltered and shady creeks. The inflowing stream will rapidly stock it with shoals of fish, marine crustaceans, molluscs, seaweeds, and their germs, on which a host of creatures feed. Turbot, tunny, soles, mullet, gurnards, fishing-frogs or anglers, and such like piscine dainties, will increase and multiply. With saffron and onions from the garden-plot at hand, oil from the

* *La Mer Interieure Africaine*, Paris, Imprimerie de la Société Anonyme des Publications Périodique. 13-15, Quai Voltaire.

tree, and a haul or two in the live fish-box, the Marseillais epicure, out for a holiday, will come and eat as good a bouillabaisse as he could get at home.

Prophets of evil predict that by the continual inflow of Mediterranean water (already saltier than the ocean) to supply the continual loss by evaporation, the inland sea, gradually growing saltier and saltier, will eventually become one solid mass of crystallised salt—the biggest block of rock-salt in the world. To this, we can only say that it will take a very, very long time to do it, and that we cannot tell what may happen between this and then. That a change of climate will occur is inevitable. The loss by evaporation may be, partially at least, replaced by rains. Salt also evaporates, when in company with vapour, as well as water; which any one may test and ascertain by licking his lips after passing through a sea-fog. In any case, barrenness for barrenness, things will be no worse than they were before—better even, by the complete suppression of marsh miasma and the cultivation of the Djerid chott.

But M. Ferdinand de Lesseps assures us that the inland sea will be perfectly safe from silting or salting up for the next thousand or fifteen hundred years—which guarantee is a sufficiently lengthened term for any human enterprise. Of course he does not reckon upon earthquakes or other abnormal geological phenomena. A more serious matter is to consider what profits and advantages may be reasonably expected from the completion of the work.

The first will arise from a zone of land surrounding the inland sea, and conceded by the State to the company which undertakes to execute the project. This land, formed by the drying up of very fertile mud, but completely unproductive in consequence of drought, would soon acquire considerable value from the modified climate due to the presence of the new-made sea. It is well known that, in the region of the oases, when water is abundant enough for cultivation of the soil to be possible, every cultivated acre gives a net revenue of twenty pounds a year. An idea may thence be formed of the profits realisable by the company from the lands conceded.

Next comes the felling of timber in the forests on the south slope of the Aures, the privilege of cutting which is demanded for ninety-nine years. The forests of Amar Khaddon and Chechar, for instance, cover-

ing an area of more than two hundred thousand acres, are filled with trees of great age and handsome dimensions. But nothing can be done with them at present, through the absolute want of means of communication. And yet, if only for the sake of maintaining those forests in a healthily productive state, periodical thinnings would be beneficial. The inland sea would make that possible, since they are distant from it only eighteen miles. Moreover, it is certain that the forests themselves will benefit largely by the modified climate. There can be no doubt that the aqueous emanations floating in the air will counteract the drought with which the sirocco periodically inflicts them.

Then come the fisheries of the inland sea, whose rich yield may be absolutely counted on, from the example of the Bitter Lakes along the course of the Suez Canal. Those lakes, completely dry before the opening of the canal, have become exceedingly full of fish, in spite of their extra briny water, consequent on the dissolution of the crystallised salt which lay at the bottom of their bed. It would seem that this excess of salt has even an attraction for many fish, for they abandon Lake Timsah, which receives the overflow of the fresh-water canal, and is consequently less salt, and migrate in mass to the Bitter Lakes, which are distant sixty miles from the Mediterranean, and only eighteen from the Red Sea. But it is remarkable that nearly all those fish are Mediterranean species. The length, therefore, of the canal from the Gulf of Gabes will prove no hindrance to the stocking of the inland sea with fish.

As an estimate of the probable profits of the fisheries, it may be stated that the fishing of Lake Mensaleh, whose surface is relatively small, is let for eighty thousand pounds a year. The tenant, a native Egyptian, gets a good deal of money out of it, although the work is very badly done. Certain species of fish, after their roe has been extracted to make a sort of caviare called "boutargue," are thrown away, and so yield absolutely nothing, whereas oil at least might be obtained from them, and afterwards manure possessing the qualities of guano.

Besides which, the chott Djerid is covered at certain points with layers of crystallised salt, which render it a vast natural salt mine. The railway which the company will lay down alongside the canal of supply, as soon as the works are fairly

commenced, will permit the immediate working, almost without expense, of these immense quantities of salt, whose whiteness and purity are quite exceptional.

The new inland African Sea would also give to Algeria, and thereby to France, a secure frontier of the greatest political and military importance. One thing, however, is clear—namely, that this sea, if realised, will benefit very many persons besides its projectors and its executors.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

DEAR, do you remember lingering side by side,
Where in the midnight heavens the daylight never died;

Where the waves' recurrent music kept cadence to
our thought,
And the hour and the silence our love to rapture
wrought?

Dear, do you remember the fair and foolish
dream?
How life grew to enchantment beneath its golden
gleam?

While the pulses thrilled together to the clasping
of the hand,
And the moon's path lay in silver on the sea and
on the sand;

And, like phantoms o'er its radiance, fitted the
shadowy ships,
And love and life were meeting at the touching of
the lips.

Ah me! how fast it faded, that glittering heaving
path,
The glory of the skies above, as of the earth
beneath!

The dream was false and fickle, the hope an idle
thing,
The music died upon the notes, and snapped the
golden string.

Perhaps it had been wiser if nor heart nor lip had
met,
Dear, do you remember?—it were better to forget.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

OUR YEOMEN. THE FATHER.

ON the authority of a renowned poet—now, indeed, we may say, on the authority of a "person of quality" likewise—we are assured that "the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns;" and, if I remember aright, the general teaching of the poem from which the sentence above is quoted, sets out the belief that the human race has entered the path of progress, and is pressing onward with a will. This question of progress, however, is one out of which, on slight provocation, may arise a battle as keen as that of the Books or of the Frogs and Mice, so I will merely glance at it, inferring I may assume that the present era is one of change, and saying nothing as to whether the change is for the better or for the worse. I have

been led thus to moralise on the mutability of things in consequence of my experiences during a visit I lately paid to Hedgelands Manor, the residence of Mr. Arthur Suttaby, a house in which many of the happiest of my youthful days were spent. The reader will probably decide at once that I found the Hedgelands of to-day changed from the Hedgelands of my youth, and in doing so he will not be far wide of the mark.

Though it lies within the parochial limits of Shillingbury the manor-house stands a good two miles from the market-place, and its owner gets very little in return for the rates for paving and gas-lighting, which he has to pay, in order that the denizens of Shillingbury proper may walk with unsullied boots, and not knock their heads against the town pump on such nights as may not be illuminated by the light of the moon. The country round Shillingbury is rather tame in its natural features, but the hill down which one has to go in order to reach the happy valley of Hedgelands is a very respectable hill, when judged by an English standard. This valley is narrow and winding. Along it there runs as charming a little trout-stream as the heart of an angler could desire. It is thickly wooded with fine-grown elms and chestnuts, and it is bounded on the far side by another boldly-rising breast of down-like country. The house is a long, low-walled, steep-roofed building, without anything to mark it in the way of architectural pretensions save the flint facings of the walls and the mouldered brick mullions of the windows. It is an old house, and so, in a manner, interesting, but its chief title to renown lay in the fact that, amidst the decay and absorption of the small estates which had been going on at such an untoward rate of speed since the beginning of the century, it still sheltered a man who still owned as well as tilled the surrounding acres.

In my youth, the owner of the place was a Mr. Nathaniel Suttaby. He and my father were close friends, and Arthur Suttaby, his son, though some years my junior, was my own chief playmate. To a Londoner, life in Shillingbury itself would have seemed real country; but I, as a boy born and bred in the town, was never looked upon as a bonâ fide country lad by my friends at Hedgelands, and often, during the Sunday morning's walk which my father and Mr. Suttaby invariably took together after service, the latter would

remark that I was looking pale and pinched like, and that a breath of country air would do me all the good in the world. Then, as a rule, the next morning, a strange composite vehicle, called a sociable, would drive up to our front door to carry me off, nothing loth, for a week's run in the farmyards, and barns, and granaries of Hedgelands Manor.

Mr. Nathaniel Suttaby was a yeoman of the old-fashioned type, and his establishment was certainly conducted on old-fashioned lines. In the days of his early training, master and servant, farmer and merchant, carried on their dealings largely by the transfer of kind. Money as the medium of exchange did not play the part it does now in our more complicated social state. In Hedgelands, at that time, there would be always as many female servants again as one would now find in a house of like pretension; but very few of them got any wages in hard money. The village-girl had the run of the table, a new dress or two, and training of a rough sort, which generally enabled her to secure a place in a real gentleman's house, provided that Hymen did not interfere and join her fate with that of one or other of the carter-lads who abounded in the stables just as the maids did in the kitchen. There was rough plenty, both for master and servants. The stray caller, let him be neighbour, cattle-dealer, or messenger, would never be allowed to go away without first taking the good cheer of either cellar or larder. Mr. Suttaby would stand at the front door, with his hands in his pockets, on the look-out for such like droppers-in, and would ever be ready with some rough bit of pleasantry concerning the sharpness of his visitors' noses as to where a good dinner was to be found; but, in spite of his gibes, he was always in his heart glad to see them, to hear what news was stirring in the next hundred, and how lambs were selling at Martlebury. The old gentleman had a hearty laugh and rather a bitter tongue, and a selection of ancient jokes, each flavoured with some special spice of personality, and these would be duly let off whenever the appropriate subject might approach the doorstep. The point of most of these, I remember, lay in the overweening arrogance and extravagance of the world in general, in these latter days, and in the frightful falling off that had come to pass universally since the days when he was a boy.

Mr. Suttaby was a tall old man, lank

and wiry. His face was clean-shaven, and his close white hair grew thick as a door-mat on his head, though—or, perhaps, because—he had never used a drop of any hair-preserving compound in his life. A blue coat with bright buttons, a buff waist-coat, drab breeches and gaiters, and a white spotted neckcloth, worn without any such superfluous refinement as a collar, made up his costume—a costume which knew no change during twenty-five years and more. Mr. Suttaby was a keen-witted, observant man, with a sound judgment, and gifted with that all-embracing, well-nigh infallible memory which is the compensation of those who read little. Memories like his run along in one narrow groove of personal observation, seizing upon every incident that meets them with octopus-like tenacity, in lieu of diffusing themselves in futile excursions over acres of printed broadsheet. Upon them, events such as a river flood, an unusually hot summer, or a bad lambing season, imprint themselves far more deeply than they would upon memories choked by the dust of the great grinding mill of modern intelligence. Mr. Suttaby could tell you, without a moment's hesitation, how many bushels per acre of wheat he threshed out of the home close the first year he farmed; what year it was when Harry Cole ran away to enlist; and how long old Sally Jarvis had been on the parish. He was shrewd and quick-sighted with regard to his business as far as his lights went, and probably his brain harboured no more cobwebs than might any day have been swept out of the craniums of enlightened persons by whom he would have been rated as an illiterate farmer, and nothing more.

I can recall some half-dozen individualities, familiar to me during youth, which, now that I look back at them over the best part of my life, seem to belong to a very remote antiquity. I doubt whether the young people of the present day, when they shall have spent enough time to enable them to indulge in the questionable luxury of retrospect, will note so great a gulf between themselves and the older stagers around them. The advent of the age of steam made society jump farther forward in ten years than in the whole preceding century. And of all the individualities just alluded to, Mr. Suttaby certainly dated back the farthest. His ideas, his speech, and his manners were archaic even for a man of his age, and there was a reason for this. Both his parents

died when he was very young, and he was brought up by his maternal grandmother, a lady who was born in the year A.D. 1698.

In her system of education, I think, Mrs. Endicott—for this was the old lady's name—must have followed a vigorous line, and one calculated to mould early into definite shape the young material she took in hand, for Mr. Suttaby, as a grown tree, certainly had a strong inclination towards the ways and habits of the last century, thus showing in what direction the twig had been bent. As I have said before, he held the belief—not uncommon amongst old gentlemen—that the world and all it contained were going to the mischief. With wider questions of the day—questions which are now fully, aye, and shrewdly discussed on the village-green and in the inn-kitchen—he troubled himself little. Now and then, when rumours of towns sacked and half destroyed by the mob of reform came to his ears, and stories of threshing-machines smashed by gangs of farm-labourers imperfectly instructed in the science of political economy, he would hazard the opinion that Government ought to do something; but politics at large he regarded as matters for the gentry and the people up in London to wrangle about at election-times. He always voted Whig, for the very good reason that his grandfather had done so all his life, and had taught him the following verse by way of helping him to form his political creed:

Last Christmas Day morning I thought it no sin
To drink a glass of Holland gin,
To clear my voice, and make me sing,
The Prince of Orange shall be king.

But to learn what Mr. Suttaby's real politics were would have been a difficult task, for I have over and over again heard him repeat with emphasis that Whigs and Tories were all rogues alike. I have known him, however, to speak in terms of high approval of Mr. Pitt, and of the high prices which blessed the land during that statesman's tenure of power, so I fancy, in spite of his blue and buff exterior, that he was a Tory at heart.

The internal economy of the house, as it used to be when I first knew it, certainly belonged to a bygone age. On entering one came into a huge square room with a brick floor and large, open chimney. On one side, and ranged in racks against the wall, hung a score or more of old brass-mounted muskets which had been sent down to Mr. Suttaby, as a man of weight, to distribute amongst the villagers in the

year when that futile camp was being formed on the heights behind Boulogne. Under the windows ran a long oaken table resting upon solid trestles let into the floor; and at this board in the hot summer weather the whole family would take their meals—master and mistress, son and daughters at one end, and the domestic servants, and now and then a farm-labourer, at the other. At one end of this apartment were two rooms panelled with fairly good work of the seventeenth century, and in the smaller of these, the keeping-room as it was called, the family usually lived. The larger, dignified with the style of the parlour, I never entered as a guest, but sometimes when I used to spend the day with Arthur, we boys would make furtive excursions thereto. I cannot pretend to describe its equipment in detail, for I never saw it save in a dim, half light. I can only say that a good deal of care and brown-holland had been expended in covering everything upon which a cover could possibly be put. Its blinds were many times doubled; for Mrs. Suttaby, careful housewife as she was, held that light took the colour out of carpets and curtains as much as the full blaze of the sun; and people of her condition, when they fitted themselves out with household goods, did so for life, and she would have as soon thought of buying a second set of curtains or carpet for the parlour, as she would of going to London to be presented at Court. Upstairs there was a vast range of bedrooms, some of them almost as unapproachable as the above-described parlour, and above these the attics, a region of mystery and delight. The memory of the happy times I had spent in these elevated abodes was still so vivid during my late visit to Hedgeland, that I was strongly tempted to face dust and cobwebs, and crazy staircases, and revisit them; but my philosophy, warning me of the danger of attempting to repeat a success, came in just in time to hold me back.

Mrs. Suttaby, as long as I knew her, was an invalid; one of those who rather delight in parading their ailments. Her health was certainly indifferent, but she could not have been afflicted with half the diseases of which she was always discovering symptoms, or she must have gone to her grave years before she did. She was a tall, handsome woman, with dark, curling hair, and flashing black eyes. Her face was well-shaped, and her features

clearly-out, and of a high-born type. Neither she nor her husband had anything like pride of birth, but now and then I have heard the old man declare that his wife, if she liked to do so, could show a descent which would put to shame the family claims of many of the county magnates round about. In most matters Mrs. Suttaby belonged to a past age almost as completely as her husband did; and for her the question of the subjection of women was scarcely a practical one. She was of a generation which took the rule of the strongest more as a matter of course than later ones have done, and in her relations with her husband there were traces of the age when the term of wife included many duties that we should now rate as menial. She may or may not have realised the fact that it was the destiny of women to weep, but it is certain that she accredited them with the liability of labour, and accordingly she ruled her maids with an iron hand, and kept them on the move from cockcrow to sunset.

The Suttaby family consisted of four daughters and one son. The girls were fine, tall, handsome women, strongly favouring their mother, and they were all married to neighbouring farmers, and the mothers of numerous children before they were any of them thirty years of age. With these we have little concern. Arthur, the only son, named after the Duke of Wellington, was born some six years after the youngest of the girls, and was in a way the child of his parents' old age. By some strange whim of destiny, the boy showed just as strong a tendency to reach forward to the future in his tastes and habits, as his father was disposed to hark back to his grandsire's time, and there was thus a far wider interval between the two than there commonly is between an elderly father and a young son. It was evident that considerable pressure would be needed to mould Arthur into conformity with the family traditions. When his son was born, Mr. Suttaby was well-to-do; for his position, indeed, he was a rich man; and, as the boy grew up, a legend gained currency in the household—a legend, it must be added, which had its source in a hidden and long suppressed ambition of Mrs. Suttaby's—that he was to be brought up like a gentleman. Where and from whom the good woman gleaned the notion of what a real gentleman ought to resemble, it will not profit us to consider; but I fear there is no doubt that she did not take her husband as a complete example, for Arthur was

taught early that it was vulgar to cool his tea in his saucer, or to use his knife to carry food from his plate to his mouth, or to employ in conversation the vigorous *Folkshire provincialisms*, all of which social offences, to my certain knowledge, Mr. Suttaby often committed.

It was soon evident that Arthur, as far as his outward seeming was concerned, would never even approach the paternal model; for his mother, with that silent, mild insistence by which weak people so often get their own way against people of stronger will, contrived that her boy, from the time he left the nurse's arms, should be attired exactly as the young Master Winsors were. Few of my readers will be able to realise, from actual experience, what was the youth's fashionable attire of 1840, or thereabouts, so I will refer them to contemporary illustrations, and leave them to judge whether Mrs. Suttaby would not have done better to have dressed her boy in the garb of any other known period of history. Arthur's schooling was, for a long time, a matter of some difficulty. Until he was nearly twelve, he went every day, for a couple of hours, to a Mr. Kench, a mild old gentleman, who had once kept a private school in a neighbouring town, and had now retired for a life of ease and the care of a garden to a pretty little cottage between Hedgelands and Shillingbury; but when it was deemed that a course of study like the above was hardly enough for a boy of Arthur's age, he was sent to the grammar-school at Martlebury, where the boys learnt Latin and Greek, Euclid and Algebra, instead of the scarcely less ineffectual curriculum in vogue at the classical and commercial academies, which were then the sole fountains of learning in the smaller towns. Of course there was our own grammar-school, but that was just then falling into its lowest depths of decrepitude under Dr. Addlestrop's mismanagement, and, besides this, Mrs. Suttaby had an idea that something very superior, in the way of polish, would be imparted to the pupils of a grammar-school in a cathedral town. To his mother and sisters the day of Arthur's first departure to school was a very mournful one; and the old man, though he scoffed at the women for their display of soft-heartedness and affected the Roman father, looked rather wistfully at the boy's empty chair at meal-times, and set out with a heavy heart for his after-breakfast walk, in which he had for some time had his

boy as a companion. He went much more frequently, too, to Martlebury market, after Arthur was entered at the grammar-school, and it is needless to say that he never made the journey without taking with him some toothsome offering in the way of a hamper of cakes, and patties, and new-laid eggs, and divers others of those good things, which seemed to spring up naturally in the kitchen at Hedgelands. The boy came home for his Easter holidays, and was naturally made a hero of by the womankind. These, and probably Mr. Suttaby as well, enjoyed this first vacation quite as much as Arthur himself did. The boy was tractable and studious, and, thanks to the care of one of the sub-masters, who had taken a fancy to him, he learnt a good deal of useful knowledge in the way of chemistry and botany, branches which, it is hardly necessary to add, did not enter into the ordinary work of the school.

He grew up into a tall, handsome lad, a bit of a dandy as to his clothes, but manly withal. Everybody liked him, and it appeared as if Mrs. Suttaby's prescription for making a gentleman of her son was doing its work well, though, assuredly, it was making him into a man differing from his father as widely as winter from summer. It might have been on this account, or it might have been the result of reasons more complex, that Mr. Suttaby did not regard this gentleman-making process with the same approval as the rest of the world did.

The old man was, as I have said before, a sharp observer, and he had seen, with ever-growing regret and uneasiness, every time that Arthur came home from school, that the influences to which the boy was subjected, however desirable they might be in other respects, were not calculated to make him satisfied with a life such as he would have, farming the acres of Hedgelands, as so many generations of Suttabys had hitherto done. This life, the old man had decided, somewhat prematurely perhaps, must needs be good enough for anybody, seeing that it had been good enough for himself. Arthur would want reminding several times after breakfast that his father was ready for his morning walk round the farm, and would tear himself away from his book with a sigh and look of regret, and, for the first half-hour, would probably turn out a very uncongenial companion, for his thoughts would be with the essay or story he had

left, rather than with his father's remarks upon his own crops, or his criticisms of his neighbour's husbandry. Nothing that the boy did positively, no spoken word of his, tended to increase the father's uneasiness so much as the listlessness he showed where his interest should have been the keenest. There was a something in the air, an indefinable restraint, growing more and more marked every day, and threatening, ere long, to draw asunder completely the lives of father and son.

Mr. Suttaby was quite right in his apprehensions. The new surroundings of the boy were rapidly shaping him into a man utterly out of sympathy with the old home and its ways. There was soon no charm for him in its rude plenty and free simplicity, and after a little there grew up something like positive distaste, and, try as he might, he could not altogether hide this from his father's eye. He would constantly be letting fall remarks as to the careers which certain of his schoolfellows were going to follow: how one was going to be a clergyman, another a barrister, another was going to India, and another already talked of the red coat and sword he would wear when he had got his commission. He was conscious that he was just as clever as, and certainly better read than these, so there was a gnawing of bitter disappointment at his heart as he compared the prospects of his more fortunate schoolfellows with his own, which promised nothing better than a whole life spent in the midst of uncongenial surroundings. It was worse than ever when his father would make jokes, with something of mistrust in his voice and eye as to how his remarks would be received, as to what the young master would be up to when he should have done with books and school; how that three-year-old colt would be just fit for him to ride in a couple of years' time; and how they might perhaps manage to make a cricket-ground in the home pasture—not up to the mark of the grammar-school ground at Martlebury, perhaps, but one good enough for Arthur to play on with myself and some other boys out of the village. Arthur would say very little in reply to these suggestions. He would smile, a very wan and wintry smile for so young a lad; and the old man, knowing that all his solicitude and would-be kindness provoked no throb of pleasure in the boy's heart, would turn away with a muttered rebuke on his lips and bitterness in his soul.

When Arthur had been about two years at the Martlebury school, it happened that one of the members for the city, moved by a desire to stimulate the talents of the local youth, or by anxiety to give new lustre to his own waning popularity, offered a prize to the head-master of the grammar-school, to be given to the pupil who should write the best essay on a given subject. Of all the compositions sent in, Arthur Suttaby's was pronounced to be by far the most promising. The prize was given to him, and a paragraph to that effect found its way into all the county papers. That year the midsummer speech-day and prize-giving was invested with special importance. The Mayor was present, as a matter of course, so was the senatorial donor, and so was the accepted candidate on the other side at the next election, who registered a vow during the proceedings that his name should appear as a benefactor in next year's prize-list. Arthur was, in a way, the lion of the day. He was introduced to all the bigwigs, and was soon in conversation with the M.P.'s wife, who assured him that he really must come to town and be a barrister, and write for the papers. Her husband was in the House, and would be delighted to speak a word for him, and editors were wont to be civil to people who had friends in the House. Then the M.P. himself came up, and said it was very warm, almost as warm as it was in the House, and when he rose to speak, was careful to address himself to the Mayor, in the chair, as "sir," and to allude to the head-master as "my honourable friend." Such words as the lady murmured to Arthur were strange to him, and they were very sweet as well; but they would have been much sweeter if he had not been expecting every moment to see his father and mother enter the schoolroom, and make their way to the front places which had been assigned to them as the parents of the successful essayist.

At last they appeared, Mr. Suttaby in a brand-new suit of clothes. His coat seemed bluer, and his waistcoat yellower, and his face redder than ever, in Arthur's eyes. Mrs. Suttaby looked very handsome; but the contrast between her gown, of a fashion thirty years old, and the costumes of the other ladies present was certainly striking. There was a profound silence as the old couple made their way up the room, followed by a murmur of tittering comment, and many of the remarks which reached Arthur's ears

made his heart sink within him and his face burn; but it burnt not, I fear, with honest indignation at the ill-bred jeers which affronted his hearing, but rather because his father came dressed as a rustic into an assembly of provincial town-folk.

Arthur was by this time on the platform, and from there he greeted his parents as they took their seats with a smile and a look; but it was a timid smile and a shifty, furtive look, and not the steady, honest regard of pride and affection which should, at such a time, have glanced from a child's to a parent's eye. After the prize-giving, there was a lunch at the head-master's house, and the great man was full of compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Suttaby on the diligence and acquirements of their son, prophesying great things of him in the future, when he should go up to the University, as, of course, he would. Poor Mrs. Suttaby's head was quite turned with the proud position she had occupied during the day, and she found it difficult to say anything in reply to anybody, except to remark she was sure they were very kind; but her husband, soured and suspicious already, was moody and curt in his speech and manner, for he had tasted the bitter drop in the cup of honour, which seemed that day to be full filled for him and his own. His boy was the hero of the feast; his name would stand as a prize-winner on the schoolroom wall; a pile of handsomely-bound books would lie on the parlour table at Hedgelands; but of what profit would all this be to the old man, seeing that in the course of winning these honours his son had learnt to be ashamed of his father and mother?

During the drive home that evening Mrs. Suttaby could hardly keep silence for five minutes, asking Arthur how ever he had managed to pick up such a lot of learning, and remarking to her husband that it certainly was wonderful. But the boy was shy and reserved, as if conscious of some jarring chord; and from Mr. Suttaby she could extract nothing but monosyllabic replies; so she was forced to fall back upon her own reflections, and these, it is hardly necessary to add, led to the drawing of certain mental pictures of the high estate of the Suttabys when that process of gentleman-making, which had been so auspiciously begun in the case of her son Arthur, should have been duly completed.

"EDELWEISS."

A STORY.

CHAPTER II. AS SHADOWS FALL.

THERE came a long silence after those words. Conrad von Reichenberg was watching the girl as she stood a little distance away from him, her earnest eyes intent upon that distant path where the well-known figure of Hans Krauss would appear.

"For whom are you looking?" asked the young man presently. "A lover?"

She turned her eyes to his in grave rebuke.

"I watch for my father," she answered. "I have no lover. That is what the girls in the village talk about. It is so odd, how they quarrel about Hans, and Fritz, and Friedrich, and Karl; and they are so stupid, all of them!"

He laughed.

"How flattering to Hans, and Fritz, and the rest of their brotherhood! But you could scarcely expect them to be anything but stupid, could you? They are like the cattle, who work all day in the fields, and go to rest at sundown; plodding, honest, industrious, no doubt, but brainless. And so you have no lover. Well, you are young yet. Time will mend that mistake."

His light tone jarred on her. She felt perplexed and disturbed. She looked at the handsome dark face, but the mockery on it disconcerted her.

"You mean that I am stupid, too," she said. "Yes, of course, I know that; only——"

"Only, there are different degrees of stupidity," he interposed. "You are right; but pray don't imagine I had any such unflattering thought of you. Ignorance does not imply stupidity—far from it. Yet it brings more happiness than knowledge does. The more we know, the more we want to know. Yet we never know enough before the book is closed for ever."

"May there not be something more to learn—afterwards?" she said timidly.

Her quick fancy had followed him with ease. To her it always seemed so much easier to think than to speak.

He looked at her in surprise.

"Do the priests tell you that?"

"Oh no; I never speak to them of my fancies. Of course they are old, and full of learning. They would only laugh."

That odd little smile again shadowed the lips of Conrad von Reichenberg.

"You think so? You have not heard

of the wisdom of simplicity, then? A child's questioning has puzzled many a wise head before now. How earnestly you look up that mountain path! Is your father in sight yet?"

"No," she answered, somewhat troubled; "and he said, at sunset. I can't think what delays him."

"He may have gone farther than he intended," said her companion. "Do not be anxious. After all, it is very little past the hour. Has he never broken faith with you?"

"Never," she answered proudly; "nor with anyone. You do not know how good he is."

"I will take your word for it," said the young man lightly. "I wish you would sit down here instead of standing; you will be tired."

"I am never tired," she answered simply, "and it would not be seemly for such as I to sit beside you. You are a gentleman, and I only a peasant."

"What of that?" he said gravely. "You might sit beside me if I ask you."

She shook her head.

"There are many of the great, and rich, and noble who come here to our mountains. My father always says to me: 'Where you can render service do so, but never impertune, and never take payment unless you have done something to earn it. Above all, keep your own place, and preserve your own self-respect.' I am only a peasant, mein herr; it is not fitting that I should sit by your side."

"Have you ever read the story of Aschenbrödel?" he asked with a smile in his brown eyes. "She was a kitchen-wench by force of circumstances, yet a prince wedded her. How do you know you are really a peasant?"

"What else could I be?" she asked simply. "Hans Krauss used to tell me when I was little that the fairies had left me in the mountains, but the girls in the village laughed, and so at last I begged him to tell me the truth. It made me very sad for a time, but it was better I should know."

"Women have a fancy for brushing off illusions," he said curtly as a shadow came over the eyes that were like clear brown waters. "They could not let you rest content with yours. Feminine nature is true to itself, even in a village."

"They are very good to me though," she said with eager championship; "everyone is that. I do not think I could in any way be happier than I am."

"Do you not?" he said, smiling at the

earnest face touched and lightened into a more spiritual beauty by the faint light that lingered in this dusky nook. "I wish you could teach me your secret. Do you really feel that there is nothing more for you to do or to care about in life than to sew and spin, and milk your goats, and gather your wild flowers, and minister to the simple wants of your foster-father?"

"To do—no," she answered. "To care about—well, that is different. I should like to read better, and to know a little more. This railway, for instance; my father and the peasant-folk used to say it was witchcraft and the work of the Evil One, but I have seen the books and the plans, and I know if they can teach men all that they must be wonderful indeed."

"Yes, they are," he said gravely. "All of life that is worth knowing or learning, books can teach you; but after their knowledge comes another, easier to gain, but scarcely so pleasant in the gaining. We call it experience. It is learnt in the school of the world, not among your mountains and valleys, my child."

"I would rather have the books," she said simply.

"A wise choice," he said. "Shall I lend you some? Can you read German, such as I speak?"

"Not very well," she answered diffidently. "You see, at the schools they teach you so little, and then I have not much time for reading. But I would try," she went on eagerly. "My father speaks better German than I. He was in Wien and in Linz when he was young. He could help me."

"Wien? That is my birthplace," said her companion. "I have not been there for nearly two years, though. I have been travelling about in the interests of my profession."

"What is that?" she asked.

"An engineer," he answered. "That is why I have come to look at this wonderful work here. I am a friend of the chief-inspector."

"And you are a soldier, too, I suppose?"

"Of course—by necessity, not inclination. I should like to have been an artist, but my father opposed the wish. It is not always possible to follow one's own inclination, you know."

He paused abruptly. It struck him as a little odd that he should be talking in this confidential fashion to a little peasant-girl with a childish face and blue eyes.

He drew out his watch.

"I must be making my way to the village," he said. "Shall I see you to-morrow, and bring you the book I promised?"

"If it be not too much trouble, mein herr," she said, colouring brightly.

"It won't be that," he said, laughing. "And now good-night. I hope your vigil won't have to last much longer. I—"

Something cut short his words—a cry from paling lips, a sudden frightened gesture as the girl pointed up the mountain-path, down which a slow and halting procession was slowly approaching.

"Lieber Himmel!" she ejaculated. "What has happened? Is it—is it my father?"

He, too, looked with anxious scrutiny at the slow progress of the group, who seemed to be supporting some helpless burden.

"Don't look so frightened," he said gently. "There has been an accident, doubtless, but it may be only one of the tourists."

She never seemed to hear him. She started off with the speed of a hare. After a moment's hesitation he followed. He saw the pretty, slender figure flash in and out among the shadowy firs. He saw the group halt and part at her approach. He saw her fall on her knees beside the burden they carried, and then he, too, rushed forwards over the rough, narrow path.

"What is it?" he asked the men eagerly.

"He fell down an incline. The ground gave way, they say. His back is broken."

"And who is he?"

"He is my father," sobbed the girl wildly. "My father, and he is dying, they say. Dying! Lieber Gott, what shall I do—what shall I do!"

The piteous, heart-broken appeal thrilled out from the silence with a despair that touched every heart. The young Austrian bent over the prostrate figure. He saw the old man had fainted.

"Perhaps the injuries are not so great," he said gently. "I have some small knowledge of surgery; get him to his cabin, and I will examine him."

The men raised the rough litter they had made. The girl rose to her feet; her sobs seemed frozen, her tears no longer fell. So, slowly and in silence, the little procession moved down the mountain side in the soft June dusk, none speaking or daring to speak of the dread that each heartshared.

When they reached the little cabin they laid him on his bed, and Conrad von Reichenberg tore off the rough shirt and

waistcoat and examined the injuries of the wounded man.

One look was enough. With a shudder he turned away.

"He is dead already," he said softly to the men, so that she, waiting there in the summer dusk, might not hear him.

But the stillness and the silence told her their own tale. She thrust the door open and came forward. They looked at her compassionately.

"Nothing can be done," they said. "You see he was old and heavy, and the fall was a bad one."

She never seemed to hear. She went up and looked at the features in their frozen calm; her warm young hands touched in vain appeal those lifeless, nerveless ones that lay so helpless and unresponsive now.

"Is this death?" she whispered strangely. "Not three hours back he was with me and spoke to me, and I kissed him; now——"

Then she fell down on her knees with one faint, piteous moan.

"Father—father, I had only you. Oh, come back to me—come back to me!"

CHAPTER III. AWAKING.

THE first touch of sorrow falls with a strange, terrible chill on the young.

The little mountain-maid suffered keenly when she found herself bereft of the tender guardian who had for so long stood to her in the place of all nearer relationship.

The days passed on, but she took no heed of them. A sort of stupor was upon her. She could scarcely realise that she was quite alone—that she must act and think for herself. The friends of Hans Krauss came about her and consoled her, and the old priest told her there would be some little money for her from the sale of the little cabin and its simple furniture, and she listened to them all and thanked them in her grave, simple way, and fell to wondering what she should do now with her solitary life.

It was a Sunday evening when, for the first time since old Hans's death, she walked out and took the little path by the lake-side where she had so often walked with the dead man.

It was a beautiful, still evening; the birds were fluttering amongst the chestnut-boughs. The sky was gold above the far-off mountain-tops; the lovely blue water looked clear as sapphire where it rippled by the little path. Insensibly the girl's heart grew lighter as she drank in the beauty of the scene. She stood quite

still—there under the chestnut-trees—in her simple black gown, and with her fair uncovered head lifted up to the sunlight, and her rapt, soft eyes fixed earnestly on those rosy-tinted clouds that drifted round the golden portals of the day. Perhaps through them the tender heart she loved had passed into some vague unknown world beyond; perhaps a new life had begun for him; perhaps he could see her—watch over her still. So her innocent thoughts ran on, till suddenly a shadow fell across her in the evening light, and a voice broke the spell of silence that had been filled with dreams.

"I am glad to see you out once more," it said. "I hope you are better."

She turned, colouring shyly at the remembered tones.

"I am quite well, I thank you," she said, in her grave, direct way; "and I have not been ill, only very—very unhappy."

The young Austrian saw the change in her face, but it seemed to him as if sorrow had only lent it a rarer charm, and the look in her eyes touched him as nothing had done yet. He could not offer her any commonplace consolation; he felt it would be unworthy of such grief. He stood beside her in silence, and his eyes followed hers to those golden heights where the glory of the day still lingered.

"Will you walk on with me?" he asked her presently. "I should like to speak to you of your future. You are so lonely and unprotected, and perhaps I could serve you in some way. I have so often wished to tell you, but I did not like to intrude upon your grief. Only now——"

"You are very kind to think of me at all," she interposed as he hesitated. "I—I do not know what I shall do. I must live on here, and work——"

Her voice trembled and broke. It was still so new to her to have to think of herself, and for herself.

"It will be best, no doubt," she went on hurriedly. "The neighbours are kind, and I can earn my bread. I am not afraid."

"But do you really wish to stay here? Does this rough, hard life content you?" he asked wonderingly. "It seems to me you are fitted for better things than working in the fields, and tending cattle, and all the coarse, homely cares of a peasant."

She looked up and met his eyes, and a strange trouble seemed to thrill her heart.

How handsome he was, and kind, and how different to the rough-mannered youths of the village!

"One must be content as one is," she answered, with a sigh that belied her words. "What I wish has nothing to do with it."

He would have liked to tell her that it might have a great deal to do with it, but something held him back—some innate sense of chivalry and compassion for the innocent youth, and simple soul that held such beauty of purity.

He walked on beside her in the summer dusk, and some few of the peasants and people of Vitznau meeting them, looked half askance at the girl, and nodded their heads, and muttered to one another that no good could come of it.

Edelweiss noticed nothing of this. She answered their simple greetings in her usual grave and gentle way, and was in no whit proud of the honour of this young aristocrat's companionship. It was kind of him to notice her, to interest himself about her, but she knew how wide a gulf divided him from herself; still, that evening's walk was very pleasant.

He talked to her a great deal. He told her of beautiful cities which had been scarcely known to her even by name; of life in the great world, of art, and wealth, and fame; of himself, too, he told her—of his home, his childhood, his mother's death; his lonely youth, that had been chiefly spent in quaint, pretty Heitzing. Then of his father, and of the beautiful young wife he had lately married, until the young girl grew absorbed in interest, and forgot her recent sorrows and anxieties in listening to this wonderful history.

At last a heavy step came sounding on the path behind them, and a voice called to the girl to stop. She looked back, and saw it was the great rough figure of Franz Brühl, the son of the richest farmer in Vitznau.

"The mother has sent me to bring you back to sup with us," he said in his gruff German patois, and looking at her companion with rude and angry stare.

The girl started and coloured in her shy fashion.

"Your mother is very good," she answered gently. "But I do not wish to come to-night."

He stared at her stupidly, then a curious smile stole round his lips.

"I will tell her you are better employed," he said rudely, and turned away.

The young Austrian looked at the retreating figure, and then at the girl's troubled face. He felt a little amused. This young

boor was her lover, of course, and he was angered and jealous.

"Who is that?" he asked her as they moved on again, through the deepening shadows of the woods.

"He is Franz Brühl," she answered simply. "His people are very rich, so everyone says, but I do not like them much."

"Nor Franz either?" he asked, smiling. "You have offended him, I fear."

"I am sorry," she answered. "But, indeed, I had no wish to go and sup with them to-night. They are so rough and so noisy, and his brothers—they are often rude. My father did not like me to be with them."

"They thought you would be lonely, no doubt, and the invitation was kindly meant," he said. "Do you always answer people in that direct way?"

"I always tell the truth. That is right, is it not?" she said, looking up at his face.

"Yes; and you may tell me the truth now, if you will. Would you rather be walking with me than supping with your friends at the village. Is that why you refused?"

"I would rather be with you—oh, certainly; but I did not refuse the Brühls for that reason only. I have already told you why."

The sun had set now. There was a dull red glow on the mountain heights. In the distant village lights began to twinkle star-like among the dusky trees.

Involuntarily Conrad von Reichenberg paused and looked down at the fair flower-like face by his side. She was so beautiful and so unconscious, and so good and pure. Certainly far too good to be thrown away on a rough boor like Franz Brühl. He lightly touched the little brown hand that hung by her side.

"I am glad you would rather be with me," he said softly. "But Franz is angry, is he not? Perhaps you are unwise to offend him."

"Why?" she asked simply, and drew her hand away, looking up at him with frank, sweet eyes, that yet held the shadow of some dim trouble.

He laughed a little uncomfortably.

"Perhaps he loves you, and would marry you, and then you would have a home, and no need to trouble yourself about the future."

The rosy colour flushed all over her fair face.

"Oh no—no!" she cried eagerly; "I could not—I have never thought of such a

thing. And Franz—oh, I do not like him at all. He is fierce and rude, and he thinks-so much of himself because he will have the farm, and the girls of the village all flatter him. But I—oh no, I should never think of him as—as you say."

"You are a foolish little soul," he answered, smiling, but not ill pleased, after all, at the frank confession. "Why are you turning that way—do you wish to go home already?"

"It is getting late," she said rather reluctantly; "I must return now."

"Will you walk here again to-morrow, after sunset?" he asked impulsively. "I will bring you that book we were talking of, if you like. I think you said you could read German?"

"Yes; but not very well," she answered diffidently. "And will you really bring me a book? You are very kind. I—I know I am stupid and ignorant, but indeed I do so wish to learn more, and to know more."

"I will help you if you will let me," he said gently. "I may not be here very much longer, but while I am——"

A momentary compunction cut short his speech. He knew how it might be, and she did not. He saw the pure white page of an innocent, fanciful girlhood lying there at his hand. Should he leave it a blank, or write upon it those letters of fire that are never again to be erased?

As the thought crossed his mind, his eyes met hers in the soft summer dusk. They were so anxious, so pleading, so full of hidden depths of thought, emotion, passion—all that might be as fruit to the flower, as blossom to the bud.

"While I am," he went on hurriedly, "I will teach you whatever you wish."

Her whole face glowed and brightened at his words.

"How can I thank you, sir?" she said.

"Perhaps—some day—I will tell you," he answered; but she, not understanding, was silent.

How happy she felt walking homewards in that enchanted stillness, beneath the dusky boughs and gleaming, silver moon-rays! How happy, even though old Hans was sleeping yonder in the grey shadows of the churchyard, and on all the wide earth she had neither kith nor kin to love or care for her.

Perhaps in all life there is no feeling so exquisite as that sweet, vague happiness which nestles closely, shyly, to the heart, in no way to be expressed or explained, but capable of transfiguring every thought and

emotion, and filling the soul to the very brim with its own sweet, fanciful possession.

Talking gravely, simply, earnestly, frankly, turn by turn, so the two so strangely met and associated went on by the bright lake waters, parting only as they reached the village-street, which was quite deserted now.

That night, as the girl knelt by her bed, and said her simple prayers, she found herself dimly wondering that that dread, cold weight of unhappiness seemed no longer to press its heavy hand upon her heart. Some new hope had sprung to life; some faint gleam of sunlight had fallen across the path that sorrow had left so gloomy and so desolate.

It was with her when her eyes closed in slumber, it was with her still when in the clear, bright dawn she woke to hear the songs of the birds among the boughs, and the lowing of the cattle in the meadows. She rose and opened her little lattice window, and looked away over the dewy fields to where the great mountains lay still wrapped in dim mist. She had not been up there since Hans Krauss died, but she thought she could go this morning, and it would be sweet to feel once more the cool, rich air on those lofty heights, to see the grey, soft shadows melt beneath the sunrays, and feel the old sweet thrill of wonder and delight, as she looked down at the sleeping canton, and tranquil waters far below.

She was soon dressed, and out, and climbing the steep path which led up beside the nearly completed railway. She met no one till half-way up the ascent, and then, with a strange little thrill of anger and dislike, she found herself confronted by Franz Brühl.

"You are up early," he said with a grim smile. "Are you going to meet the fine gentleman who was with you last night?"

She looked up at him, her eyes dark with sudden anger.

"I go to meet no one," she answered curtly, "only to see the sunrise. It seems so long since I have been there," she added sadly, as she looked up towards the Rigi Kulm.

He looked at her closely, then turned as if to bear her company, for she was moving on.

"My mother was vexed you could not come last night," he said presently. "And it is not wise of you to be about so much with the herr engineer. Gentlemen such as he are not fit company for peasant maidens, so my mother says, and so I think too."

"Your mother is very kind to interest herself in what I do," the girl answered proudly. "And yesterday was only the second time I have spoken to the herr. He was so kind to my father. And why should I not speak to him, or let him walk with me, if he wishes? There is nothing wrong in that."

"At present—no," answered Franz moodily. "But if it goes on, one cannot tell. I do not like you to talk so familiarly with strangers."

"You do not like it?" she echoed wonderingly. "What is it to you? You are not my father or my brother, Franz."

"No," he answered in the same sullen way. "Perhaps it would be better if I were. I would tell that fine aristocrat to keep his distance, and not be trying to make honest girls discontented."

The warm indignant colour flushed rosy into the girl's cheeks.

"I am glad you are not my brother," she said hastily. "You are rude, and rough, and unkind. You never did like me to have any pleasure or amusement. I wish you would not mind about me or what I do. There are so many other girls in the village, and they are prettier and well dowered, and they think so much of you. Why do you not go to them?"

He looked at her with a half-stupid, half-admiring glance, and his bronzed face grew a shade paler.

"You know very well I care for none of the village girls," he answered sullenly. "I like you better than any of them, and I will marry you at once, if you will only say yes; and you need not trouble about your future, or work hard as you said you would, and my mother will welcome you, though you are only a nameless child, and can bring no store of linen or dowry of any sort in your hand. But we are well-to-do, and that does not matter, and they know I have set my heart on you, though indeed there is rich Kätchen, the vine-grower's daughter, whom I might have for the asking, and pretty Therese, too, for the matter of that, and—"

"I should advise you, then, to ask them," interrupted Edelweiss indignantly. "I do not like you—no, nor ever did—and I do not wish to marry."

For an instant her companion stood still, and stared at her as if discrediting his senses.

"You—will—not—marry me?" he

jerked out abruptly, and then laughed rudely and long. "Perhaps you think I am not in earnest, but I am. You had better think it over. You will not get such an offer twice," he said at last. "You know you are only a peasant, and have not even a name to call your own. You will have to live by yourself, and work hard for your daily bread, and it is no use letting your head run on books, and fine gentlemen, and such like follies. Everyone knows what that leads to."

He stopped abruptly, for something in the girl's white, indignant face shamed his rough taunts.

"You have forced your company on me," she said. "I did not wish for it, and you have no right to insult me because now I have no one to protect me. I—I cannot help about my name; and has not Father Josephs told us that it is what we do that brings us respect—not what we are. And now I have said all, and I do not wish you to speak to me again. If my father had been alive you would not have dared to offer me such insults; it is cowardly, and I—I hate you! I wish I might never see your face again!"

She broke down into bitter weeping, for anger was rare with her, and her rage and indignation surprised herself. As for Franz, he only stood still and stared at her with lowering brows and angry eyes. Then she turned and fled past him into the woods beyond, and he knew it was useless to follow, or attempt to make peace, until her first feelings of wrath and indignation had spent themselves.

"Hate me!" he muttered to himself as he went down the steep, rough path. "That is his doing. Let him look to himself. I swear he shall never win what he has made me lose!"

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VIII.

EDIE FAIRFAX, with every whit as good cause to take life as easily as Phil, found herself unable to do so, for the simple reason that Nature had endowed her with a more restless and question-loving disposition. To lay aside her oars and rest upon them, simply because a good breeze was filling out her sail, would have been an utter impossibility to her. Thank you, no; she would far sooner "bout ship," and go in an exactly opposite direction, making what headway she could against the wind. Time enough to give up the management of her little craft when her hand was too weak to hold an oar, her eye too dim to see the rocks ahead. Until then her course she would make and keep for herself, and, no doubt, would manage to get on, just as well as the rest of the world, by dint of hard pulling, good steering, and taking her soundings pretty often.

Honestly it must be admitted that this little matter of "taking soundings" did go on pretty often. Edie was one of those individuals blessed with such an excess of energy that, one way or another, it must find an outlet for itself. The outlets she had found for herself from her smallest and most mischief-loving days upwards were numerous, and at times remarkable. A whole menagerie of pets, a box of gardening-tools, an incessant succession of dancing, riding, driving, and boating lessons had been wonderful safety-valves for her in her pinafore days. Later on had come in their stead delightful sips of London dissipation imbibed during a yearly summer's visit, the usual round of country sports and amusements, and of

county gaiety. Then, too, there was dear papa always at hand to be looked after, taken care of, kept "up to the mark" generally in his social and magisterial duties; and, over and above everything else, was there not dear old Phil to tease and worry, caress and be kind to, just as the fit might take her little ladyship?

But alas for the wet days that cut her off from any one of these outlets to superfluous energy! Alas for the dreary days when a sprained ankle kept her indoors. Alas for the three months that Phil was enjoying his mountaineering, fishing, or yachting, if they failed to come precisely at the time that Edie was in London with her father, enjoying her round of social gaieties and entertainments! Put a stopper upon Stromboli, look for results in the Mediterranean! The results in the household at the Hall following these untoward events were, to say the least, disturbing and uncomfortable. A servant or two sent away would count for nothing. They might be, and no doubt frequently were, reinstalled when the young mistress's caprice had spent itself, and fine weather had once more returned.

There were other things at times not quite so easy of readjustment. Hasty letters written to distant relatives, or half-estranged friends, which no amount of apology afterwards could atone for; hasty resolves made and acted upon, whose consequences it would take the wisdom of years to undo.

It may reasonably be doubted whether the ill-advised notion of releasing Phil for a whole twelvemonth from his engagement to her would ever have entered her head, had not a wrist sprained at tennis incapacitated her at once from riding, or driving, thereby leaving her a vast and most unfortunate amount of leisure

wherein her mind was free to dwell upon all sorts of probabilities, and likely or unlikely possibilities. Among the latter she placed the possibility of Phil not having sufficiently known his own mind when he allowed himself to drift into a matrimonial engagement with her. Of course it was not likely that Phil ever would or could see anyone in the whole world he would or could love better than her, little Edie, but still there was a possibility of such a thing, and that possibility must be faced. So there and then, in her usual impetuous yet dogged fashion, she set herself to face it, and the result was, as has already been shown, a considerable amount of discomfort to her father, to Phil, and eventually to herself.

It may be imagined that Ellinor's coming to the house, and the consequent upheaval of many cherished household ways, set Edie's brain going on a few fresh possibilities.

Ellinor was altogether "a new experience" to Edie; in the whole course of her eighteen years she had never seen a girl to compare with her for beauty, for "distinction" of appearance, for grace of manner, for audacity, for intellectual superiority of a certain sort. That the coming of this remarkable young person into their quiet household must be attended with some results went without saying. Now what were those results likely to be? And Edie, having arrived at this point in her thinking, let her pen for an instant fall from her hand—she was writing invitations to a dinner to be given for Ellinor's express delectation—leaned back in her chair, knotted her brows, and made her head ache.

"Phil said the other night," her thoughts went on, "that he hoped she didn't mean mischief. Now what did he mean by mischief—what sort of mischief can she by any possibility—"

But rap, rap, there came at the door at this moment (Edie was writing in her own little sitting-room); and Janet, her maid of more than twelve years' standing, made her appearance.

"Did you say, miss," asked the neat, prim old servant, holding up some black lace, "that this lace was to go on your grey dress?"

"Now you know I did, Janet," said Edie a little sharply, for Janet's entrance had somewhat disturbed her train of ideas, and she was anxious to get rid of her, to set them going again.

But Janet did not seem at all anxious to be gone; she made the round of the room, arranged a curtain, straightened a table-cover, brought a foot-stool for her young mistress's feet.

Edie knew by experience that Janet had something else to say, and she would not be allowed to be at peace till it was said.

"What is it, Janet? Make haste and tell me at once," she said a little petulantly; "don't you see I have all these notes to get through before I go down to luncheon?"

"Oh, I have nothing much to say, Miss Edie," replied Janet with an affectation of nonchalance which Edie detected in a moment; "I was only thinking that I don't think your eyes are quite so quick as they used to be, or you would have seen what was going on just under them."

"Seen! What do you mean? What can there be to see?"

"Look, Miss Edie," was Janet's reply, as with one hand she drew back the window-curtain she had just been arranging.

Edie, sitting sideways to the window, half turned her head.

From her room there could be seen a pretty stretch of lawn, broken here and there by flower-beds, and bounded by a lake in which stood a small laurel-planted island. A boat was always kept there ready to hand, so that one could step off the lawn into it, and enjoy a brief row.

Into this boat, at the moment Edie turned her head, the squire was handing Miss Yorke. He was doing it somehow with a bowing, courtly air which seemed new to him, and which imparted to him a somewhat jaunty, youthful appearance.

Edie laughed.

"Why, how ridiculous papa looks! Oh—h!" She stopped herself abruptly in the very midst of her exclamation as it flashed into her mind that this—exactly this that she was looking at—was what Phil had meant when he used the uncomfortable word "mischief" in connection with Ellinor.

She felt herself grow cold and sick, then she flushed hot and red.

"It can't be—it isn't possible!" she cried vehemently, turning to Janet.

Janet, however, had discreetly vanished. Her object was accomplished. She had aroused her young mistress to a sense of a possible condition of things, which not she,

nor any other member of the household, could contemplate with satisfaction; this done, she did not care to face alone the torrent of angry vehemence she felt sure would ensue.

Edie stood still watching the pair from the window. She watched the little boat glide across the lake, she saw the two land at the small island, then disappear among the rhododendrons and willows. This tiny island was merely a nesting-place for the water-fowl; no doubt Ellinor and the squire were making the round of it in Ellinor's slow, graceful fashion—somewhere about a step a minute, and a minute's pause between each step.

"I could have gone round it and explored every nook and cranny a dozen times over in less time, no doubt, than they would take going half-way," Edie said to herself, standing there at the window with her watch in her hand timing the unconscious two.

At exactly a quarter of an hour after they had landed, Ellinor's cream-coloured morning-gown showed again among the dark glossy laurels. How carefully the squire held the boat while she stepped into it; what a long time he seemed to keep her hand in his to assist her in taking her seat! Why she, little Edie, would have been left to bump herself in and shake herself out as best she could, and had had to do it scores of times over. And actually there was he putting one of the cushions for Ellinor to rest her feet on, for all the world as if they were going a journey to the North Pole, or, to say the least, a trip across the Channel, instead of across a little tiny pool of water that scarcely gave one time to say, "One, two, three—here we are!"

Ellinor took the oars returning. It was a bright, and for the time of year a warm morning. Autumn was dying slowly, regretfully, deliciously. Ellinor must have felt warm, or, more likely still, have felt herself looking particularly handsome that morning, for she took off her straw-hat, and dared the sun's rays. The squire must have had a good front view of her as they sat face to face in that small boat.

"He can't help—it isn't possible for living soul to help admiring her!" Edie said to herself as she noted the slender, graceful form of the rower, the ease and skill with which she managed her oars. "How like a crown of burnished gold, too, that auburn hair of hers shone in the autumn sunlight! What wonder if——"

but here Edie abruptly broke off her thinking—a sudden resolution had come into her head. She would not pause to reflect whether it were a wise or a good one—act upon it at once she must and would.

So downstairs, there and then, she went, and met Ellinor and her father coming in at the garden-door.

"Your rowing is as perfect as your riding, Ellinor," the squire was saying in his usual loud, mellow tones, as they entered. "I wish little Edie could be made to understand——"

But Edie, at this moment, confronted him with:

"I understand a great deal more than you give me credit for, papa. Come into the study. There is something I want particularly to say to you this morning."

It was a bad beginning for the squire. He felt, to say the least, uncomfortable, as he followed his little daughter into his own sanctum, and, as she bid him, shut the door.

Edie took her father's big chair beside the fire. He remained standing in front of her, feeling uncommonly like one of the small culprits—apple or egg stealers—he was at times in the habit of interviewing in that room, in order to save them a more public ordeal.

"Well, now, Edie, what's the very important thing you have to say to me this morning?" he began, making a huge and visible effort to assume an air of easy indifference. "Want another five-pound note—eh, little girl? Overrun the constable this week again?"

Edie ignored the latter half of his speech.

"This is what I have to say, papa," she answered, looking him full and steadily in the face: "that I won't have Ellinor Yorke for a stepmother—that's all."

How she managed to say the words so calmly, she herself did not know, for her heart was going at a tremendous pace, and as she sat there she trembled from head to foot with nervous excitement.

"Bless my soul!—bless my soul!" exclaimed the squire, trying to collect his ideas and get a little time for himself; then once more "Bless my soul!" for the more he tried to get together his ideas, the faster they seemed to run away from him.

"Ah, it would be time for us all to pray for our souls if such a thing as that were likely to happen. But it won't—it sha'n't!

I tell you, papa, I won't have her for your second wife."

The squire coughed and cleared his throat.

"Don't you think, Edie," he said, feeling himself a little bit driven into a corner now, and at bay—"don't you think you had better leave the question of my second wife to me? You'll have quite enough to do, my dear, if you devote your thoughts—ah, to your own first husband."

"Thank you, papa, I have quite enough thoughts for both, and, don't you see, if I leave this matter to you, you will be sure to make a mess of it one way or another, and then be sorry when it's too late. You'd be bitterly, bitterly, bitterly sorry when it was too late, and you found Ellinor Yorke had done her best to break everyone's heart."

"Now, Edie," said the squire, growing suddenly serious, "will you mind telling me what you can find in Ellinor to dislike as you do? She is a beautiful young woman, an amiable——"

"Oh—h!" groaned Edie under her breath.

"Young woman, most graceful, accomplished, winning in her ways. Now, my dear, let me tell you, her companionship would be of immense benefit to you. Your dear mother dying when you were such a baby, you have lacked many advantages in your bringing up. Now, to begin with, your manner of entering a room does not compare with Ellinor's——"

But here Edie jumped to her feet, crimson and palpitating.

"Papa, I should hate—hate—hate myself if I were the least bit in the world like Ellinor Yorke!" she exclaimed. "If I felt myself growing the tiniest scrap of a morsel like her, I would rush off to the chemist's and say, 'Give me every atom of arsenic you have in your shop; I want to kill myself right off at once.' Manner of entering a room, indeed! I never think the least bit how I go into a room, and so long as I don't go in on all-fours, how can it matter? I don't think of manner, and I won't think of manner! I do just whatever comes into my head——"

"And say just whatever comes into it!"

"Why, of course I can't say what doesn't come into it! And this I will say: that for a man of your age—sixty at the very least—to think of marrying such a very young girl, is simply ridiculous! Papa, it is no use you getting into a rage like that! I

say it's ridiculous, ridiculous, ridiculous!" And here Edie gave a most impressive stamp with her small foot on the Turkey-carpet.

"My dear Edie, I never felt less inclined to be in a rage in my life. Only, next time you state my age, please remember I was only fifty-four last birthday."

"Papa, you were in a rage—I could see it in your face; you always get into a temper, however quietly I may speak to you. Well, I have only one thing more to say, and that is, if you do make yourself ridiculous and marry this girl, I'll make myself ridiculous, too, and marry a man old enough to be my father. You'll see, papa—you'll see."

"Now, my dear Edie——" began the squire.

But Edie was not to be interrupted.

"I can't marry the vicar, because he is married already, or else he's just the man I should have chosen, the nice, stupid old thing! But there's dear old Colonel Wickham a bachelor still—yes, just as old as you are, and it would be quite as utterly absurd——"

"My dear, wouldn't the Colonel's nephew do better?" suggested the squire slyly.

"What, Phil! Oh, he's much too young. Nothing under fifty would suit me now. You'll see, papa, you'll see. We shall all be at Wickham Place to-night, and I'll begin and make love to the Colonel as fast as ever I can. You'll see, papa—you'll see."

Edie, as she spoke, was gradually making her way towards the door. She felt her calmness was giving way, and did not care to collapse into a flood of tears in her father's presence, and have to submit to the indignity of having them kissed away.

"Now, Edie, my dear, this is very ungrateful," the squire expostulated. "If I have shown Ellinor any slight attention——"

But here, with another "You'll see, papa!" Edie shut the door behind her and ran straight upstairs to her own room.

What the squire had intended was to hint, in a delicate fashion, that if he had seemed to show Miss Yorke any marked attention, it had been out of pure kindness to Edie herself, and to Phil, in order to keep the latter out of harm's way. He knew his little daughter's temper, and had something of a dread whither it might lead her now.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

RUTLANDSHIRE.

LITTLE Rutland, it may be said, has been a good deal neglected by historians and chroniclers. Nobody has thought it worth while to make any great flourish of trumpets over the doings of such a small patch of territory, which has never, perhaps, felt itself big enough to take any leading part in public affairs. The district, indeed, did not rise to the dignity of a shire under the Saxon kings; and it was only after the Conquest that it was administered as a separate county. As to how Rutland got its distinguishing name, there are various explanations; there is a tale of one Rut who rode round this county in a day—a feat not difficult of accomplishment, seeing that its whole circuit is little over sixty miles. But the most probable account gives the etymology as “quasi Redland, for, as if nature kept a dye-vat therein, a reddish tincture discoloureth the earth, stones—yea, the very fleeces of the sheep feeding thereon.” This red-ochreous earth alluded to, by the way, is only found in one limited portion of the county, where it was long a source of profit to certain itinerant dealers, who were locally known as raddle or ruddle men, and who dealt in this substance, which they sold to farmers and graziers for the purpose of marking their sheep.

But if Rutland has borne no great part in history, many writers, ancient and modern, have a word of praise to say for its unassuming pleasantness and prosperity. “No place,” writes Fuller, “so fair for the rider, being more fruitful for the abider therein.” While Drayton, in his *Polyolbion*, though, to be sure, the poet is given rather to flattering notices than severe criticism, sings:

Small shire, that canst produce to thy proportion
good,

One vale of special name, one forest, and one flood,
meaning, that is, the vale of Catmos, of some local celebrity; the ancient forest of Liefeld, on the western border of the county, of which, by the way, there is little now left but the name; while the “flood” is represented by the little river Wash—that some people spell with a G, writing it thus, “Guash,” which looks as if some person of Celtic proclivities had been trying to turn a good, honest Saxon word into Welsh.

Few districts have so little to show in

the way of changes and transformations. Trade and manufacture have nowhere established themselves; the population has been almost stationary for centuries, and in some cases shows a distinct decline since Domesday Book was compiled.

The whole of Rutland, or, as it was then called, Roteland, was under the direct lordship of the Anglo-Saxon kings, and was generally assigned to the Queen for the time being; and there is a curious survival of this state of things, in the ancient village of Ketton, which still pays an annual rent of a few shillings to the Crown, *pro occreis reginæ*, to provide the Queen with leggings, that is, an article of attire that may be represented by the high-buttoned boots of the present day. But Edward the Confessor, in his lavish affection for his favourite foundation of the Abbey of Westminster, bequeathed the whole of Roteland to the monks thereof—a grant, however, not confirmed by William the Conqueror, except as to the tithes of the district. But the memory of the Confessor’s gift is preserved in the connection still existing between the present Dean and Chapter of Westminster and the county. The county-town of Oakham is still divided into the separate jurisdictions of the lord’s hold and the dean’s hold, and a triennial court is still held in the latter under the authority of the Dean of Westminster. And the neighbouring manor of Barleythorpe has the unique distinction of having existed since the days of the Confessor under the same lords, the Dean and Chapter being allowed as the virtual representatives of the Abbot and Brethren of Westminster.

The secular lords of Oakham Castle have undergone greater vicissitudes and changes than the religious corporation. The first Norman castle is said to have been built by Walcheline de Ferrers, of the great Iron family which bore the three horse-shoes as its heraldic device. These Norman Iron-barons, who were Masters of the Horse to the Dukes of Normandy, were thus charged with the purveyance of horse-shoes for the ducal cavalry, and might be considered as the feudal chieftains of the blacksmiths generally, while a remnant of their privileges is preserved in the old manorial custom of Oakham. According to this custom, every baron of the kingdom on his first passing through the lordship, must give a horse-shoe as tribute to the lord of the castle, and this tribute is still exacted, and a goodly array of these horse-shoes,

mostly gilt, and many of portentous size, are in evidence upon the walls of the old hall of the castle, now used for assize and sessions, and nailed upon the castle-gate. Even royalty has not been held exempt from the tribute, and shoes are pointed out, respectively contributed by Queen Elizabeth, George the Fourth, and the Princess Victoria.

But the notion that horse-shoes thus affixed brought luck to the owner of the dwelling, derives no confirmation from the history of the lords of Oakham Castle. After the Iron race, the Mortimers held it—unhappy, ill-fated family—and, succeeding these, the Bohuns. The tragic end of the last of the Bohuns is familiar to us in Shakespeare's Henry the Eighth. Nor was the fate of Thomas Cromwell, who acquired this, among other spoil of the Bohuns, any more propitious, while the Harringtons, who had flourished in the county for six centuries, came to a sudden end soon after acquiring the lordship of Oakham. The short and baleful splendour of the two Villierses, Dukes of Buckingham, is hardly an exception to this record of ill-luck. The spell was broken, however, by the Finches, whose fortunes were founded by Sir Heneage Finch, Recorder of London, and Speaker of the House of Commons—the Speaker who was held in his chair, while some uncourtly resolution was passed—while his son, Heneage the second, rose to be Lord Keeper, Lord Chancellor, and Earl of Nottingham.

Many centuries, however, have elapsed since Oakham Castle ceased to be in habitable condition, and there are no striking remains of its ancient state except the ancient hall already mentioned, still in use as the "aula magna" of the district. The fine and ancient church of Oakham contains sundry ancient monuments of long-forgotten worthies; but perhaps the most remarkable person to whom the town has given birth was Jeffrey Hudson, whom contemporary chroniclers have recorded as the least man of the least county in England. Wright, the historian of Rutland, who had seen and known the celebrated dwarf, says that he was "the son of one John Hudson, a person of very mean condition, but of lusty stature, and so were all his children, except this Jeffrey." If we may believe his biographers, Jeffrey was seven years old, and only eighteen inches high, when he first attracted the attention of George Villiers, the new Duke of Buckingham. Villiers had built for himself a

magnificent mansion at Burley-on-the-Hill, near Oakham, and here the famous dwarf made his first appearance before the King and court, then on a visit to the Duke of Buckingham, served up, it is said, in a cold pie, out of whose crust he leaped in the full attire of a gallant page of honour.

After this the dwarf was presented to Queen Henrietta Maria, and was contrasted with a gigantic porter at Whitehall, who, it is said, during the progress of a masque at court, pulled the little fellow out of his pocket. So much in the royal confidence had Jeffrey grown that he was dispatched to France, to bring over a midwife for his royal mistress's accouchement, but was captured by a French privateer, and carried into Dunkirk, being released soon after at the express instance of the French court. In the Civil War Jeffrey obtained the commission of a Captain of horse, but followed the fortunes of his mistress when she took refuge in France. Hudson was of a peppery, valiant temper, and, outraged by the too familiar practical jokes of the young English refugees about the court, he challenged one Mr. Crofts of their number, to mortal combat. Crofts appeared at the rendezvous armed with a squirt, but Jeffrey showed conclusively that the laws of honour had no respect for the size of those who appealed to it, and compelled Mr. Crofts to meet him on horseback, armed with pistols. On this occasion the dwarf brought down his man with fatal effect, and was compelled to fly the Court of France in consequence. Hudson returned to England after the Restoration, and from a Captain of horse, became, it is said, a naval commander. Anyhow, he was taken prisoner by the Barbary rovers and sold into slavery, but was redeemed after a time, and spent the rest of his life in obscurity, supported by a pension allowed him by the Villierses and other noble families. According to his own account, he grew not at all between his seventh and his thirtieth year, but after that shot up to the height of three feet nine inches, a sudden growth which he attributed to the beatings and hardships endured under his Mahomedan masters.

As to the magnificent and ancient seat of Burley-on-the-Hill, where Hudson the dwarf made his first public appearance, the house fell upon evil days in the civil wars, when it was occupied by a Parliamentary force. These troops, finding the house scarcely defensible, abandoned and set fire to it, and in the flames disappeared all

traces of the magnificence of the Villiers occupation. Only the stables remained, and the mansion lay ruinous and deserted for many years, till the Finches bought it from the second spendthrift Duke of Buckingham. And now a fine classic building, the work of some former Earl of Nottingham, occupies the site.

Not far from Oakham and Burley lies Exton, with its Tudor mansion, once the chief seat of the Harringtons, who held the place for some six centuries—from the eleventh to the seventeenth, we will say. In the church is a fine monument to Sir James Harrington and his wife, Dame Lucy, daughter of Sir William Sidney, and with this pair by feminine descent a large proportion of the more ancient nobility of the kingdom may claim to be connected. The son of this pair was created Baron Exton by King James the First, and was the Lord Harrington of whom so much is heard in a subordinate way during the reign of that King; described as a bountiful housekeeper, and as the executor of Lady Frances Sidney, a great benefactor to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. In later years Lord Harrington—as already stated in the account of Combe Abbey, in Warwickshire—became the tutor and guardian of the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James the First, afterwards married to the Palatine. It was, perhaps, in consideration of arrears due for the Princess's board and lodging, for which hard coin was difficult to extract from the wasteful, impecunious King, that Lord Harrington was granted the patent for coining farthings, a coin which hitherto had been supplied by private enterprise in the way of tradesmen's tokens, which were now pronounced illegal. The profit of coining these new farthings, which were of much less intrinsic worth than the trifling value they represented, was no doubt a handsome perquisite, but Lord Harrington did not live long enough to enjoy the profits or the popularity which attended the new coinage. But people called the new coins after him, it seems, for "I will not bate a Harrington o' the sum," wrote Ben Jonson in *The Devil is an Ass*.

Lord Harrington's death was indirectly owing to his devotion to his royal charge, as he accompanied the Princess Elizabeth to her new residence at her husband's castle of Heidelberg, to make arrangements for her future comfort. "This done (as if God had designed this for his last work), he sickened on the first day of his return, and died at Worms, in Germany, anno 1613."

This last statement will correct a curious error which crept into the account of Lord Harrington and the Princess Elizabeth given in connection with Combe Abbey, Warwickshire, in which Lord Harrington was mixed up with another nobleman, Lord Craven, who eventually became the great champion and friend of the handsome and vivacious Elizabeth, and by a singular coincidence Elizabeth's art collection was brought to Combe, where part of her early life was passed, by collateral descendants of Lord Craven—quite unconnected with the Harrington family—who acquired the estate by purchase.

This purchase was connected with the general break-up of the Harrington estates, which followed the death of the second lord without issue, when the great landed property of the family was sold in various directions. Sir Baptist Hicks, the founder of Hicks's Hall—the old Clerkenwell Sessions House—became the proprietor of Exton Park, and the descendants in the female line of the worthy mercer of Chepe still enjoy the estate which he thus acquired.

Close by Exton is the small hamlet of Horn, through which ran the old British trackway, known in many parts of its course as Ermine Street, but about here as Horn Lane. This lane was once the high-road to Lincoln, and to this circumstance Rutland owes its possession of one historic battlefield. For here, at a spot still known as Bloodyoaks, Edward the Fourth encountered the hasty levies of the adherents of the House of Warwick, chiefly men of Lincoln, whom he put to flight in such disorder, that the fugitives flung away their doublets and coats-of-mail in order to run the faster. Such, at least, is the generally received explanation of the popular name of the battle—namely, *Loosecoat Field*.

Close to Horn also runs the Great North Road, now almost to be ranked with Ermine Street as one of the antiquities of the district. The village of Stretton shows in its name the existence of the more ancient highway that hereabouts crosses the great north road, while the village itself has an ancient reputation for the spirit of its female population, embodied in the popular distich, "Stretton in the street, where Shrews meet," upon which an ungallant chronicler remarks: "Why, so they do in every street in the kingdom." Probably our cynic chronicler had in his mind the equally ancient saying, "There is but one Shreve in England, and every man hath her;" while the reputation of the

country generally for the vigorous eloquence of its matrons, is shown in the general and cruel measures used for its repression—the scolds' bridles and the ducking-stools, of which we have so many relics.

Not far from Stretton, which has some remains of an ancient manor-house and a curious old church, once stood the old coaching inn, The Ram Jam, a lonely public-house on the great north road, but a general stopping-place for coaches, and of much fame among coaching and horsey men generally. Perhaps the house stands there still, and might be discovered, if any one had the courage to explore the dusty solitudes of the old coach-road.

At Empingham we have an old Saxon settlement, that has the credit of once having been a place of importance, stretching down to the little river Wash, from which the village is now at some distance. And close to the old coach-road is Ticken-cote, whose church shows many interesting evidences of antiquity, spared in more recent reconstruction; a fine Norman arch remaining to testify to former grandeur. The coach-road crosses the river Wash by a bridge, which has given its prefix to Bridge Casterton, while close by is Little Casterton, with an ancient church. Some small camp probably protected the ancient road, which crosses hereabouts, and hence the suggestive names of these villages. Nearer the border of Lincolnshire is Ryall, also an ancient Saxon settlement, one of whose early lords is noted as having commanded the men of Stamford in a fight with the Danea. The church was once dedicated to St. Tibba, a Saxon saint of the royal Mercian line, who is said to have here passed her days in the seclusion of a lonely cell. The fair saint, however, had strong proclivities for hawking and hunting, and became, after her death, generally considered as the patron saint of those who followed sport with hawk or hound. The huntsman's encouraging cry, "Ho, tantivy!" is said to have been originally an ejaculatory appeal to St. Tibba, from whom, perhaps, Tib the cat has derived her name.

But it is interesting to find that the fame of this ancient saint is still preserved in the neighbourhood where she is reported a Queen of ancient days, who was accustomed to bathe in a spring, which is still shown at Tibbal's Hill, which took its name from that circumstance. Adjoining the church, on the west side, are also shown remains

of a building, which is called St. Tibba's Cell, and which, possibly enough, may mark the exact site of her dwelling, occupied from time to time by a succession of anchorites.

At Essenden, close by, we have the site of an ancient castle, shown by traces of the moat that once surrounded it, and an ancient church, which once probably served the castle, and was enclosed in its enceinte. And these once belonged to the great King-maker, and were subsequently sold by the Crown to Cecil, ancestor of the present Marquis of Salisbury, who takes his title of Baron Essenden from these grassy hillocks.

Normanton lies higher up the little Wash, where a village has altogether disappeared, its foundations hidden under the greensward of the park, where the church alone remains, enclosed within the private grounds, as evidence of the former existence of the deserted village; while at Edith Weston, close by, we have an ancient church and mansion, of which parts may have belonged to an ancient priory—a cell to the stately Norman Abbey of St. Georges de Boscherville.

Another relic of more prosperous days is Martinsthorpe, or Mastrop, according to common parlance, with its population almost nil, and its church in ruins, where once existed a seat of the Earls of Denbigh, shown in Wright's old county history as a plain battlemented house, with an Italian portico, and two long rows of a dozen or so of mullioned windows, now only to be traced by the shape of its foundations in the green sod. At Brook, close by, are some scanty remains of a small Augustinian priory, founded by one of the De Ferrereses of horse-shoe fame, hardly worth mentioning except to show that our county can boast of some share, however small, in the cloistered ruins of the past.

Not far from Stamford town, on the border of the county, lies Ketton, already alluded to in connection with its contribution towards the Queen's wardrobe, with an ancient and beautiful church in a state of preservation which says much for the excellent free-stone of the neighbouring quarries.

And now we come to Uppingham, the second town in relative importance in the county, a quiet, secluded town, that once owed fealty to the Beauchamps, with its fine grammar-school, and some reputation for cricket. After passing the race-ground at Uppingham we come upon a hilly

country, with a fine valley on the left, watered by the Welland, the sight of which will recall the old prophecy—that Wash and Welland will drown all Holland—the Holland of Lincolnshire, that is; and here opens out a rich prospect of hill and dale, dotted with villages and spires, with two circular hills, Preston and Bee hills, standing out curiously isolated from the valley.

To the right lies Drystoke, or Stokedry as it is more generally called—the Stokes being generally meadow-enclosures near some river; and here are a few remains of the ancient manor-house of the Digby family, while in the little ancient church will be found sundry monuments of the race. Here lived Sir Everard, who having been drawn into the Gunpowder Plot, ended his life on the scaffold; and here was born his more fortunate son, Sir Kenelm, who, thanks to family settlements, inherited the estate in spite of his father's attainder, and rose to favour with the Stuarts. Charles the First gave Sir Kenelm command of a naval squadron which was sent to chastise the Venetian and Algerine pirates, and Digby had some success over them at Scandaroon. But the knight is better known as a man of letters and learning, a benefactor to the Bodleian Library, and in after years, at his house in Covent Garden, as chief of a quiet coterie of thoughtful scholars.

In Ridlington, we have another instance of a falling off in population and prosperity compared with ancient times. Domesday Book records the existence of a hundred and fifty-three men, heads of families for the most part, no doubt, and implying a population of six hundred souls or more, with two priests, three churches, and sundry mills. At the present day there are barely three hundred inhabitants, and the one ancient church is amply sufficient for the wants of the neighbourhood.

As further evidence of the decline of population in purely agricultural communities stands Leddington, an ancient decayed market-town, where once was a county house of the Bishops of Lincoln, converted by the famous Lord Burleigh of the sagacious nod, into a hospital for decayed parishioners, of which the hall is still standing in its pristine condition. An ancient church, with many well-preserved brasses, also bears testimony to the former existence of a prosperous community, and the custom of borough English, by which the youngest son, instead of the eldest, inherits the family dwelling, is another

proof of the existence of a place of sufficient importance to preserve its own liberties and immunities. Another decayed market-town is Barrowden, with little trace of its former prosperity, except its good church and comfortable living.

With all the rapid increase of population in the country generally within the last few decades, Rutland has remained stationary in that respect, and even shows a relatively important decline. We cannot aver, with the poet of The Deserted Village, that

Trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain,

for Rutland has little to do with trade in any form or shape. But the causes that are at work in clearing the humbler classes from the land, and drawing them into the compass of the large towns, may be seen pretty clearly at work.

And yet in outward aspect there are few districts that can show a more general appearance of smiling prosperity than little Rutlandshire. Finely diversified with hill and dale, universally cultivated with a greater expanse of lawn, and park, and glade, and more pleasant country houses, perhaps, than any similar extent of ground in all England—if there be an element of decline in all this prosperity, it does not show upon the surface. And failing a return of the Heptarchy, when Rutland would probably be annexed by more powerful neighbours, there is no reason to apprehend any startling change to diversify its hitherto quiet and uneventful annals.

"THE PLAINS."

A STORY.

THE name did not apply distinctively to the house in which the Miss Harveys lived, but was the appellation of the whole short, wide, comfortable-looking street in which the Miss Harveys dwelt in middle-aged health and comfort.

Their house, like each one of its fellows, was tall of red brick, approached by four rather steep stone steps, and entered by a stout oak door, on which gleamed a brass knocker of good design and workmanship. But the Miss Harveys' house differed from its neighbours in respect of being more snowy as to its steps, more brilliant as to its windows, more gleaming as to its knocker, and more up to the mark as regarded its general appearance than any of its neighbours.

"A thoroughly well-kept house," the other occupants of the short street said, pointing it out with pride; "and inhabited by two of the best and 'best-kept'—in mind, heart, and soul—women that ever lived."

Dear ladies, both of them—women who had weathered many a storm in early life, but who had not got roughened or hardened in the process; women who had seen a fair property dissipated by extravagance on the part of a father whom they had never found it in their hearts to censure; who had, after that, been thrown into a tumultuous state of feeling by learning that they were the co-heiresses of a wealthy uncle; women who had worked patiently and unceasingly as companions, or governesses, during several years of their great expectations; and who had finally been rewarded at their uncle's death by finding that he had left the bulk of his property to his deceased wife's niece—"a young lady of considerable personal attractions," she would probably have been described had she figured in a police report. As she never achieved that celebrity, in order to put her personnel plainly before the reader, it shall be said that she was a fine, well-grown, audacious-looking girl, endowed with masses of light hair of several shades of bronze and gold, thick, milky-white skin, big blue eyes, and an inordinate love of and craving for admiration.

To his own nieces, the infatuated old gentleman, who had made an heiress of this Lilian Taylor, left two hundred a year each. And on their united income of four hundred, they retired to the house which has been described, in the heart of a pretty wood and river surrounded town in South Devon.

It was not an exciting or a greatly diversified life this which the Miss Harveys led, but they were well content with it, and grateful for the means of living it. Their tastes were simple enough to be satisfied with the monotonous round of social life in the little town and its vicinity. Their kindly natures compelled them to feel a strong personal interest in the fortunes and misfortunes, the successes and sufferings, of every man and beast in the town. Their yearning for travel and adventure was amply gratified by their drives through the surrounding scenery in a low four-wheeled carriage, drawn by a shaggy but most sure-footed pony. The Western Morning News kept them quite sufficiently posted up as

to contemporaneous history. The dainty ordering of their daintily-ordered house gave them full physical occupation without fatiguing them. Their poorer neighbours relied on them, with reason, for such help and succour as they could afford. Their richer ones respected them. Everyone who knew them took an interest in their quiet happiness and unpretending ways. And, altogether, it may be safely affirmed, that two happier and more contented maiden ladies could not have been found within the limits of the United Kingdom, than were these two Miss Harveys of The Plains.

Envy and greed were such strangers to their breasts that when it was more than hinted to them, on the occasion of their uncle's death, that undue and altogether unseemly and improper influences had been brought to bear upon him in the matter of the distribution of his property, they resolutely closed the subject, and forbade further discussion on it. They were grateful for and satisfied with what he had left them. It was between Miss Taylor and her conscience if she had bent or wheedled him to her will by unworthy means.

They had been living in The Plains about ten years, and were looked upon quite as people "of good standing and most desirable acquaintances" by local society, when some new people, called Kesterton, came into the neighbourhood, causing considerable commotion in the aforesaid society by their coming.

The place they took for a term of seven years was a picturesque, pretty, verandahed house, standing in its own well-wooded grounds on the border of a water-lily bedecked pond, which was just large enough to justify its appellation of the Lake House. There was no shooting let with the house, and the fishing in the pond was not good enough to lure tenants to the Lake House. The Kestertons were absolutely unknown to the "best people," or, indeed, to any people round about this region into which they had adventured. Therefore, local society put its considering-cap on, and came to the conclusion that, as it knew nothing either for or against the Kestertons, there must be something strange about them, but that, until that "something" transpired, local society's plain duty was to call and encourage them.

They were almost transparent to the keen local vision, these innocent Kestertons,

as soon as they were called upon. The motives which had brought them to the Lake House were open and honest as the day. The house was good, and full of capabilities. The country round was lovely in itself, and, they had been told, was plentifully sprinkled with any number of good, hospitable, delightful people, who were always glad to see new blood infused into their social life. Mr. Kesterton was an idle man, fond of trout-fishing, and the Avon, which flowed down from the heart of Dartmoor, within easy reach of him, had a rare reputation for trout. Mrs. Kesterton was fond of tennis, and anxious to join an archery club. What better opportunity could she have of gratifying these tastes of hers than by joining the archery and tennis clubs at Avon Wick? The lady was something more than a good amateur artist, too, and the wooded water-slopes and dells, the wild moor distances, and the high-hedged, flowery lanes, all had their charms for her. People with such tastes, combined with good looks and fair fortunes, were, on the face of it, a great acquisition to the neighbourhood.

For that their fortunes were fair, was reasonably to be assumed from the style in which they came down and took up their abode at the Lake House. A correct, but not exaggerated staff of servants, a well-appointed little carriage and pair of ponies for the lady, a capital pair of hacks, and a sturdy cob and well-built dog-cart for the husband, betokened not only prosperity, but a habit of living as if they were well accustomed to prosperity.

And that their looks were good, no one could deny. He was one on whom "middle-age had slightly set its signet sage," but there was not the slightest suspicion of "adipose deposit" about him as yet. Of stature fair, with long, lithe, cleanly-cut limbs, a well-groomed head and moustache, and a splendid seat in the saddle, he was soon voted highly decorative, both at dinner-tables and in the hunting-field.

Highly decorative, "but not interesting to talk to," some hypercritical people averred. But this was really being extortionate in their demands, more reasonable and less exacting ones felt. Why should a man "be interesting to talk to" who has a good cellar, a good cook, a habit of giving dinners, a capital seat on a horse, that always enables him to be in a good place in the field, and a wife whose beauty was only equalled by her powers of fasci-

nation, and her desire to make herself agreeable to all and sundry?

They had no children, a circumstance she regretted openly and touchingly to her new lady friends. Her husband was silent on the subject, but his wife said for him that his distress was even deeper than hers, as he was of a most affectionate disposition, and had strongly developed domestic tastes, qualities which he concealed under the guise of taciturnity and reserve in society. She, however, being the very soul of frankness and openness, never made the attempt to conceal any of her tastes, hopes, disappointments, or feelings generally, and she "only hoped her new and charming circle would forgive her for being so entirely on the surface, and take her as she was."

It was very easy to "take her as she was," she was so very charming in manner, so bewitching in her bright blonde beauty, so full of sunshine that she seemed to beam upon everyone who came within reach of her. She gave quite a fresh start to social life in the neighbourhood. People began to wonder how they had got on before she came into their midst to stir them up and set them going. The two Miss Harveys felt quite a little thrill of excitement when they heard they were to meet her at a luncheon-party given by their friend Mrs. Hale, the doctor's wife. They looked out their best old lace ruffles, and collars, and cuffs, and put on their handsomest mantles and most irreproachable bonnets, and went forth in quite a little pleasurable tremor of excitement to meet her.

Mrs. Hale's drawing-room was full when the Miss Harveys arrived, for in these hospitable regions luncheon is not a light and airy nothing, to which you are invited to sit down to trifle with fragmentary delicacies as an excuse for meeting and conversing in the middle of the day. It is rather a good, substantial, sensible repast, commencing with soup, and ending, after many intermediate courses, with grapes worthy of being offered up at the shrine of young Bacchus.

Accordingly, wise hostesses take the opportunity of wiping off the scores against them, by inviting just as many to these mid-day feasts as they would to a late dinner, which has its conveniences in the winter-season, when the precipitous character of the country in this part of the county is taken into consideration. So now Mrs. Hale had called in a large number of the nicest people she knew,

to come and eat luncheon, and look at Mrs. Kesterton.

The Kestertons were in admirable time: they timed their arrival with such exquisite punctuality that though the luncheon was announced the moment after they came, and though they were the last comers, not a single dish was kept waiting for an instant. Still, if they had been a few minutes earlier, their kindly hostess would have been better pleased. She did so much wish to introduce beautiful, brilliant Mrs. Kesterton to two or three of her old friends—notably to her dear friends the Harveys.

But it was impossible. Luncheon was announced, and Mrs. Kesterton swept off in a pansy-coloured velvet-dress, the outlines defined with feather-trimming of the same shade, on Dr. Hale's arm.

A little hum—it did not amount to a "buzz"—of admiration followed her. It proceeded from the assemblage of ladies, and was called forth—"extracted" from them, in fact, by the way she had embraced everyone in the genial apology she had made for not having come two seconds sooner. The perfect cut and fit of her dress had something to do with it. The Miss Harveys were so taken with her profile and back-view, as she slid into the drawing-room, and was then wheeled off into the dining-room by her host, that they quite felt they had been culpably negligent in not having called on her before.

"Really culpably negligent," Miss Harvey whispered to her hostess, next to whom she was sitting; "and I am sure Cynthia feels the same." Cynthia was the second Miss Harvey, the staidier and more thoughtful, and, perhaps, a shade the less popular of these popular sisters.

"Miss Cynthia is quite struck with Mrs. Kesterton's beautiful face—I can see that; she has hardly moved her eyes from Mrs. Kesterton since we sat down," Mrs. Hale rejoined in high good-humour. Mrs. Kesterton had been specially engaged, days before other people were invited, to shine at this luncheon. Therefore Mrs. Hale was naturally well pleased that the graceful attraction, whom she had secured, should be a prominent object of attention and topic of conversation.

"Ah, Cynthia is an artist, you know," Miss Harvey said with pride. "Self-taught; in her youth, poor dear, we hadn't the means of getting instruction for her; but a real artist, I assure you. She always sees more in a face than I do, reads off the bad

and the good that speak through the human countenance like a book."

"She can only read what is good in that lovely face, I am sure," the hostess replied warmly; and Miss Harvey agreed warmly with her, and again expressed the opinion that she and her sister had been culpably negligent in not having called on Mrs. Kesterton before this.

But at least the pleasure of an introduction to the bewitching stranger was promised to her as soon as Mrs. Hale could get the opportunity after luncheon. And Miss Harvey, contented with this promise, turned her attention to her immediate neighbour during the rest of luncheon-time, and became immersed in local politics.

It was winter when this agreeable little reunion took place at Mrs. Hale's hospitable house, and that lady was utilising her privileges and the occasion to the utmost, by having an afternoon At Home to follow the luncheon. Several young ladies, from the surrounding country-houses, had been invited to "bring a few songs and a little music," and their brothers and cousins, if these gentlemen could be persuaded to come home an hour or two earlier from shooting for the sake of hearing Mrs. Kesterton sing. These invitations had been freely responded to. Soon there was quite a little crowd in Mrs. Hale's drawing-room, and as it was thickest round the popular beauty, the opportunity of being introduced to the latter which Miss Harvey so ardently desired, was lost to her.

Mrs. Kesterton sang well, and received all the plaudits which her singing called forth, sweetly and unaffectedly. Miss Harvey ventured to remark to Mr. Kesterton that "he must be very proud of his gifted wife," on which he roused himself from a day-dream, and declared that he was "very proud of her; she was a real trump! She did what she wanted to do, and didn't care what anyone thought of her. She'd snap her fingers in anyone's face who went agen her—that's what she'd do; and why shouldn't she? she'd got beauty and brains, and a thundering good banking account."

Mr. Kesterton's manner and diction struck Miss Harvey as being "odd," to say the least of it. Indeed, though he looked well, dressed well, and stood well, Miss Harvey could not help arriving at the unpleasant conclusion that the charming woman's husband was not a gentleman.

It was not till the party was breaking up, and Mrs. Kesterton was departing, that

the introduction to her was effected for Miss Harvey. In the haste of the moment Mrs. Hale forgot to mention Miss Harvey's name; but Mrs. Kesterton's reception of her was as cordial as if Miss Harvey had been a Duchess.

"I hope to see you soon, and often, at the Lake House," she said quite effusively in her eagerly energetic way, warmly shaking hands with half-a-dozen people simultaneously. Then summoning her "Lion," as she called her husband, she swept away out of the house with graceful velocity, and the remaining guests burst forth into eulogies of her "beauty, grace, and unaffected vivacity."

Not all the remaining guests though. Miss Cynthia was strangely silent. Miss Cynthia looked strangely scared. Miss Cynthia was most strangely unsympathetic.

"I hope—I pray with all my heart I may never see the woman and her evil spirit again," she said, when her sister forced her to give expression to some sort of opinion respecting the general object of interest.

"You surely can't call that distinguished-looking husband of hers her 'evil spirit'?" Mrs. Hale asked blithely, while the others laughed and jested, and declared that "poor Miss Cynthia was as piqued as a man might have been by having been overlooked by the captivating beauty."

To all this jesting Miss Cynthia turned a weary ear, and privately begged her sister to "go home at once," admitting that she was "strangely upset by something."

If they had followed the popular beauty home, they would have seen her cast her smiles and carelessness as completely as a snake does its skin, as soon as she had flown upstairs and locked her bedroom behind her. And they would have heard her mutter, as she clasped her hands over her eyes, and her head on the pillow:

"Leave me—leave me—leave me! I will kneel and pray to you to leave me!"

"Didn't I please you to-day? I held my tongue, didn't speak to anyone but an old hag, who began carneying to me about you," Mr. Kesterton said, when they were alone that evening after dinner.

"Oh, you did well enough, Lion."

"Then why do you look so precious sulky?"

She shook her head impatiently.

"Don't make me mad by noticing my looks, and take care what you say."

"There's no one to hear me. What are you looking over your shoulder for? The servants are gone."

"Silence!" she cried, stamping her foot in passion.

"Your fads are growing on you, my girl," he said crossly; "you're right enough when you're in company——"

"In company! Don't use such phrases; do forget the servants'-hall," she interrupted savagely.

He laughed jeeringly.

"Don't you wish you could put me back into it? You could do so much better if I wasn't in your way; such a charming beauty as you, with all your money and fine dresses, might get a real gentleman to marry you now. Do you ever think of the day you began to court me first——"

"Silence, you coward!"

"No, I'm not a coward; if I'd been one I should have been afraid to get myself tied up at the registry-office to a woman who'd broken the law and married her dead aunt's husband, so that she might get the better chance of poisoning him, and working on him to leave her all his money. No, I'm no coward, Lily—don't you fancy I am one. Why, you've murder in your face now, woman! Can't you take a joke?"

He finished with an uneasy laugh, and edged farther away from her, as with a convulsive, violent movement she sprang from her seat. His words recalled her to herself. She clasped her hands tightly over her head, and murmuring:

"Murder! Is it murder?" got herself away out of the room before he could goad her further.

A few days after this Mrs. Kesterton sent out invitations for an evening At Home. She had come to the end of her list, and heaved a sigh of satisfaction with a sense of duty done, when she suddenly remembered that she had forgotten the pleasant, elderly woman who had been introduced to her at Mrs. Hale's luncheon.

"There were two of them; I didn't catch their names—did you?" she asked her husband.

"'Twas Hardy, or Halton, or some name of that sort," he answered carelessly.

So, failing to get the requisite information from him, the hospitable mistress of the Lake House enclosed a blank invitation card to Mrs. Hale, with the request that she would fill it in with the names of the two agreeable maiden ladies—sisters—whom she

(Mrs. Kesterton) had had such great pleasure in meeting, but whose names had unfortunately escaped her memory.

In due time the invitation reached the Miss Harveys, and the elder sister was duly delighted at the receipt of it. But Miss Cynthia manifested an unaccountable aversion to going to the Lake House under any circumstances.

"Don't try and persuade me, for your persuasions will all be thrown away," she said, with what appeared to her sister to be unnecessary vehemence. "I only hope I may never set eyes on that woman again."

"Why?" Miss Harvey questioned.

"That I am not going to tell you."

"Then I consider you most weakly, not to say wickedly, prejudiced," Miss Harvey said with a greater air of severity than she had ever before assumed towards her sister.

"It's cruel of you to say that," Miss Cynthia said emotionally; but though her tones were wavering, her intention apparently was not, for she held to it stoutly for several days.

But on the morning of the day, the close of which was to witness the festivities at the Lake House, Mrs. Hale—privately instructed by Miss Harvey—brought her forces to bear upon the contumacious lady. To stay away, when she had neither the plea to urge of either ill-health or a previous engagement, would, the doctor's wife affirmed, have a very strange, not to say uncharitable and suspicious appearance in the eyes of all those who knew she had been invited. Besides, what was there—what could there be about Mrs. Kesterton to make Miss Cynthia shrink from her?

Briefly and emphatically Miss Cynthia replied:

"Heaven knows!"

"You will spoil your sister's pleasure entirely by remaining away; it's not like you to indulge a selfish caprice at the cost of her happiness," Mrs. Hale urged.

"Oh, if you would let me alone in this matter," Miss Cynthia cried rather wildly. "I'm frightened and miserable enough already——" She checked herself, and added more calmly: "Think me selfishly capricious, my dear old friend, if you will, only don't drag me to do what my very soul revolts at."

"Dear Miss Cynthia, you alarm me," Mrs. Hale cried with genuine concern. "Do you know—is it possible that you can suspect anything against that charming woman's character?"

"I pray to Heaven I may never set eyes on that charming woman again," Miss Cynthia said fervently.

"Really, you make me uneasy in spite of my own conviction that everything is quite right about the Kestertons," said Mrs. Hale in a vexed tone. "To be sure, he is not very polished in conversation, but he looks well, and one can't have everything. However, you have made me uncomfortable, Miss Cynthia, and I can't help feeling that you are not acting with your usual kindly tact and consideration."

"If Cynthia is so obstinate, I shall not go either, and I have looked forward to this evening with greater pleasure than I ever looked forward to any party since my girlhood," Miss Harvey said resignedly, and at this Miss Cynthia gave way, and piteously announced that she would do as they pleased.

After making this concession she strove to put a cheerful face on it, and took as much trouble in arranging her toilette for the evening as even her sister could desire.

"Was it any thought of its being the anniversary of poor old Uncle Edward's death that made you so unwilling to go to Mrs. Kesterton's to-night, Cynthia?" Miss Harvey asked when they were dressed and awaiting the fly which was to take them to the Lake House.

"Dear me, no! Is it the fourteenth of January? I had quite forgotten it," Miss Cynthia replied simply, and then with a sinking of the tone and beating of the heart which was entirely unsuspected by her sister, she got into the carriage and was taken to the Lake House.

Mrs. Kesterton was in "splendid form" that night. All the men assembled vowed that she was so, and all the women commented upon the matchless taste with which her dress was devised to display her beauty. "A perfect hostess, nobly planned," they all declared her to be, and in the general satisfaction no one noticed how ill Miss Cynthia Harvey looked, or how uncontrollably nervous she seemed.

"Refreshments at twelve," had been the unassuming notification on the invitation cards, so that the many were surprised to find an exquisitely ordered banquet served at a score or so of small tables that would just take four persons each, in the large dining-room.

"It's a custom I learnt in France, where I spent my whole life till I came to the Lake House," Mrs. Kesterton said

unblushingly to those who complimented her on the arrangement; "four people must be stupid indeed if they can't get genial and amusing when brought together at a dear little, round, well-spread table. Dr. Hale, will you complete the party at my table?"

"Undoubtedly I will. I'll fetch the lady whose interests I've promised to attend to during the solemn hour of supper," he said, as he walked away in search of Miss Cynthia.

It was in vain, when she found what was to be her destination and who was to be her vis-à-vis, that she protested she did not want any supper, and would rather stay alone in the deserted drawing-room. Dr. Hale blithely disregarded her reluctance, led her to, and planted her in a chair opposite to their brilliant hostess, and proceeded to enjoy that lady's conversation, together with the good things she had provided.

As he sat between the two ladies at the round table, he had a full view of the faces of both, and looking up suddenly to give a deliberately formed opinion on the merits of some truffled quails, he was staggered to see that Mrs. Kesterton had a look of terror which almost commanded pity in her face, while Miss Cynthia's wore an expression of uncontrollable horror. Before he could speak, however, the latter had risen from her seat with a cry that was almost a shriek, and was flying out of the room to the consternation of as many of the guests as saw her.

With a hasty apology to his hostess, Dr. Hale followed his old friend, Miss Cynthia. He found her in the ladies' cloak-room, huddling on her wraps in frantic haste.

"Don't stop me; let me go, and—bring my sister away," she sobbed out; "don't ask me anything till I get home—then I'll tell you."

Very much against her will, Miss Harvey came and offered to go home with Cynthia.

"I shall really be ashamed ever to look Mrs. Kesterton in the face again, Cynthia. Such nonsense, such a return for her kindness and hospitality, such a scene to make altogether, and she so kind and concerned about you!"

"For pity's sake don't let her come near me!" Cynthia cried. "Come away—come away—come away!"

She grew calmer after they got her home, but still her state of trembling nervousness was such that for three or four hours Dr. Hale did not feel justified in leaving her.

At length as morning broke she seemed quieter, dropping off to sleep, but suddenly started up with a choked, horrified cry.

"I will tell you now—now, what I saw—what has nearly killed me," she cried. "I'll tell you both now that you may be less horrified when you hear what is happening now at this very time at the Lake House. Behind that woman's shoulder peers an awful face, always whispering to her, always felt by her, always seen by her. I saw it once or twice at your luncheon, Dr. Hale; it has never left her, never left off whispering and threatening all this night. She handled her knife for a moment as if she would have killed herself when I shrieked and started up—"

"The doctor's wanted this very minute, please," the servant said in a loud whisper at this juncture, and Dr. Hale left Miss Cynthia, her terrible disclosure still ringing in his ears, to hear why he was summoned so hurriedly.

"A groom has come over from the Lake House, sir," his own servant stepped forward to say. "Mrs. Kesterton has cut her throat, and though she is quite dead, they thought they had better send for you."

The Miss Harveys went on to the end of their days living in absolute contentment on their modest income in The Plains, though many people said they might have been rich women if they had liked to dispute the disposition of the property, out of which their uncle had been cajoled by the unhappy woman they had only known as Mrs. Kesterton.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

OUR YEOMEN. THE SON.

WHEN Arthur Suttaby's seventeenth birthday drew near, the question of his leaving school and settling down into the way of life which he should follow for his span of years, began to grow pressing. It was one Mr. Suttaby did not care to face, otherwise the boy would not have been allowed to remain at school till an age at which, according to all family precedent, he should have been buckling to work, and taking his share in the management of the farm. He put off the task from half-year to half-year as long as he could, till at last the lapse of time, which accomplishes most things, brought likewise this bad quarter of an hour to Mr. Suttaby.

Arthur, young as he was in the ways of the world, felt that it was coming, and did not bow to his fate without a struggle. He knew that it would be next to useless to dream of his ambition's farthest flight and talk to his father of a military career, or even of a University training with the church or the bar to follow, so he stretched out his hand to a compromise, and met his father with the proposition that he should go as articled clerk to Lawyer Merridew, with the view of becoming a solicitor.

Now Mr. Suttaby, like everyone else in the district, looked upon our man of law as the best of good fellows out of his office; but he, as a man of acres, had as great a contempt for lawyers and hack-writers in their professional state as Rob Roy had for weavers, and he met his son's proposition to mount an office-stool in very much the same spirit as the gallant cattle-lifter showed when the honest baillie proposed to make apprentices of the two young Macgregors. What could the boy be thinking about? He must be mad to prefer the confinement of a stuffy office over the dullest of drudgery to a calling which most men of business look forward to as the solace of their years of ease and retirement, riding about free as air on as smart a horse as any young squire in the county could boast of. Mr. Suttaby met Arthur's proposal at first by bantering opposition, but finding that the boy was in earnest, he spoke sharply and sternly. Then there passed a miserable month of restraint and half-quarrel between father and son. Nothing was done; Arthur lingered on at home, and, when Mr. Suttaby was confined to the house for six weeks or more with an attack of bronchitis, took, in a fashion, the direction of the farm, and these six weeks sealed his fate.

When a strong will has to contend with a weaker one, the latter, if it has on its side the force of vis inertiae, and knows how to work it with due effect, will not be fighting a fight without hope. How much more arduous, therefore, is the task of the weaker nature which has to overcome the passive resistance set up by one stronger than itself? And this was Arthur's case. A few ineffectual struggles, and the game was up. If he had been a boy with much of the devil in him he would have run away to sea, or to seek his fortune in London; but Arthur was of that nature which is so often found in the youngest of a family. He was weaker, more infirm of purpose than either of his parents, or any

one of his sisters. So he accepted his destiny, not without a struggle, but without anything like the confidence of victory.

Mr. Suttaby, having gained the day, ought to have rejoiced over the fruits of his victory; but his triumph did not bring him pleasure unalloyed. Arthur's face was pale and gloomy, and he went about to do whatever his father might suggest, in a half-hearted, perfunctory manner. The work which had been thrust upon him was distasteful, and he took no pains to conceal his discontent, so it was not long before something like remorse made itself felt in the old man's breast. His manner towards his son grew very soft—at times almost submissive. Obstinate and self-willed as he was, he had not gauged aright the depth of the love he had for his boy, and the desolation that came over him as it was revealed to him that he had struck a cruel blow at the creature most dear to him in all the world, was almost more than he could bear. He seemed to be searching day and night to make some compensation for the ill he had wrought. If there was one phase of modern progress that he hated more than another, it was scientific agriculture; but Arthur had learnt a little of chemistry at school, and would sometimes make an attempt to analyse soils and samples of artificial foods and manures. As soon as Mr. Suttaby knew of this, he gave Arthur carte blanche to fit up a disused room at the top of the house as a laboratory, and to get whatever books on agricultural chemistry he might want—vain and useless fancy as he deemed the science to be, the device of a lot of spectacled fellows who were conceited enough to fancy they could farm land while sitting in an easy-chair, as well as he himself could from the back of a horse. He had never followed the chase himself; indeed, he had always been pretty free with his sharp speeches for those farmers in the neighbourhood who had already done so; but, as the next hunting season drew near, he let Arthur understand that, if his taste should lead him to the coverside, he need not be afraid of asking for an extra horse. Then there was an outlying portion of the farm, which Mr. Suttaby had bought some years before, and this he proposed to turn over entirely to Arthur, together with a due amount of capital, to be worked according to any scientific method the latter might like to employ. Concessions such as the above, coming from a man of Mr. Suttaby's temperament, meant a good

deal; but they were not the only manifestations of his magnanimity or his remorse. There was a gentleness in his manner towards Arthur which was, to say the least of it, unusual. No other member of his family had ever had a taste of the same. He seemed suddenly to realise to the full, that the sacrifice which the boy had made in bending to his will, and settling down for life as a tiller of the soil, was a real one, and thereupon he set to work to do his best to make the yoke as little galling as possible to his son's neck.

But the season of his repentance was not destined to be a very long one. Just after Arthur's twenty-first birthday, Mr Suttaby was seized with a fit, and died in the course of a few hours. About four years after this Arthur married, and Mrs. Suttaby retired to a little house in Shillingbury, for she had common-sense enough to know that the day of the wife's home-coming should be the day of the mother's departure. Her resolution to move may also have been braced by the liking she had for a town life. She had a notion that she would see more of the spinsterhood and widowhood of Shillingbury round her tea-table in her new home than she could hope for at Hedgelands, when a couple of miles of muddy road lay between her and society.

I heard of Arthur's marriage when I was absent from England, and sent him duly a wedding-present; but more than sixteen years elapsed between my last visit to Hedgelands under the old, and my first under the new régime. After my long absence, I naturally found everything in the old country much altered; but nowhere had the hand of change been busier than in the old manor-house. As soon as Arthur Suttaby knew I was in England, he wrote to ask me to make his house my home whenever I might be disposed to visit the haunts of my youth, and I accepted his invitation with more than ordinary pleasure, for, during my sojourn in Australia, where I had spent a good portion of the sixteen years above-mentioned, hints had several times been dropped in my presence, by men who had recently been "home," that English hospitality was no longer what it used to be. So, after transacting some business in London, I travelled down to Shillingbury by the railway which was not even dreamt of when I had set out on my travels. At the station a dog-cart was waiting for me, driven by a groom in livery, and as I

approached the old manor-house I became conscious that the stout gentleman with mutton-chop whiskers and a bald head standing by the front door was no other than my host, whom I had left a pale, thin youth, without a hair on his face. He greeted me in kindly fashion enough, but his manner, for a man of so wide a girth, was not hearty, and supplied me with a fresh instance to corroborate a pet theory of mine—that it is a great mistake to suppose that fat men are universally the jolly fellows they are made out to be. Arthur took my travelling-bag out of the dog-cart with his own hands, and led the way into the house. I had noted already several changes in the exterior of the old place—the diamond-paned casements to the windows had given way to white-painted sash-frames, with large squares of glass, and what used to be the drying-ground for linen was now laid out as a flower-garden—but these were not so striking as the revolution which met my eyes as soon as I passed into the great hall kitchen. Here I saw that the hand of the upholsterer had been busy. A yellow mahogany hall-table and hat-stand stood where formerly was the long oak table, and the well-worn brick floor was covered with strips of rather florid patterned carpet. "I think we shall find my wife in the drawing-room," said Arthur, as he led the way onward, and accordingly into the drawing-room I went, and was introduced to Mrs. Arthur Suttaby.

She was a little woman, with no pretensions to beauty, either of figure or face. She was one of those people who give one the idea of being unfinished, and offend the eye negatively in this respect, rather than by any positive ugliness. There was no semblance of anything like colour in either her hair, or her cheeks, or her eyes—all seemed washed out and faded, the only trace of a warmer tint being located in a spot where the poor little woman surely least desired to have it—viz., in the tip of her nose. After the usual enquiries and greetings, she said it was rather cold for the time of the year, and that she was afraid I should find the country very dull. The air certainly had struck chill as I was driving along the road from Shillingbury, and since I had been in the house the fireless, paper-ornamented grates had jarred unpleasantly with my anticipations of warmth within. Perhaps my liver and my temper as well had been a little upset by the journey, but it certainly appeared to me that Mrs. Arthur Suttaby was not

overjoyed to see me, and an uncomfortable suspicion began to crop up, that, perhaps, the warning notes as to the decadence of English hospitality, which had reached me on the other side of the world, might have some meaning, my host's letter of invitation notwithstanding.

The drawing-room in which I found myself, was no other than the parlour of old days, that mysterious chamber which I had never yet surveyed, except in a dim half-light, and, little as that half-light had revealed to me in my youthful days as to the furniture and adornments, I carried away enough impressions of it to determine now, by comparison, that Mrs. Suttaby, in changing the parlour into a drawing-room, had not made a step in the right direction. The many-folded curtains of the olden times now no longer tempered the light to the fleeting dyes of chintz and moreen. The sun's rays had free course, and as I looked at the vivid tints in the Brussels carpet, with which Mrs. Suttaby had covered the floor, and in the rep curtains and chair-furniture, I could not help thinking that the orb of day might do a little colour-extracting without any great artistic deterioration to the fabrics he smiled upon. There was a cottage piano, in rosewood, and a set of chairs and couches to match; but the crowning act to the adornment of the room was to be found in two huge fire-screens in Berlin wool-work, the one representing the conflict of St. George and the Dragon, and the other an episode in the island-life of Paul and Virginia. On one of the occasional tables was an open book of poetry, and upon another a tangled web of something which looked like fancy-work; but I fear both open book and needlework were impostors, set out merely for effect, to give an air of habitation to the room, which, in spite of its altered name, was as much of a best parlour as it had been in the old days.

After a few minutes of rather laboured conversation with the lady of the house, I was not displeased at the appearance of my host, who came to carry me off to my bedroom. We had dinner at five o'clock—a five o'clock dinner I afterwards discovered to be a sure sign of gentility in these latter days. In the evening, Arthur and I smoked our cigars in the hall, and then he gave me some account of how things had gone with him since we had last met.

Mrs. Suttaby, I soon learnt, was not country-bred. She was from London—from Bayswater, Arthur added, with some-

thing of deprecation in his tone, lest I should be taken aback by the announcement.

"We have not been able to do quite so well as I hoped," he went on, "because Julia's father, who was in a large way of business when we married, failed soon after, and all that Julia should have had went in the crash, and since that time he has never been able to do much."

From the melancholy ring in Arthur's voice as he said these words, I thought I could determine that, however little his wife's father might have been able to do in the financial world since his failure, he had, at any rate, managed to negotiate a loan with his son-in-law, and that the family money-dealings in this case had turned out no better than such dealings generally do.

"And you know, when a man has two boys at school, he is not much troubled with spare cash. I should have sent them to the old school at Martlebury; but there were things for and against, so I sent them to the Rev. Mr. Sloper's, at Wingfield. It is rather expensive, but then it is very select."

Of this last item of news I was already in possession, as Mrs. Suttaby, in the few minutes' talk we had had, found time to tell me how her two boys were under the care of a reverend gentleman whom Sir George Lardbury had selected as the instructor of his son and heir. From her, too, I had heard that it was rather expensive, but very select.

I had recently come from a land where a board lavishly spread was the rule in the most unpretending households, and I must confess it often occurred to me that the catering at Hedgelands was on a very meagre scale when compared with what I had just left, or with Hedgelands as it used to be. Perhaps Mrs. Suttaby, with her Bayswater training, held profusion in comestibles to be a thing worse than wickedness, to wit, vulgarity.

When I arrived, it was just towards the end of harvest, and, remembering something of the doings which used to mark the harvest-ending in Mr. Nathaniel Suttaby's time, I expected to meet a repetition of an old experience; but, on asking when the harvest supper was to be, I was told that all the supplementary gratuities—the supper at the end of wheat harvest; the cans of beer, and the currant buns, when the home-close was carted; the harvest supper itself, and the largesse after-

wards—had been commuted for a money payment. There were some sharp words too, one morning, between my host and hostess on the subject of the rabbits which the harvestmen killed during their work, Arthur faintly contending that these perhaps were not included in the above-named composition; but this was not Mrs. Suttaby's view. She held that her larder, and not the harvestman's pocket, was the due destiny of poor Bunny, and she kept appealing to me in a tone of querulous anger whether Arthur ought not to make a stand for his rights. It is wonderful how valiantly people will pronounce for the enforcements of rights, when they know that the disagreeable duties connected with such enforcement will fall on the shoulders of somebody else.

As it was September, of course, we had a shooting party. For several days before, the note of preparation was heard in the establishment, and on the eventful morning I found myself rigged out in a shooting-suit belonging to mine host, and an ancient muzzle-loading gun was put into my hands. Two neighbouring farmer squires, each accompanied by a nondescript dog-leading, game-bag-carrying personage, drove up about ten o'clock, each remarking, as he shook hands with Suttaby, that he supposed the parson was late as usual.

Then there was a quarter of an hour's interval of examining guns and criticising dogs, at the end of which a tall, lank figure came shambling up the drive with a wonderful and windmill-like play of arms, accompanied by a long-legged setter. This was Mr. Dowton, the vicar of a neighbouring village, the parson whose proverbial unpunctuality had already been quoted. "Here comes the parson at last!" said one of the guests. "Yes, and he's brought the old dog with him," replied the other with a significant smile. "The parson knows better than to leave him at home." And in less than a minute the reverend sportsman and his apparently valuable dog had joined our party. Suttaby was not a talkative man; his two friends had great capacity for keeping silence, but I soon found that with Mr. Dowton in our midst we should not lack conversation. He was a lean, hatchet-faced old man, with scattered grey hair, and a frame as wiry as an acrobat's, who had passed his younger days as a military chaplain in India. His wide experience of life, compared with that of his neighbours, made him a privileged story-teller, and I suppose his

associations with the military must have given him a taste for command, for, as soon as we started afield, he took the entire direction of the party into his own hands. Of course I as a stranger, completely ignorant of the local canons of sport, was ready to obey anyone. My host and his friends showed but few signs of mutiny; but old Jimmy, a veteran shepherd, and poacher to boot, as I afterwards learnt, kept up all day a running fire of covert criticism against Mr. Dowton and his doings. Jimmy was specially told-off to take care of me; but I found he was always looking round to keep an eye upon Mr. Dowton, and muttering disapprobation at the way things were going on. Poacher or no poacher, the old fellow took a genuine interest in the day's sport, and Suttaby himself could not have been more anxious to have a good total at the end of the day; but rightly or wrongly, Jimmy was under the impression that the final counting of heads would be more satisfactory if he himself were stationed near to Parson Dowton's beat, to see that all the birds which fell to the gun of that veteran shikari found their way duly into the game-bag. According to Jimmy's account, the parson, like Hal o' the Wynd, had a taste for fighting for his own hand, or more literally, to shoot birds for his own bag. "I'd take my Bible oath," Jimmy growled as he staggered along through the turnips, "that I seed him pick up two brace o' birds that last bout, and he only handed over a leash. Them pockets o' his hold a 'mazin' sight, I can tell ye, and that old dorg, blarm me if I don't put a charge o' shot into him when I get the chance." Then Jimmy went on to describe the accomplishments of Parson Dowton's raw-boned setter, and from what he told me, I decided that the animal in question must have been a perfect treasure to a man with a limited range of shooting. Ranger, for this was his name, would work like a Scotch collie after a scattered flock, in driving coveys of birds off the adjoining stubbles belonging to Squire Winsor and others into the patch of cabbages or white turnips which Mr. Dowton always planted in a convenient corner, and would pick up a young hare as readily as a greyhound. "Last year when we was a-shootin' that field there, parson he hit a hare hard, and the old dorg went after her, and instead o' bringin' her back, hang me if he didn't carry her over into parson's lower close, and there leave

er. Mr. Dowton wanted to make me believe as the old dorg had lost her, but he ever lose nothin', he don't, and Billy Long's boy told me as he seed the parson ick up the hare as he was a goin' home to get ready for dinner."

I took Jimmy's strictures on our clerical allow-sportsman with a certain amount of reserve, and when at the end of the day I noticed that Mr. Dowton omitted to tip the eaters, I thought I could account for some of Jimmy's rancour. The partridges and the hares and rabbits were arranged in a long line on the lawn, and a good show they made. "I've an old friend out of Suffolk coming to stay with me next week, Suttaby," said the parson, "and I want you to let me have a couple of brace of birds just to let him know what partridges should be like. He sent me some last season that had no more game flavour than barn-door fowl." Arthur picked out the birds with his own hands, and gave them to Mr. Dowton, but it seemed to me as if he did so without any great show of enthusiasm for the confirmation of the claims of the Falkshire partridges to superiority over all the partridges of England, and of Suffolk in particular.

We had a dinner party to wind up the day. Entrées were handed round in plated dishes, and champagne of a brand unfamiliar to me flowed freely. Mr. Dowton, as he had walked well and shot well in the field, ate well and drank well at the table. He also talked a great deal, but whether he talked as well as he ate and drank, and walked and shot, I, as a recently-returned colonial, was not in a position to judge. There was no other divine present, a youthful curate from Offbury, and from certain bantering remarks as to fasts, and saints' days, and confession, which were addressed to him by his ecclesiastical senior, I gathered that he was an exponent of the Tractarian line of thought. Unlike the vicar, he was very courteous; but, like him, he did good justice to the dinner, and the wine as well. To balance all this men-folk we had a Mrs. Vall and her two daughters, who had recently come to live in Shillingbury—people with manners and modes of thought as much alien to the manor-house and its old associations as was Mrs. Suttaby's new furniture to the old parlour. But, in compensation for this, they were, as my hostess informed me in a whisper, cousins of the late Major-General Wall, of Cheltenham.

In the old days there had never been such company-keeping at Hedgelands.

The Suttabys had been intimate with three or four families of a like standing, and a tea and supper party at one another's houses twice a year had represented all the social entertainment of a formal character. But I saw no indication that this intimacy had been transmitted to the younger generation I had come amongst. There had been the Greens and the Ringers of Bletherton, and the Hearn of Highwood. Where was young Tom Green, and what had become of all the Hearn and the Ringer? I asked Arthur Suttaby, as we sat over our tobacco the night of the dinner-party, after the other guests were gone. I learned that these families were all in their ancient seats, well represented, and fairly prosperous, considering the bad times—for there were bad times for farmers even in the days I am describing. Tom Green had married Sophy Hearn, and Dick Ringer had married Mary Green, and Fred Hearn had married Laura Ringer. "And I don't see much of them nowadays, except at market," Arthur added, with a tone of regret, I thought, in his voice. I began to speculate as to what could have put an end to the old intimacy. Had all the inter-marriages above-named led to a sort of social "ring," a family compact to keep the rest of the world at a distance, or was the absence of Tom Green, and Dick Ringer, and Fred Hearn to be explained by the fact that they had not married wives from Bayswater?

The last night of my visit, Arthur took me into his confidence with regard to his worldly position, and then I found that black care had forced a way even into this secluded valley—that the plague of want of ready money was pressing upon my host as it had certainly never pressed upon his father.

"It seems a nice place enough," Arthur said, "but there's money to be paid out to all my sisters, and the stables and the house cost a great deal more than they did in my father's time, and Julia wants Augustus to go into the Church and Reginald into the army; but I'm afraid I can't stand that."

It turned out, too, that I had been correct in my theory about unsatisfactory money transactions between Arthur and his father-in-law, who was still in difficulties, and not too proud to come annually to his son-in-law for help. Arthur asked me if I thought there would be any opening for the old gentleman in Australia. If so, he would not mind paying his passage out, and

advancing a trifle to make a start with; but, with my experience of the new world, I could not honestly advise my friend to put his money into such a venture, desirable as it would have been for him to know that a journey half round the world lay between him and Julia's papa.

The day after the shooting-party the butcher's cart came and carried away nearly all the spoil of the day before; indeed, I believe that those two brace of partridges upon which Parson Dowton laid hands represented all of the bag that did not ultimately find its way to Leadenhall Market. As I marked this and many other fresh phases of domestic economy at Hedgelands, I could not help recalling the more open-handed plenty of the old times. Mr. Nathaniel Suttaby would as soon have charged a guest for a meal as he would have sold a head of game; it was a point of pride with the old man, as wise or as foolish as such points generally are; but small economies must be looked to when men in Arthur Suttaby's position want to live according to the pattern of those with ten times their income, and to mount the social ladder by leaps and bounds. The household must be stinted, the master and mistress must both of them look out at every turn that sixpences be not wasted, and the game must be sold if Mrs. Arthur Suttaby wants to be driven by a groom in livery; if her boys are to go to school with Sir George Lardbury's son and heir, and if champagne is to be placed on the board instead of the home-brewed of old times. Everyone, of course, has a right to spend his money and regulate his life after the fashion that best pleases him. Arthur Suttaby was guilty of no breach of manners or morals in selling his game—peers of the realm have been known to do likewise. No doubt he deemed he was acting for the happiness and welfare of himself and his own; but after a week's experience of Hedgelands under the new régime, I confess I determined that, had the case been my own, I should have voted the game not worth the candle; and, having heard something of the struggles necessary to keep up that groom in livery and to put that champagne I had drunk on the table, I began to wonder whether black care in these modern days might not sometimes wear breeches and a bright-buttoned blue coat, and to fear that the dry Sillery, as it passed over Arthur Suttaby's palate, must have been a very dry wine indeed.

"EDELWEISS."

A STORY.

CHAPTER IV. DIVIDED DUTY.

EDELWEISS remained on the mountain all that day. She made a simple meal of bread-and-milk at the restaurant, where she was well known, and spent the long bright hours in wandering to and fro the old familiar haunts which she had been wont to traverse with Hans Krausa.

Her mind was unsettled and ill at ease. Its simple peace had been rudely disturbed by the words of her rough admirer, and she felt half reluctant and half ashamed at the thought of meeting the young Austrian again. And yet his presence, his manner, the charm of refinement in his voice, all had a strange, indefinable attraction for her—besides which he had promised the key to those charmed gates of knowledge she so longed to unlock; he had it in his power to reveal those stores of wonder and delight on which her eyes so longed to gaze.

She felt she could not endure to go down to the village to hear the babble of gossip, the chatter of the women, the rough jests of the men, or meet the curious eyes of the Frau Laudbauerin Brühl, and be questioned as to her refusal of the previous evening's invitation. So she spent a strange, restless day, full of phantasies, and dreams, and regrets, and vague dissatisfaction, which in no way could she analyse or set at rest. The sunset hour found her once more in the chestnut walk by the water-side, and there, too, was the figure she already seemed to know so well, and the face whose smile had haunted her the whole long day.

"I have brought you the books," he said, smiling; then paused suddenly, reading, with instinctive sympathy, the trouble and sadness of her face. "What is the matter?" he asked quickly. "Has anyone been vexing you?"

"Yes," she said, flushing a little beneath his grave and earnest gaze. "But it is nothing. I—I have almost forgotten it now."

He accepted the excuse, and, to put her at her ease, began to speak of the books, and then of his own work, and the various difficulties of the strange railroad whose construction had ever held for her so curious a fascination. She listened with even more than her wonted eagerness, though she spoke but little. More than ever she felt the charm of manner, and

recognised the difference that lay between herself and her companion, Franz Brühl had been right. She would never be anything but a peasant—a little, homely, ignorant, nameless thing, whose only joy would be the memory of some rare golden hour like this, whose flying feet she would fain have stayed. Why did the thought pain her now? Why did the presence of this one man affect her in so strange a fashion? These questions she could not answer, being as yet in that blind and perplexed state which is only half conscious of pleasure and of pain, yet satisfied to bear both in equal measure so long as the giver of them is not absent, or neglectful, or unkind.

They parted again in the sweet summer dusk, and the girl went home with her books to that one room which had been her usual winter quarters, and where she had chosen to remain for the present. The cottage belonged to an old wood-carver and his wife—kind and homely people, who loved the child with great tenderness, and were pleased to have her under their roof. They questioned her as to her long absence, but she only said she had been on the mountain, and they were satisfied. Then, when the simple evening meal was over, she bade them good-night, and took a candle and went up to her own little room, and sat herself down to peruse her new treasure.

By the help of dictionary and grammar, she managed to comprehend very fairly the passages marked out for her, and her natural aptitude and quickness made the task of learning an easy one. She went on with her task far into the night, her mind absorbed in the new interests awakened, and the new fancies stimulated.

The next day was wet and dreary. She did not go out at all, but helped old Käthe with the household work; and then, when the old woman sat down to her knitting, she took out her books once more and plunged afresh into the studies she had set herself.

That night, when the old wood-carver came home, he looked angered and disturbed, and the sight of Edelweiss and her books seemed to vex him more.

"Is it true what they are saying in the village, that thou hast a gentleman for thy lover?" he asked her abruptly. "A pretty thing truly for one like thee to set at naught old friends and faithful, for a young sprig of an aristocrat, who would never give thee a serious thought. Thou hast deeply offended the good Brühls, and everyone

knows that Franz thought much of thee, and indeed thou mightest have married him, and never have troubled about work, or known want or care."

The girl lifted her pale, absorbed face. She was still in a half dream, and scarce took in the meaning of his harangue.

"I do not like Franz Brühl," she said simply. "I would work all day, and every day, for my bread, sooner than owe it to him. And indeed I do not know why his people should be angered with me. I have done no wrong to them."

"Thou art but a foolish child, and no wiser than a baby," grumbled the old man. "Hans Krauss would be fine and angered did he but know what thou hast done. But thy head only runs on books and learning, and what will they do for thee? Not make thy bread, or earn thy clothes, I'll be bound—only spoil thee for honest work, and simple folk, such as thou hast been brought up amongst."

"Ah no," said the girl gently, "I will never alter to you, or anyone who has been kind to me, and it is cruel to speak as if I had done wrong, or been bold and forward with the Herr Engineer. He has spoken to me but thrice, and he lent me books because I am so ignorant, and wish so much to learn the German as it is spoken and written, and I am sure my father would not have minded that, or, indeed, anything that he has said or done. Only, of course, you—you do not know."

"Nay, truly I do not," grumbled the old man; "only I bid thee be careful, and take heed to thyself. And as I said before, what dost thou want with books and learning? They are for ladies and gentlemen, not for peasants like thee, and thy mind will only be filled with discontent."

"That is true," nodded old Käthe, clicking her needles sharply in the chimney-corner. "Look at me. I cannot read a printed character—no, not to save my life. I never was the worse wife for that, though. And when one can make the most of a kreutzer, and cook, and spin, and hoe, it is all one needs. But I told Hans Krauss thou wert ever too fond of book-learning, only he spoilt thee so, and would never listen to anyone else."

The girl rose to her feet, her face burning, her eyes hot and bright.

"I do no harm," she said; "I can work as well with my hands, though I do not shut up my brains. If the good God had wished us all to be ignorant, He would not have put it into men's minds to write

the wonderful and beautiful things they have done."

"Oh, thou canst please thyself," said the old woman; "thou art a strange girl and not like most of our maidens. But indeed thou art more than foolish to offend the Brühls, for they are people of influence and note, and to have Franz for thy lover would indeed be a feather in thy cap, and——"

"Franz—always Franz! Oh, how I hate the name!" cried the girl with sudden petulance, and she moved towards the open door. There on the very threshold stood the obnoxious individual whose name she had just uttered.

For an instant their eyes met, and the hot swift colour rushed all over her beautiful fair face.

"I—I came to ask you to forgive me for angering you yesterday," said the young man, almost humbly. "I spoke too suddenly, and I was rude. Will you not be friends once more?"

"Friends!" echoed the girl; "oh yes, Franz, I bear you no ill will. But I do not like you to follow me about or interfere with me. You have no right."

"I am sorry," he repeated doggedly, not looking at her, but speaking as if he were repeating a hard and disagreeable lesson.

"Come in, Franz; come in," cried the old man at this moment. "The girl is but a girl, and they never know what they would be after. She is sorry enough to have angered thee, I doubt not. Come in and take thy supper with us, and we will have in a jug of beer, and be merry as of old."

Franz needed no second invitation. He had made up his mind to keep friends with Edelweiss, and watch her proceedings narrowly. Pique, and anger, and jealousy were at work in his heart, but he smothered them down and hid them from sight beneath an appearance of cheerful good-humour, which to Edelweiss was certainly trying, though to the old people it seemed delightful.

The girl was thankful when the meal was over and the things cleared away. Franz rose to take his leave then, and she went with him to the door. The rain had ceased. A brilliant moon flooded all the street with light, and the rough houses and pavements looked almost beautiful in the clear, translucent glow.

The girl stood silent for a moment, her eyes glowing with delight as they took in the beauty of the scene. The young man watched her intently. Then he took her hand.

"Good-night," he said softly; "we are friends now, are we not?"

She roused herself with a sigh.

"Friends—oh yes," she murmured dreamily. "Only do not be foolish any more, Franz."

As they stood thus, hand-in-hand, with the lovely moonlight bathing the girl's rapt face and slender figure, someone came quickly down the street and saw them, and a keen pang of anger and pain shot through his heart.

He passed on and made no sign, but the girl started and drew her hand away, her cheeks flushing like a June rose.

"Good-night again," she said timidly, and went within and shut the door, feeling a sudden glow of anger and of shame tingling in her veins.

"He must have seen," she thought to herself, "and he might have spoken only a word."

Only a word! Had it come to this already, that the failure of a greeting could sadden and perplex her, and fill her innocent heart with such pitiful unrest?

She went to her own room, and looked out of the tiny window, but all that wondrous alchemy of moonlight seemed only dark and desolate, and a pain so cruel and so strange throbbed in her breast that she felt frightened of it and of herself.

The tears fell down her cheeks. The loneliness of her life seemed to appal her as it came home in this one moment, when there was neither love, nor sympathy, nor counsel at hand, and all the world looked desolate and cold. That night the books lay on the little bare table unopened.

"Of what use," she was saying to herself, "of what use to learn—to labour—to try and improve myself? No one cares. No one will ever care again!"

That one moment of jealousy on the one side, of pain at a causeless neglect on the other, had done more to knit those two dissimilar lives together than either of them imagined.

For many days Edelweiss studiously avoided the path by the lake or the ascent of the mountain. She kept in the house, and worked hard, and gave up all her leisure moments to study, and tried effectually to shut out all thought of the young engineer from her mind. If his memory would still intrude, then it was from no fault of hers, though she was not wise enough to know that the endeavour to abstain from thinking of any particular

person is the surest way to bring such thoughts to the mind. As for Conrad von Reichenberg, he tried to convince himself that only a very natural curiosity as to her progress in her studies prompted him to pass up that street on these moonlight evenings; but he saw nothing of the girl, and grew restless and angered as day after day passed on.

One morning, however, he met her by the lake some two hours after sunrise. In the gladness and surprise of seeing her again, he almost forgot his jealous fears of Franz Brühl, and walked on beside her, and talked to her so gaily and eagerly that her timidity gave way, and she, too, began to bask once more in the sunshine of a subdued, but blissfully conscious sympathy.

An innocent fancy such as hers wants so little to make it content. So little! Alas! that it should grow to mean so much. Just all that makes life worth the living, though we may not find out that fact until too late.

"Why would you not speak to me that night when you passed?" she asked him after a time, being, indeed, too open and too fearless to know anything of conventional scruples.

He looked a little ashamed.

"I—I am afraid I was jealous of your companion," he answered with equal candour. "I did not like to see him holding your hand and looking up to your face in the moonlight. You told me you did not like him, and then I saw you thus."

For an instant she met his eyes in the old frank, fearless way. Then quite suddenly all her self-command seemed to fail. It mattered to him if another man looked at her—touched her—cared for her! She would have been untrue to every instinct of her sex, had not that one fact opened her eyes to the consciousness of her own power.

She walked on by his side utterly speechless, but, oh, so wonderfully, intensely happy! All this time—all these weary days and hours she had been vexing herself with thoughts of his forgetfulness and neglect, and now to hear the real reason! A wonderful, perfect happiness seemed to fall upon her life. In the golden haze of sunshine she saw but one face—one smile.

The young Austrian read the sudden change in her face with a mingled sense of triumph and regret. It smote him to the heart that this young, radiant, fearless life was so completely at his mercy, was so content to take happiness or sorrow at his hands. So short a time had he known her, and yet—A sigh cut short the thought. Involuntarily he said to himself: "How she would love me if I willed it!" and then resolved he would not so will it. He would go away, she would forget; there would be no harm done, and then? Well then—At that very moment a black shadow fell across their pathway, and before them stood Franz Brühl. He gave them a sullen greeting—a meaning look, and then passed on.

All the golden beauty of the day was spoiled for both.

Conrad said to himself:

"If I leave her she will be his—that boor's! What a life! At least, with me she would be happy."

And the girl shuddered with a sudden dread, remembering the evil look and smile of the man whose love she had rejected.

The spell was broken. The golden sunshine no longer wrapped them in its mystic haze. With one accord they turned and went back to the village, absorbed, and restless, and half ashamed.

"Yes," said the young engineer to himself again and again as the long day dragged itself to eventide; "I must go away from here. I must be wise for—her, if not for myself. She is so good, and innocent, and fair. It would be base to spoil her life. And yet—oh, how I wish there were no such thing as a divided duty!"

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LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER IX.

THAT very day Edie had the opportunity for putting her threat into execution, and the squire did "see."

They were to dine at Wickham Place that evening, as she had already reminded her father.

"It is altogether a special interposition of Providence," she said to herself, pondering over her dress for the evening with an interest and anxiety altogether new to her. "I want to look quite viciously beautiful," she informed Janet, dashing into her room somewhere about half an hour before it was time to set off.

"Then, Miss Edie, you should have come upstairs an hour ago," said Janet, with the much-enduring air she generally affected in Edie's presence. "How I'm to make you fit to look at in about twenty-five minutes is more than I know, and——"

"Ridiculous!" interrupted Edie. "I can put myself into another frock in about five minutes, and how you mean to take more than another five just plaiting up my hair and sticking a flower in it, is what I don't know. Why, I shouldn't take more than fifteen minutes dressing for the grandest ball that ever was; so don't try to impose upon me, Janet."

Ellinor certainly intended to take more than fifteen minutes over her dressing, for she secluded herself immediately after luncheon, and intimated her intention of not making her appearance at afternoon-tea, at which Edie was expecting one or two of her girl-friends.

"I have, as usual, letters to write, and a multitude of other things to attend to," she said, as she excused herself to Edie

with an air which seemed to say, "Really it is very good of me to excuse myself at all to you. The flimsiest and most transparent of apologies will more than suffice."

If Ellinor had spoken exactly she would have said, "There are letters to be written, and I must dictate them," for she herself scarcely ever put her pen to paper. Where was the use of it? Gretchen wrote a beautiful hand, and knew how to address everybody properly. What more could anyone want?

Miss Yorke's first thought when she reached her room was, however, not for her letters. A variety of things of far more importance—to her way of thinking—awaited her attention. First of all her hands had to be gloved and encased in some wonderful *crème blanche*. That five minutes' handling of the oar on the lake in the sunshine had made them look horribly coarse and brown; so she said, at any rate, as she surveyed her tapered, dainty fingers. Then there was Mélanie's latest arrangement in lace for the throat to inspect, and Gretchen's daily effort in hair-dressing—on the model-block—to pass in review. Also the box of flowers sent daily from a West End florist's had to be opened and selected from. "It's such a mercy," murmured Ellinor, as she held this way and that way first a gardenia and then an orchid, "that I made this arrangement with Williamson; the greenhouses here are very inferior, and not an orchid-house within ten miles, they say. I should have been quite at a loss in matching the colours of my dresses. Yes, that orchid will do very well, Mélanie, for to-night; it will go with the cream and gold I shall wear. Now for the letters; oh dear!" and here Ellinor threw herself into a reclining-chair, and prepared to dictate to Gretchen answers to some three

or four missives which lay before her on the table.

"Let me think who must be written to to-day. I don't fancy we shall have time for more than two. It's half-past two o'clock now; the dinner will be at eight; four hours, at least, I must have for dressing; two will be all we shall be able to manage. What letters have you there?"

"From mademoiselle's mother," began Gretchen; "from Mr. Effingham—"

"Ah yes; those are the two I must answer to-day. Mr. Effingham's first—it is the most important."

No doubt to her it was the most important; for young Harry Effingham—artist and Royal Academician—designed her dresses and suited her colouring and style of beauty in a way that only a man with the eye of an artist and the heart of a lover could.

"He writes too familiarly—too impetuously for a man with only two hundred a year and his profession to depend upon," said Ellinor, half contemptuously glancing through the hotly-worded, almost boyish missive; "he must be repressed—slightly, not too much, Gretchen, for I shall soon want him to design another tea-gown for me. I want a judicious letter written, telling him to be patient, and that good things only come to those who wait for them—not those who attempt to snatch at them. Yes, put that idea in neatly, Gretchen; and don't make the letter too long, or else he will be getting hopeful."

So a "judicious" letter was penned and dispatched to the young artist—a letter here and there hinting at all sorts of possible happiness in store for him, and which, read one way with an artist's eye, might be taken to refer solely to success in the profession he had adopted; and read the other way with the eye of a lover, might be taken to refer to success in his love-quest, and the possible winning of the lady of his heart. Read with both eyes by a clear-sighted, practical man, it would seem of very ambiguous meaning indeed.

The letter to the mother took longer to conceive and indite than this poor little note.

"She asks such a multitude of questions," said Ellinor, stifling a yawn, "it will be utterly impossible even to attempt to answer them. She wants money, of course—Juliet has so many wants. How much can I send her this time? Fifty pounds? No! Ah, you are always so

prudent, Gretchen! Put in thirty pounds, then, in notes, with my love. Tell her Uncle Hugh has been more generous than ever this month, and I can easily spare it."

"Uncle Hugh" was Ellinor's father's brother—an eccentric, rich old bachelor, with a vast admiration for the beauty of this niece of his, coupled with a strong desire that she should do credit to her family and connections by making a brilliant marriage. He was a man of between sixty and seventy years—an inveterate diner-out—an habitu  of clubs—a man without the remotest conception of the comfort and happiness of a home in the full English sense of the word. Although willing to supply amply his beautiful niece's every necessity or wish, and desirous of starting her on a brilliant social career, he would sooner have laid down in his coffin at once than have sacrificed the smallest of his bachelor pleasures at the shrine of "domesticity"—or, in other words, set up a home for her.

Gretchen's pen went slowly along in neat, methodical fashion. Presently she paused, looking up at her mistress for further instructions.

"That will do for this afternoon, Gretchen; never mind about answering all those questions—they'll answer themselves if we let them alone," decreed Ellinor. "Oh, by the way," she added, "you may as well ask for the address of that Madame Someone or other who makes up those wonderful eye-lotions; in Paris somewhere, wasn't it? And you may as well say that Lord Winterdowne has not arrived at the Castle yet, but is expected daily. Also that I am not in the least dull here—have plenty to amuse myself with. Yes, plenty, plenty," her thoughts echoed, conjuring up the image of fair, handsome Phil Wickham with his usual expression, half of scorn, half of pity, whenever his eyes chanced to meet hers. "And shall have plenty for a long time to come." Then aloud: "And now for the business of dressing! Three and a half hours is barely sufficient to achieve an artistic effect."

Somehow, however, an artistic effect was achieved in something less than that time—at least so thought Colonel Wickham and his assembled guests when Ellinor entered his drawing-room, followed by the squire and Edie.

It was true she had tested everyone's patience to the utmost by not being ready to leave the house for at least

half an hour after the time at which they ought to have been seated at Colonel Wickham's table, but it is possible they would willingly have condoned this offence (the male portion of the guests, at any rate) to have their eyes regaled that evening with such a masterpiece as Ellinor Yorke in her draperies of old-gold, fading here into the cream of her antique lace, lighting up there into the yellow of her rare orchids, and finding a deeper than its own deepest tint in the coils of russet-bronze hair which crowned her shapely head.

There were, among others invited, several young officers from the neighbouring barracks. They were knocked over at once, and made sundry tremulous advances towards the beauty of the evening.

Ellinor took their measure at a glance.

"Boys all—younger sons—utterly insignificant in appearance," she said to herself, and not one of them had the pleasure of hearing her voice addressed to him in the course of the evening. She responded to their attempts at conversation with the slightest and most unsympathetic of smiles, she quenched every effort at talk with the most graceful but most distant of bows, then deliberately, to the amazement of all, crossed the drawing-room, seated herself beside the vicar on a sofa, and smiled sweetly at every one of his jokes (new, old, or middle-aged—no matter) for the remainder of the evening.

Edie's conduct that night seemed to everyone equally eccentric.

"Really, if one didn't know better," said one dowager to another, "one would think she was absolutely making a 'set' at the Colonel."

It really seemed like it. Not even Phil in the sunniest of sunny weather had ever been favoured with one fiftieth part of the bright upward glances, the sweet smiles, the soft speeches the young lady chose to bestow upon his elderly uncle this night.

The squire looked on slyly at her out of the corners of his eyes, and wondered.

"Well, little Edie, you are giving him a dose of it—that's all!" he said to himself, and "By Jove!" this also added sotto voce, "I'm beginning to think I'm cured of my fancy already before it has well begun. Now I come to think of it, there is something deucedly ludicrous in a young girl making eyes at an old man, or vice-versa. Not that by any means I feel like going downhill yet a while. I'm good for another twenty years, I hope, and am,

at least to look at, a good ten years younger than Wickham."

Here the squire gave a twitch to his shirt-collar, and took a friendly survey of himself in a mirror near which he was standing.

Edie, like most young actors, rather overdid her part that night, and occasionally brought out her most thrilling and impressive bits with her back to the audience. For instance, no doubt it was very effective to say under the squire's very eyelids, "Dear Colonel Wickham, do take me into your den and show me that wonderful calculating-machine you have had fitted up," and accompany the speech with a little, pleading, upward look and a soft touch from the small hand; but there could be neither rhyme nor reason in repeating said soft looks and touches of the hand when she found herself alone with the Colonel in his den, nor in detaining him there from his guests for at least fifteen minutes.

Once, in the middle of a very complicated set of figures he was grinding out of his machine for Edie's delectation, he stopped abruptly, and stood silently looking down on her with an odd, troubled expression, such as a man might wear who, for a moment forgetting that he is smitten with a subtle, incurable disease, is reminded of its existence by a sudden sharp twinge.

Edie grew frightened in an instant.

"What is it? Are you ill?" she asked, now with real concern in her voice.

Colonel Wickham quickly recovered himself.

"No, no, child. I was only thinking—of twenty years ago. Come back into the drawing-room; they will be beginning to wonder what has become of us."

His words seemed to end in something of a sigh. He looked white and weary when they got back into the fuller light of the larger room.

"A question to ask papa on the earliest opportunity," thought Edie to herself. "I wonder what happened twenty years ago."

Phil was standing near the door as they entered. He looked gloomy—scowling, one might have said, had it been possible for Phil Wickham to scowl.

"Are you making up your mind to be my aunt, Edie?" he said to her in a solemn voice as she flitted past.

Edie laughed out her rejoinder in an undertone:

"If I were, I should say, 'Phil, my dear boy, don't stand there looking as though

you were at a funeral. Go and make yourself agreeable to somebody."

But Phil, in spite of her remonstrance, made no effort to make himself agreeable to living soul that evening. He stood still where he was near the door, watched Edie flutter into a seat at Colonel Wickham's elbow, and then absolutely took up a newspaper which lay on a small table beside him, and began reading it.

Only for one moment, however, he held it in his hand; the next, he had dropped it with an exclamation of horror—"Great Heavens!" which sent a chill through the veins of everyone who heard it.

"What is it, Phil?" asked the squire, taking up the newspaper he had dropped.

Phil, in silence, laid his finger on a corner paragraph, which the squire read aloud, though in an undertone.

It briefly related that Mr. Rodney Thorne, of Thorne Hall, Bucks, had accidentally shot himself while handling some firearms. The occurrence had taken place at a house in Jermyn Street, St. James's, where the deceased gentleman had rooms.

Fortunately for the success of Colonel Wickham's dinner-party, music and singing were going on at one end of the long drawing-room, and only those who stood or sat where Phil was, near the door, heard the doleful paragraph.

Edie heard it, and her heart filled with pity for Phil, losing thus suddenly and awfully the school-chum and college-companion of so many happy years. She looked up at him, trying to catch his eye, and telegraph to him a whole world of sympathy.

But Phil's eye was not to be caught. Right over her head it was looking, to where Ellinor, in her cream and gold draperies sat serenely condescending to the vicar's platitudes. Edie did not know that Phil, in all his composition, had as much sternness at command as he threw at that moment into the long, steadfast gaze he levelled at Ellinor. His whole face appeared to have undergone a sudden transformation; it showed white, hard, rigid in the warm glow of the lamp beneath which he stood; it was the sort of look a man might wear who, having tracked a man-eating tiger to his lair, sees the animal lying at his mercy and nerves his arm to strike the blow.

Ellinor seemed to feel his eyes fixed upon her; she grew a shade paler, and presently rose slowly from her sofa and crossed the room to Edie's side.

"It must be getting late," she said in

a whisper that was tantamount to a command. "Are you going to order the carriage?"

Edie, as she gave the signal for departure, wondered whether Ellinor had heard the sad paragraph read, and in what way it could affect her.

In the hall, Phil laid his hand on Edie's arm and drew her into a window-recess to have a quiet parting word.

"Edie," he said, and now there was no touch of ill-temper in his voice, but an unmistakable note of pain, "I am going up to London, to-morrow. I want to hear a little more about poor Rodney. But, before I go, I want to know exactly how we stand towards each other. Are we engaged, or are we not?"

Now, surely, Edie's good angel must have folded its wings and gone to sleep at that moment, or she would not have answered Phil, with that look on his face and that ring in his voice, as she did:

"Why, Phil, I thought you understood perfectly that we were not to be engaged to each other for a whole year—were to be just friends, nothing more, till the 1st of October next year comes round," she said, making her eyes very round, and looking as astonished as she possibly could.

"Well, and when the 1st of October comes round, what then?" queried Phil; but his eyes were not round, they were narrowing under something of a frown that was beginning to gather on his forehead.

"What then?" said Edie, trying to speak lightly, but thinking all the time how oddly Phil was talking and looking. "Well, then—then—don't you see!—we must both be of one mind, and—make up our minds to one thing or the other."

She said it demurely enough, in a way that a maiden of eighteen well knows how to speak, without any teaching, when her sole listener is her lover, and her topic the inevitable wedding-ring.

Phil, however, was neither hesitating nor demure in his next question.

"Supposing we are not of one mind when the 1st of October comes round, Edie," he said in the same odd, stern voice as before; "supposing one of us cries, 'Hold fast,' and the other cries, 'Let go,' what then?"

Edie hesitated for full thirty seconds—an enormous period for her to give to deliberation—before she answered:

"Oh, in that case, if one of us should be so ridiculous as to wish to keep the other to the bargain against his will, of course the other would have to abide by it.

But it isn't possible such a thing should occur, I imagine. I assure you, Phil, you wouldn't have to ask for your liberty twice of me."

"I am not likely to ask for it once, Edie. It was not of myself I was thinking, but——"

Here he stopped himself.

What need could there be to inform little Edie he was glad to have reserved to him a certain right to control her actions at a critical period of her career—that, in point of fact, should she by any unfortunate conjunction of circumstances be inclined to throw herself and her many good qualities away upon an unworthy admirer, he would have the privilege of putting his veto upon her choice.

"Come, Edie, Edie," cried the squire at this moment from outside the hall-door; "Ellinor is shivering—we are all of us catching cold out here!"

Yet there was a cheery note in the squire's voice as he said this. Truth to tell, he was not a little pleased to see Phil and Edie creeping off in this way to a quiet corner for a farewell talk. It brought back old times.

"Coming, papa!" answered Edie.

"One moment, Edie," said Phil, laying his hand upon her arm. "As I told you, I am going to London to-morrow, and may not be back for some little time to come. You must not be surprised if you do not see a great deal of me between this and the 1st of October, next year. To tell you the truth, I can't stand this wretched"—"humbugging," he was going to say, but stopped himself—"on and off way we've fallen into lately, and feel I had better be out of it altogether."

"Edie, Edie!" again called the squire, and this time not quite so cheerily as before.

So Edie, with just one upward look into Phil's face, was hurried away. She had not said one half that she had meant to say, nor a quarter of what she would have liked to say. She would have liked to have told Phil how sorry she was about poor Rodney, and how much she pitied poor Rodney's mother, who was a widow, with this one only son. But, there, it couldn't be helped! No doubt she would see Phil again soon—perhaps he might come over to-morrow before he started for London; or if not, she might write. Ah, by-the-bye, nothing had been said about writing! Would Phil write to her as usual, and would he expect her to write to

him in reply? And if so, how were they to begin and end their letters? It was very puzzling. Really, the whole thing now seemed much more intricate than it had done at first!

Edie was very silent during the short drive back to the Hall. She had a great many things to turn over in those restless little brains of hers.

OLDER SWITZERLAND.

As the train takes one rushing through this pleasant land of ours, through smiling valleys, and past murmuring trout-streams, and smooth downs where the sheep feed on the velvet turf, it takes a considerable effort of imagination to think of the time when this land was held in the grasp of the great ice king. He has retreated to his last stronghold in Europe, Switzerland, for a longer time than our small measurement of years and centuries can take count of, but he has written his name in unmistakable characters, scratching his sign-manual on the rocks, and transporting huge boulders from peak to peak as monuments of his power. In parts of this country it is still possible, despite the railways, to find places where one is carried backwards for a hundred years or so—places where London seems as distant as Siberia, and the next county is a foreign land.

The trains come through the country and carry away the sheep and the milk, but to the farmers who send the freights, the trains are merely the carriers of sheep and milk. Life continues its slow round undisturbed by this distant touch from the restless town. For good or for evil the habits of centuries are not to be altered at once even by a railway. The opening of railway traffic has the same effect on the remote rural populations that a window in a bee-hive has on the bees—it enables the spectator to look into the hive and see what the workers are about, but it does not suggest to them any alteration in their mode of work.

Whether people are better or worse for being behindhand in what we are pleased to call civilisation, may be a matter of opinion, but it is, at all events, a fresh experience for the Londoner, weary with the fret and bustle of our crowded life, to find within a few hours of his door people living in the traditions and prejudices of two generations ago.

There are such people to be found, and

the country they live in is like a miniature Switzerland, smaller both in the extent of the country and in the height of the mountains, but with all the characteristics of its younger brother, except the eternal snow.

It would be interesting to know, if it were possible, how many people who go to Switzerland really enjoy the snow-mountains.

Part of the visitors do not see them—that is, do not see them consciously. They hear people round them talking of the snow-mountains, and gazing at them now and then—discussing them with a view to contemplated expeditions, or with the pleasant air of patronage that our countrymen and women adopt when they are out of their own country. They hear that this mountain has been ascended, or that somebody proposes to attempt Mount that next week. They hear the state of the weather foretold from observed combinations of cloud and mountain-top. They even make their own prognostications, saying: "We shall have rain to-morrow—old thingummy has his nightcap on." They know, because they have been told, that that is "old thingummy," and they believe the white stuff on him is snow. In that sense they have seen a snow-mountain, but they have not seen it with any consciousness. They have no nerves that such sights can make to vibrate.

Others see the snow-mountains very distinctly. They gaze on them with admiring eyes as the finest gymnastic appliance that has yet been discovered. They measure their height and build, and seek for the weak place in them that makes them vulnerable—the point from which they can be ascended. To these the sensations inspired by the mountains come through their legs and their lungs. At this place they had to be "roped," at that they had to cut steps and climb round a nasty shoulder, hanging on by their eyelids. They remember one peak because there Brown slipped and nearly brought ruin to the party; and another because they were overtaken on it by a fog, and were brought within a measurable distance of having to camp out for the night on the snow. Such active employment of robust physical health and vigorous muscle puts the mountains in the position of direct antagonism, and leaves little room for contemplation of their beauties.

Mountaineering is a grand game for those whose physique admits of it—a game that

tests body and mind to the improvement of both; but enjoyment of the environment must be the result of subsequent contemplation.

Of those who go to the mountains for the sake of the scenery there are few who receive from it unmixed pleasure. They have an eager longing for the neighbourhood of the eternal snow, but the emotions it evokes are too strong for pure pleasure.

For the robust, who are able to spend all the day in climbing, coming back to their hotel merely to dine, and spend an hour outside afterwards smoking and talking to the assembled guides, before going to their beds and dreamless sleep, till the first daylight calls them out to renew their labours—for these the mountain inn has no hardship, and the grim neighbourhood of the silent mountains no terror. But for the more feeble ones—that is, for the generality—the early hours of the morning are scarcely pleasurable. In the valleys, where most of the inns are placed, the sun has to attain to considerable height before it can make itself felt. The sparsely-furnished rooms are bare and cold when one comes down to them in the grey morning, and there is no pleasure in struggling into boots which have just been washed in the ice-cold stream, which is the Swiss way of cleaning them. Not till an hour or so of walking has brought one into the warmth of the sun again has one any pleasure in existence. The keen sense of living as one drinks in the vigorous exhilarating air, and plunges one's eyes into the vast distances, and searches out the exquisite pools of colour that fleck the mountainsides, repay one for the labour; but when, after attaining the summit of the modest height that is the day's goal, the climber finds himself surrounded by silent, snow-clad giants, sitting there as if in sterner and unsympathetic judgment of the lower world, the feeling of horror is apt to mingle too largely for perfect enjoyment. Even in after contemplation the minor details of the mountain-experiences remain as the pleasant memory, and the horror of the silent land dominates, and perhaps elevates the mind. Even where the sights are more gracious the intensity of their beauty leaves something like an ache in the memory. The first sight of the rose-glow on the snow burns into the mind, and is never afterwards to be effaced.

In our older Switzerland this element of horror is absent. All the emotions it excites are on a smaller scale. All its beauties

are more human, and one's pleasure in them is more placid. In the land of Tell one lives among giants. Although yourself, perhaps, attempting no big work, all the interests of the place are in the struggles with ice and snow and towering peaks. An ordinary day's walk of the most modest description involves some amount of preparation: wraps, compass, the packing and carrying of luncheon, perhaps a guide; and the talk is of peaks and passes, of glaciers and ice-fields, of exploits involving something more than the ordinary amount of strength and endurance.

In our more modest country all this is wanting. To ascend the proudest height is little more than to walk the same distance along the high-road. No precipice balks you and makes you retrace a mile or two of your journey; no crevasse waits at each step with the fear of possible disappearance down unknown depths; you do not spend your days, as it were, with a half-tamed animal, who, at any moment, may turn and rend you. There is nothing to interfere with the most placid enjoyment of the beauties around you—nothing to excite you but your appreciation of their loveliness.

But to those who enjoy beautiful scenery for its own sake, the enjoyment is great. The scale may be smaller than that of Switzerland, but in all but size our own land has nothing to fear from the comparison. In place of snow-fields you have smooth expanses of grass where the sheep are nibbling, and for the crevassed glacier a dell where ferns plume the mossy boulder. The elevation of feeling that comes of the contemplation of colossal grandeur is wanting, and the discipline of physical endurance is not imposed upon the tourist; there is nothing to divert the mind from the pleasures that can come to it from the eye. In this older Switzerland, the fierce passions of youth have been toned down, and time has endowed it with numberless graces; rubbing off at the same time, it may be, some of its sterner characteristics, so that in the course of an afternoon's walk you seem to be passing through several counties.

One lovely morning in this last most lovely summer, I started from the unpretentious but comfortable hostelry which I had made my headquarters in the country of which I speak.

Our way led through the neighbouring village. Down a steep slope a mountain-

stream blustered. On either side of it was a row of mighty trees. Two stone bridges crossed it, and from either of these you could watch the trout swimming below. Behind the trees on each side, for some six hundred yards, were the houses that composed the village. All the houses in this country are built of grey-stone, and one's first impression of them is that of coldness and discomfort. This feeling is increased by the walls of grey-stone that everywhere take the place of the hedges of southern counties. They seem, too, to have an absolute passion for building walls. In the fields, through wild pastures, up the sides of hills, on the very summit of the mountains you see these inevitable erections; not cemented with mortar, but merely made of heavy pieces of the local stone piled up one on the other. Where there is a footpath across the fields that is intercepted by these walls, or where, in less frequented parts, there is likely to be any traffic, steps are made up the wall by leaving the end of one or two stones projecting from the surface. If the passenger has still any difficulty in getting over, he can push stones from the top till he has made a gap sufficient for his needs. The squire of dames has generally to do this many times in the course of the walk; and his promenade is thereby made a laborious one, for if he has a conscience it demands that he should replace the materials before he proceeds on his journey, and by the end of the day he is able to estimate the weight of a block of stone pretty accurately.

In many places, and particularly in the small outlying farms, the houses are white-washed to a dazzling whiteness; but in the villages, and particularly in the village in question, the severity of their appearance is relieved by the creepers that cover their walls. In spite of the rigour of the winters in this northern land, the plants and creepers flourish exceedingly, and cover the houses with a most fragrant mantle.

To judge by the view of the interiors that one gets in passing, the inhabitants of this village are in very comfortable case. There is scarcely a house that can fairly be called poor. An air of comfort and cosiness characterises them all. Pictures are on the walls, nicknacks on the tables, flowers in the windows; nobody seems hurried or distressed in any way; people move about with a leisurely composure as if all went well with them, and they wanted nothing of the outer world.

Climbing this village street to the top one comes to a barrier, formed by a church—a very ugly one, it must be confessed, but surrounded by fine trees—a low arch covered with ferns, through which the stream tumbles, and a park-gate.

As we came through the village we got, at the agent's house, the key of this gate, which is always, by the courtesy of the owner, at the disposal of visitors, who wish to walk that way; but reserved the use of it for our return journey. Skirting the park, we went up a boaky lane, a lane between the inevitable grey-stone walls, but bordered, and here and there arched over, by trees, and on either side meadows in which cattle, and sheep, and numberless rabbits and birds disported themselves, and made one envious of their careless liberty—a lane that was like a happy youth—a hill that gave some small zest in climbing: pleasant sound of birds, and sweet scent of roadside flowers; alternating sunshine and cool shade; but beyond, a wide space that seemed sweeter, but was fenced off by hard stone walls, the climbing of which was an offence.

Farther on, the shade of trees ceased, and out beyond one gazed on Switzerland. Smooth green Alps, surmounted by grim limestone crags—a Gemmi in miniature. Beyond this the way grew level, and led through pastures and by woods, and so to an old farmhouse, a deserted-looking place with mullioned windows, the ancient seat, it is said, of the family who bear the name of the place. They have migrated now to softer dwelling-places, and lost, perhaps, some of the sterner qualities that must have come to them from blood nourished in that keen, pure air.

Beyond the farm we came out upon the moor. Soft, close, smooth turf, eaten down by generations of rabbits and sheep, with views of exquisite beauty and delicacy extending farther and farther as increasing altitude widened the horizon. There are few greater pleasures to the dweller in a town than the sight of a broad, open down.

As you advance, the glamour of the scene steals upon you. The fleeting light and shadow chase each other, revealing fresh beauties of colour as they alternate. Each boulder shows a delicate tracery of gem-like lichens, each hollow holds a bloom like a fruit. The sun pours itself over the distant limestone crest of the mountain, and reveals bands of purple that mock the artist's pigments; a delicate fragrance floats

out from the coppice as you pass. A group of cattle in the distance call your attention to the delicate gradations of hill and dell. A sheep, with huge, curling horns, and grave, but startled face, runs out from behind the rock where he had been feeding, to see who it is who is invading his domain—startled, but yet with a half-friendly assurance that you can mean no harm in that peaceful place.

Beyond, the country expands into broad, open moorland, springy turf, and expanses of purple heather, out of which the grouse rise in a brown cloud, with a noise that sends a quiver of excitement through you.

It requires wary walking, for those big tufts of yellow-green and grey moss are soft in something more than their colour. Step on them, and you are up to your knees before you know where you are, and are lucky if you go no farther. On one occasion I was leading a pony, from which a lady of our party had just dismounted, and was walking on what appeared to be perfectly hard ground, when the pony put one foot on a soft place. He had walked to the edge of a bog. The sinking of her foot threw the pony forward, and I barely escaped following my charge into the quagmire, as she plunged helplessly forward in the ooze. Custom had probably made her dexterous, for, after a minute's frantic struggling, she scrambled on to firm ground again, with no further damage than the bursting of a couple of straps, and the loss of a basket, which was hanging on the pommel of the saddle, which she trampled to some unknown depth in the black mud. Fear of such like catastrophes, and the sight of the numberless Alpine flowers which grow everywhere, keep your eyes peering on the ground till, suddenly, you find it gaping before you.

Here, for once, there is no stone-wall—nothing to warn you of the abyss that yawns before you. It plunges straight down like a well in the centre of the moor. On the far side a mountain-stream comes plunging and leaping down a succession of stone-steps. Now, in the drought of summer, it is attenuated to a mere thread, but the breadth and bareness of the bed shows the volume to which it must sometimes attain. Down this bed it rushes till a wall of rock arrests its progress, and keeps it whirling till, after some unknown time, it burrows to the soft earth again, to reappear a couple of miles down the valley. Round the mouth of this well delicate ferns and flowers grow, and from it always rises a thin mist of vapour. Of course a

natural instinct leads one to gather stones, and pitch them down to hear them plunge sullenly in the depths some seconds afterwards. It is not a place one would like to come near in a foggy day.

Crossing the moor in the direction this vanished stream must take, you come to a mass of small trees and undergrowth at the head of a small ravine. Forcing your way through this, you find yourself in a confusion of boulders, and in front of you a fissure between two walls of rock that frames as charming a view as the eye can look upon. On either side are trees and precipitous rocks; below a winding green road of velvet turf that looks like a triumph of gardening skill, but is, in fact, just as nature makes it; beyond are green Alps and purple moor, and, crowning it all, a mass of rugged grey limestone.

Five minutes before you were on the wild moor, which seemed to extend as far as the eye could reach. Now you seem to be in some carefully-planned "surprise" devised by utmost skill in a king's garden. Five minutes before you were in Yorkshire or Scotland; half an hour before you were in Switzerland, and now, as you advance, you find yourself in the depths of Devonshire. The turf under your feet is vividly green, and of velvet texture. Forests of ferns plume the rocks on either side. Gnarled trees arch you in, covered with masses of soft, grey lichens. The moor with its rocky crown has disappeared, and peat-stained streams gurgle round you. The transformation is marvellous. You can scarcely believe the evidence of your own senses. In a few minutes' walk you have gone from one end of England to the other.

By-and-by you come to a gate, which admits you to charming pleasure-grounds nestled in a valley between the moors. Here the stream reappears, and flows down to form a lake between two precipitous banks, clothed in foliage of every kind; and at the end of this the stream and the village trickle down together. One travels far to see less beautiful sights in other countries.

Back again at the inn, you have no doubt of the part of the world you are in, whatever you may have thought during your walk. There was one native of Cockayne there who spoke the language of his country in its purest form. Meeting him one morning in the garden he remarked to me: "I think it's 'otter now than we 'ave 'ad it yet. Everythink 'as got so 'eated up;" but his homely dialect

from the distant land only meandered like a stream through the rich Yorkshire brogue that, in the smoking-room in the evening, filled what space was unoccupied by tobacco-smoke. In his appointed corner always sat our burly host—a rubicund, genial-looking man, who farmed, managed the stable, dealt in horses, supplied the countryside with coal, and, to judge by his appearance, made all his trades answer entirely to his satisfaction. In any dispute or difficulty mine host was the arbiter and stakeholder. Silent, serious-looking farmers would beckon him out of the room sometimes to ask his opinion or advice. I never discovered that he gave either with any very certain sound, but his solidity of appearance, and unruffled smile, answered the purpose sufficiently well.

In another corner my genial cockney was always ensconced, and there he prattled pleasantly to all comers. The rest of the company was usually composed of chance natives—farmers most of them, who came in for a sociable glass and a pipe; or sheep and cattle dealers, who had been to one of the neighbouring markets. Saturday and Sunday evenings were our fullest times. On those days we had visits from men who, on other days, did not leave their own firesides.

The farmers in that country are small men—small in point of land, that is, for in person they are sons of Anak. Many of them hold farms of fifteen or twenty acres of miserable land, principally pasture, for which they pay from forty to fifty shillings an acre, and make a living out of it. Most of them are teetotalers and dissenters. Some of them, unable to abstain absolutely from intoxicants, allow themselves a periodical indulgence—once, twice, three, or four times in the year. When their time of indulgence comes round they retire to a neighbouring village, and make up for lost time with the same pertinacity that they show in other pursuits; and when their craving is satisfied, or their purse exhausted, return to their farms, and rigidly forswear sack till their time comes again. As a rule, however, these small farmers are total abstainers. Unless they were so, it would be impossible for them to make their minute holdings pay. These men—tall, broad-shouldered giants—would come in, light their pipes, call for a bottle of ginger-ale, and either sit silently, or talk slowly and sedately of local topics: of the cattle that were likely to be seen at the

next show; of a new bull that had lately been acquired in the neighbourhood, or such-like matters.

Many of them brought their dogs with them, each one, after a solemn greeting to his neighbours, retiring silently under his master's seat till ten o'clock struck, when, according to the routine of the country, each man took his leave, the dogs emerged from their resting-places, and the house was shut for the night. Another visitor, who sometimes honoured us with a visit, was the keeper from a neighbouring estate. With him I was on very friendly terms, for being in some alarm on account of a sore place that had made its appearance on my dog's back, and not being certain whether it was due to the heat and unwonted exercise in persistent but utterly unavailing pursuit of the rabbits and hares that enticed him on all sides, or to some more unpleasant cause, I consulted the universal referee, our host.

According to his wont he patiently heard the case, but refrained from expressing a decided opinion, contenting himself with a mere hope that it might not be anything serious. His profoundly solemn and interested look of itself gave that hope weight, though I felt sure that he knew no more about canine ailments than I did; but, he said, with an air of solving all doubts and curing the dog off hand, he was sure to see "keeper" in the course of to-day or to-morrow, and keeper had some "stuff" that was wonderful good for such ailments. He would ask him to "step round" and give his opinion, and bring his stuff with him.

The stepping round meant a walk of some three miles, but of such a distance as that nobody there seemed to take any account, unless there were intervening bogs.

Soon after dinner next day, the hostess announced that keeper had arrived, and was ready to look at t' dog. I went outside and found an odour of dogs and ferrets, and other creatures alive and dead, with a tall, gaunt man standing inside it. He examined the dog, solemnly took out of the vast receptacle that with ordinary individuals would be a pocket, a bottle and brush, and proceeded to anoint the troublesome place, and gave in a cheery voice that immediately won my heart, the decided assurance that the mischief was not what I feared. This incident made a strong bond of sympathy between us, and we met afterwards in the smoking-room on the footing of friends.

One evening when I went in there, I found my bland Harrobes looking very angry, and talking with great energy. The anger, however, I was relieved to find, was retrospective. He was recounting an unpleasant difference of opinion that had occurred in that room, some time before, between him and a neighbour.

"Ah was gey vexed by what Ah had said aboot un," he was saying, when I went into the room, "and Ah said, eef you say that again A'll poot the oop chimney. Well, he wouldna' go back, and he said it again. So Ah jooat teuk un by t' collar and t' seat of uss breeches and shooved a' heeard oop chimney. Yew say thart agaan, Ah said, and A'll pounch thee oot top of chimney."

"And did you punch him up?" I asked.

"Nae," he answered, his face expanding into the huge beaming smile that was habitual with him; "Ah heard so the hecart t' do it;" and with that he relapsed into chuckling silence.

They are a curious race, the natives of that part of the country, and independent in their manner to an extent that sometimes seems like surliness, and sometimes like rudeness. A countryman will sometimes join you, if you are loitering about, and begin a conversation as if you were an intimate acquaintance, and on terms of perfect equality with him. He owes nothing to you in deference or any other way because you happen to wear a better coat than he does, and does not see why he should pretend that he does by using terms of ceremonious servility. If you take his view of the matter, you will get on very well with him, and often get much pleasure from the intercourse. If you do not like to be addressed by a man of rough speech and clothing without the prefix of "Sir," you will probably be annoyed very often, and had better avoid chance meetings with Yorkshiremen; but if you like men who are sturdy in person and character, even if they do not altogether conform to your ideas on such small matters, you will probably be pleased with the dwellers in our English Switzerland. They have the vices and virtues that are generally found in people whose life is a hard struggle with a hard country, but the virtues preponderate, and as a rule the more you see of them the more you will see to like in them.

They are a different race to the southerners, just as the character of their country is different. The severity of their circumstances leaves patches of sterility;

but both in the country and in the people even these are not without their beauty.

But however the manners of the natives in their manner of address may affect you, you can scarcely spend any time in our older Switzerland otherwise than to your advantage, both of body and mind.

The country swarms with game, and will make your mouth-water as you walk over it, if you are a sportsman. There is a splendid show of grouse, a fair sprinkling of partridges, the fields absolutely swarm with ground-game, and in the wooded parts the owners rear a very respectable number of pheasants, while the streams are everywhere full of trout.

The country has a beauty that grows upon you daily, if you have eyes that can see; a delicate beauty not to be surpassed in any land I know. Finer and more striking views you may perhaps find, but none that so satisfy the artistic eye. And for those who do not want a professed cook and rare vintages to satisfy their appetites, the homely comfort of the inns will make them more than content.

A BLUE-CAP MUTINY.

It is necessary to glance back some forty years across the pages of modern history to recall an incident which—scarcely noticed in the rush of greater events with which it was in some sort connected—seems to add a graphic episode to military story. It was related to me by an eye-witness, a gallant soldier whom, but a few months since, I followed to his grave.

The circumstance occurred at a period of the first Carlist war, when the contending parties were so evenly balanced that one signal success, or even a daring movement, might have turned the whole tide of war and changed a dynasty.

In more than one province Carlism was triumphant. It already possessed its capital—Estella—and its so-called court, and a march upon Madrid itself seemed but a question of time and policy. The Carlist leaders, trained under the eye of the gallant Zumala-Carreguy, were brave and skilful soldiers, and at the period we speak of united as one man in support of the man they esteemed their rightful sovereign. The army of the queen-regent, Maria Christina, was under the command of General Espartero, subsequently Duke of Vittoria and, after sundry revolutions, Regent of Spain.

Attached to this latter—the “Christino” —force, was a certain corps of picked men, known as the “Chapelgorris” or “blue-caps.” This regiment—a thousand strong—had been recruited principally from the better classes of Spanish society, and numbered in its ranks many young men of gentle and noble birth, fond of adventure, and ready for any service, however dangerous, on which they might be ordered. Brave as lions, they nevertheless lacked the discipline without which the best troops must prove, at times, inefficient. Great care had consequently been taken to place them under an officer who might at once command their attachment, and cause them to respect his rule. Such a man had been found in the person of Colonel Carmina, a distinguished veteran, known to the whole army as being as just and as humane, as he was resolute in executing the difficult duty confided to him.

More than once the reckless bearing of these men, and the savage fury with which they not unfrequently followed up their warlike successes, had compelled Carmina to resort to the sternest measures sanctioned by military custom, in order to check these excesses, and restore discipline. Notwithstanding this, the Colonel’s popularity had never for an instant waned.

It chanced that the Chapelgorris were stationed at Zaragoza, when they were suddenly ordered to join the grand army under Espartero, about to commence its march to confront the entire Carlist force which had invaded the adjacent province. At that moment the feelings of this excitable corps had been roused to an unusual degree by some painful but necessary examples provoked by certain of the more turbulent spirits, the irritation being increased by a long delay in making up arrears of pay. Murmurs arose, and it was openly proposed that, previous to obeying the order to march, a protest should be presented, demanding redress for the alleged grievance.

Whether the moment was deemed ill-chosen, or that the tone adopted by the remonstrants was too dictatorial—perhaps for both reasons—the request was met by a brief and stern rejection. The regiment was ordered to commence its march on the following day.

This brought matters to a climax. A disorderly meeting was at once held by the malcontents—who, indeed, comprised nearly the whole regiment—and it was unanimously agreed to proceed in a body

to the square in front of the town-hall, and make their complaints heard.

Unfortunately, as it happened, the men, who had been engaged in cleaning their arms, shouldered their muskets, and at once hurried to the rendezvous. Here they were met by one or two of their chief officers, who endeavoured, but in vain, to induce them to disperse; and so threatening was the aspect of affairs that the Colonel—at that moment visiting an out-quarter some miles distant—was summoned in eager haste to the spot. Meanwhile, the disturbance had been augmented by the ill-judged interference of the civil guard, and shots had been exchanged, when Carmina, with his aide-de-camp, arrived at full gallop, and joined the group of officers assembled on the steps of the town-hall. His white hair, as he uncovered to return the salute that greeted him, caught every eye, and for a moment calmed the tumult sufficiently to allow of his comprehending the appeal now addressed to him. But the firing had reached his ear, and the veteran commander had but one answer to return:

“With arms in your hands? Never!”

They were the last words he was destined to utter. Whether the shout that followed was misinterpreted by those more distant as an expression of disappointment and defiance, was never clearly ascertained, but the conflict with the civil guard recommenced, firing began in new directions, and a volley aimed at the town-hall stretched the brave old Colonel dead, mortally wounded two other officers, and inflicted slighter injuries on several of the rest.

After this exploit, the spirit of the furious soldiery underwent a sudden change. As if conscience-stricken by the enormity of their cowardly crime, they stole away in every direction, leaving no trace of what had occurred, save the terrible witness of the bloodstained platform, from which the victims of this tragedy were being mournfully borne away.

Notice of the event described found Espartero on the point of marching to attack the Carlists; but, rigid disciplinarian as he was, the exigencies of the moment forbade further action in the matter, and he contented himself with sternly forbidding the mutinous Chapelgorris to join his forward movement.

Three days later, after a decisive victory, the General retraced his steps, halting, however, at Zaragoza, where he issued

orders for a grand review of the whole army on the morrow.

The spectacle next day was imposing, as the July sun shone brilliantly on the victorious army, formed in three sides of a square, the city walls forming the fourth. The Chapelgorris occupied, as had been their custom, a position in the centre.

All being ready, the gates were thrown open, and Espartero, followed by a numerous staff—of whom my informant was one—rode slowly out. It was remarked that, contrary to his custom—except when royalty was present at such ceremonies—he was in full uniform, and wore his many decorations. His face was deathly pale. Passing along the whole array, halting at the head of each regiment, to distribute rewards and words of commendation, referring to their conduct in the recent action, he at last approached the peccant Blue-caps, hitherto sullen spectators of the bestowal of rewards and honours, in which, but for their crime, they would, no doubt, have largely shared.

After a pause, the word was given, “Order arms!” Down went the muskets. But the next order: “Pile arms, and retire fifty paces to the rear!” was not so readily obeyed. It had a sinister sound, and men glanced at each other, right and left, as if to see what support disobedience would receive.

The next moment, at some probably preconcerted signal, a line of cavalry opened, and disclosed three field-batteries unlimbered, with their guns so disposed as to concentrate their fire on the hesitating regiment.

The hint was taken, and the order obeyed, when the cavalry, advancing, drew up between the men and their piled arms, while Espartero rode, as slowly as his horse could walk, along the agitated line. Returning to their centre, he addressed them:

“Soldiers, I have inspected your line, and have missed more than one well-known face. Among these, that of my old friend and brother-in-arms, the brave Carmina. I am here to demand him of you.”

A bewildered pause. No man replied.

“I will tell you where he is,” resumed the General’s deep voice, as his sword flashed from the scabbard, and he pointed it towards the cemetery, outside the city walls. “He lies there, in the bloody grave that you—his soldiers, whom he has often led to victory—provided for him. Five minutes to produce his assassin.”

More than one bronzed and reckless face grew pale; but none stirred or offered answer.

"Five minutes more," said Espartero.

The time elapsed.

"The regiment will be decimated," was the chief's stern sentence.

Infantry and cavalry at once closed round the doomed regiment, while the provost-marshal, with his escort, commencing from the left, selected every tenth man, and drew them up in line—one hundred strong.

Espartero gazed gloomily down the line of the condemned—fine, soldier-like fellows, not a few of them descended from the best blood of Spain, and seemed irresolute.

"Mutineers and murderers as you are," he said, "I cannot bring myself to shed so much Spanish blood. But an example is demanded. You will be decimated again, and the ten be shot before I quit this ground."

The selection made, "A priest, and a firing-party," was the next command.

After a brief shrift, the condemned were conducted a few paces to the rear, and ordered to stand facing the city-walls, with their backs to the execution-party—a position assigned to mutineers and traitors.

One of the ten—a young man of noble presence—turned suddenly round.

"Take my life, general," he called out, in a clear, ringing tone; "but I am neither traitor nor murderer, and will not disgrace my name by dying as one."

Espartero's inflexible face never changed its expression, but a sergeant attached to the provost-marshal's guard fell out without permission, and approached the General, saluting; he wore two decorations.

"Well, sir?" asked Espartero sternly.

"General, that man is innocent," the man replied. "I was told off with others to report on the disturbance. He was without arms, and took no part in the mutiny. More than that, I was beside him when the volley that killed the Colonel was fired, and noticed him strike up the muskets of those nearest, to distract their aim."

"You are so well-informed, sir," said the General with a half-contemptuous smile, "that you can doubtless tell us who did direct his fire upon the murdered officers. Otherwise, the execution must proceed."

"I can, general," answered the sergeant. "His name is Pedro Gomez. He lies wounded in hospital. Ward L., bed Thirty-five."

"Fall in, sir," said Espartero, and calling an aide-de-camp, ordered that the execution be delayed for half an hour, and that Pedro Gomez, wounded or otherwise, be transported to the spot.

This was at once done. Gomez, who had been slightly wounded during the desultory firing in the market-place, had managed, under cover of the trifling hurt, to take refuge in hospital. Carried to the spot where his—perhaps less guilty—comrades waited to expiate the general crime, he was substituted for the youth whom the sergeant's timely interference had saved, and the sentence was carried out.

LILIAN'S LOVERS.

A STORY.

DINNER was over; Miss Macpherson had retired to the drawing-room with Lilian Champion, leaving her brother, Dr. Macpherson, to enjoy half an hour's chat with his guest.

"So you're going to settle down in England again, are you, Fairchild?" said the doctor. "I'm glad to hear it."

"You're very good."

"And whereabouts are you going to train up your vine, and plant your fig-tree?"

"I'm afraid I must wait a while before I settle down to that extent," replied Fairchild with a smile. "I'm an unattached bachelor, and some chambers in town are the nearest I shall get to having a home of my own."

"It's time you married," said the doctor in a fatherly way.

"I acknowledge it, but I've managed to spend thirty-two years without a wife, so that I feel no urgent call to try and win one."

Herbert Fairchild was not, perhaps, speaking the whole truth. Had the worthy doctor been gifted with more acute powers of observation, he might have noticed that his guest's face had perceptibly fallen when Lilian left the room, and that, even now, his eyes were on the door through which she had disappeared.

The doctor, however, saw nothing, and was quite unconscious of the skill with which Fairchild managed to bring round the talk to the subject which interested him so much.

Not that he was in love with Miss Champion. He had met her but three times since his return from a long residence abroad. Still, he was conscious that he

ould not have visited Dr. Macpherson ven three times in the fortnight, had he nd his sister been the only occupants of lenfoyle.

"Yes," said the doctor in reply to some uestion of Fairchild's, "she has been my ard now for eight years, and will be of ge next year. I suppose she will even then emain with us; she looks on this as her ome."

"You must not make too sure of her emaining long," said Fairchild, meaning to nd out whether there was anyone else in he field before him.

The doctor's face perceptibly darkened. "I suppose not," he replied; "a girl ith her charms and good looks, and with considerable, though not large, portion, s likely enough to find admirers."

"Of course," assented Fairchild me- hanically.

"By-the-bye," said the doctor suddenly, do you know anything of a Mr. Blake— odney Blake?"

Fairchild looked puzzled.

"The name seems familiar to me," he plied; "I'm sure I must have heard it omewhere, or I should never recognise it o readily. But I can't associate it with nyone."

"No, of course; it's improbable to the ast degree," assented Mr. Macpherson. "There was just the chance. I want to earn something about him if I can. He's een here a good deal lately."

"Oh, indeed," said Fairchild, not know- ng what to say.

"I'm afraid he's heard that Lilian has en thousand pounds," said the doctor with n uneasy smile. "I wish she hadn't when ee him about. I've taken an immense islike to him."

Fairchild wondered why he was chosen s a confidant. It was true that he and Lilian had been playfellows when children, nd that he was a connection of the doctor's. The fact was, the doctor wanted to talk to omeone about Blake, and found so little ympathy on the part of his sister that he ook advantage of the first person whose elationship warranted a disclosure.

"You see the worst of it is, that Lilian evidently likes him very much, I'm afraid. That gives him a strong position, and it has prejudiced me against him to find that he takes advantage of it. Perhaps I am too prejudiced against him; it is difficult for an old fogey like me to welcome a man who wants to take away my Lilian."

"Of course."

"I don't know much about him; he has not given me the right to demand particulars yet. But, if, by any chance, you should find out anything about him, I wish you would let me know—in confidence, of course. I don't want Lilian to lose her heart to a fellow who does not deserve her."

Fairchild promised, and soon after the two men joined the ladies. Lilian sang and played to them, but one at least did not spend so pleasant an evening as he had anticipated.

Fairchild left early, as he had to return to Windsor, where he was staying. He was on the qui vive to discover anything, even a glance, which might imply that Lilian regretted his departure, but was forced to confess that, if he had been a married man, she could not have been less neutral, though she was as charming as could be.

Fairchild did not go to bed early that night. He lit a cigar, and sat up in his bedroom with a novel—he was staying at an hotel. He wished he had not gone near Glenfoyle. As it was, he had seen Lilian just often enough to unsettle his mind, without having the satisfaction of having made the slightest impression on her. He read twenty pages of his novel whilst he was smoking his cigar. On resuming his book, after lighting a fresh one, he could not find his place, nor could he remember what he had been reading about—not a word stayed in his memory.

Reading was evidently a waste of time. He threw down the book, and began thinking.

Rodney Blake! He had heard the name before, he was sure. When?

He got up and fished his desk out of his portmanteau. He kept a rough diary, jotting down memoranda day by day sufficient to remind him of the chief events which had occurred. He commenced reading this diary from the first page. Perhaps Blake's name might occur in it.

Although the name he was in search of did not appear, he came across an entry which put him on the right scent. It was on a piece of foreign letter-paper, roughly gummed into the book.

It consisted of part of a letter from a cousin in India, almost entirely about business, but referring shortly to a scandal in the regiment which had cost the writer fifty pounds. Like a flash, the rest of the letter crossed Fairchild's memory. The scandal was the misappropriation of regimental

funds by the surgeon, and the surgeon's name was Rodney Blake."

At first he was quite sure about it; but as he turned the page over he began to doubt. It was ten years ago—he might be mistaken; he had been puzzling over the name of Blake so long that he might have unconsciously attributed it to the wrong individual.

It was, however, easy to make sure. He wrote a letter to his cousin, now stationed at Gibraltar, asking for details of the affair and for some means of identifying the actual culprit.

That done, he went to bed. He could not get an answer for some days, and could do nothing till he received one.

On second thoughts, though, which visited him the next day, he could pay another visit to Glenfoyle. He had nothing decisive to report, but if he could persuade the doctor to try and put a stop to Blake's visits for the present, it would be worth while doing so.

Glenfoyle was on the outskirts of Reading, near the river. The Macphersons kept a boat, and Fairchild had some hope of an hour or two on the water with Lillian. But his hopes were disappointed. On reaching the house, he found that the doctor and his sister were out, and that Miss Champion was with a gentleman in the garden.

Fairchild looked at the staid old servant who opened the door to him.

"Surely I know your face!" he said.

"I hope so, sir; it was one of the first you ever saw," she replied.

"Why, you're Susan!" cried Fairchild, holding out his hand.

"Yes, I am, Master Herbert, and I should have known you in a moment, though I haven't seen you since you were a boy."

"Are you living here?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. I haven't left Miss Lillian ever since she was a baby, and that's twenty years ago."

Fairchild was unfeignedly glad to meet his old nurse, and she, on her part, was highly delighted. It was not long before she had confided to him the full history of Lillian, with many expressions of hope and fear.

They were talking in the breakfast-room from which the garden could be seen. Presently Lillian appeared on the lawn, walking beside a gentleman, who was talking earnestly to her.

"Who is that?" asked Fairchild.

"That's Mr. Blake, sir," she replied;

"and I wish he had never come near the place. He's bewitched Miss Lillian, that's what he's done. She thinks that because she speaks fair, and has a big moustache, that he must be everything that he ought to be; but I think he's after her money, and I've as good as told her so."

At this moment the doctor and Miss Macpherson returned, and the interview was cut short. They all adjourned to the garden, and Fairchild was introduced to Mr. Blake, who was as warmly welcomed by Miss Macpherson as he was received coldly by the doctor.

The latter took an early opportunity of being alone with Fairchild.

"You haven't heard anything about him, I suppose?" he asked.

Fairchild was in a quandary. It seemed a wrong thing to do to make an accusation of the truth of which he was not sure. At the same time he saw it was high time that something was done. Lillian's pleasure in Blake's company was too evident.

He decided that it was his duty to speak.

"I'll tell you all I know," he said, and proceeded to give the doctor the grounds for his suspicion.

"I will respect your confidence," the doctor said. "I will manage to take Lillian away somewhere for a week, and by that time you will have heard something definite. We had better join the others now."

Mr. Blake proved himself a very pleasant companion during the afternoon, which, notwithstanding, was not an agreeable one for Fairchild. He could see that there was an understanding between Lillian and Blake of a much more intimate nature than the good doctor suspected. He was half afraid that his interference, even should it be justified, would come too late.

He did not accept the doctor's invitation to stay to dinner. He felt that he was only in the way, and that in his present mood he was far from a pleasant addition to any circle. The only company he was fit for was his own, and he did not feel in the humour for enjoying even that.

Blake remained, to the doctor's annoyance, but Miss Macpherson had asked him at Lillian's request. The doctor determined that this should be the last time they should meet, until Fairchild was able to bring some decisive report. Even he could not blind himself to the fact that Blake seemed to have entered on a new stage of his relations with Lillian; his attentions were perhaps not more marked than usual, but they were of a different kind, more in

accordance with those of an accepted than a hopeful lover.

"I will spin out dinner as long as I can," said the doctor to himself, "and manage to keep him with me after Lilian has gone away. He's fond enough of my wine; there ought not to be any difficulty in making him keep near it."

Had the doctor only been aware of it, Blake's thoughts were similar to his own. He, too, was looking forward to the tête-à-tête after dinner, and his interest in it was at least as great as his host's.

Similarly, too, Blake was not quite easy in his mind. He was quite conscious that Dr. Macpherson disliked him, and he regretted it. But he did not pay so much attention to the fact as might have been expected.

The truth was that he had proposed to Lilian and had been accepted. He had fascinated her, and she responded to his declaration with all the passion of a girl's first romance. He had her completely in his power. Miss Macpherson was his ally; what more could he want?

He had some hope that the doctor would not have the courage to oppose him. If he did—as of course he had the right to do—it would be time enough then to decide what must be done.

There was a meaning look between Lilian and her lover as she left the dining-room. He held the door open for the ladies to pass out, and managed to whisper:

"Don't be afraid, my darling."

Dr. Macpherson was vaguely uneasy as Blake pulled up his chair to the table and poured himself out a glass of wine. He did not delay long before beginning to say why he had paid this visit.

"You may have guessed, sir," he said, "what I want to say to you. I want to have your consent to my marriage with Miss Champion."

The doctor was taken by surprise. There was no need for him to say so; his face showed it.

"You surely must have seen my admiration of her. Even had I wished to do so, I could not have concealed it entirely."

"Yes—yes," assented the doctor; "I have observed it, but none the less you take me by surprise now. Have you spoken to Lilian?"

"I have reason to believe that my suit will not be unwelcome to her."

"That means, I suppose, that you have asked her to be your wife?"

"Yes," assented Blake rather hesitatingly.

"I hope," he continued, "that I have not been mistaken in thinking that my visits to your house, and my attentions to Miss Champion, were not unwelcome to you. You acknowledged just now that you had observed that I admired her, and, as you did not give me to understand that I was intruding, I felt no hesitation in continuing to accept your hospitality."

The doctor felt that he was in a dilemma. He resolved to temporise.

"You can scarcely expect me to give you an answer on the spot," he said gravely. "Lilian is my ward, and is still under age. You will, of course, be able to satisfy me thoroughly as to your position and prospects. You must acknowledge that I have had very little opportunity of learning anything about you till now."

"I acknowledge it," was the reply. "I shall be able to convince you that my income is sufficient to warrant my marriage. I have, as you know, a consulting practice in London."

"Yes—yes; I have no doubt that all will be satisfactory," said the doctor, as a new idea struck him. "If everything turns out as it should, and Lilian accepts you, I shall be quite ready to give my consent."

"You are very good."

"But, as I said just now, Lilian is still under age, and, perhaps, more inexperienced than most girls of her age. One thing I must insist on, and that is, that she does not marry till next year, when she will be twenty-one."

"Really, sir——" began Blake.

"That is a condition I cannot waive," said the doctor, thinking that by this means he ensured ample time for an examination into Blake's eligibility.

"I must say, I fail to see the reason or justice of your condition," replied Blake with more warmth than he had hitherto shown. "Taking it for granted that I am able to thoroughly satisfy you as to my position, what reason have you for postponing our marriage beyond the date which Lilian may desire?"

"Surely," retorted the doctor with some sharpness, "it is scarcely for you to require me to explain to you the motive which may guide me in my conditions."

"With all due respect for you as Lilian's guardian, I must protest against your right to make unreasonable conditions. They reflect on me."

"In what way?"

"Inasmuch as they imply that you have some motive for delaying our

marriage. What is it? Do you know anything derogatory to my character? If so, refuse your permission, but do not make it contingent on my being able to clear myself from a false accusation."

The doctor lay back in his chair, and was silent for a minute or two. He was thinking whether he could by any chance put out a feeler to discover whether Blake had ever been an army surgeon in India.

Before he could make up his mind, Blake began to speak.

"I must demand a decisive answer, sir," he said firmly.

If there were one thing more than another needed to confirm the doctor in his suspicions, it was Blake's persistence. Why should a man who had nothing in his past life to hide be so anxious for a speedy marriage?

"I thought my answer was plain enough, sir," he said coldly. "When you have satisfied me as regards your position and so forth, my sanction will be given to your engagement, but under no circumstances to your being married till Lilian is of age."

Blake finished his glass of claret.

"Very well, sir, I must try and be satisfied with your reply, which is certainly distinct enough. Shall we join the ladies?"

"If you wish," replied the doctor, thinking that he might have let him suggest the move to the drawing-room.

In spite of the doctor's efforts there were not wanting opportunities for Blake to speak a few words in a whisper to Lilian. Her guardian would not have been reassured had he overheard what was said.

"I shall write to you to-morrow," he said in a low tone, as he turned over some music.

"Doesn't uncle consent?"

"No; I'll tell you all about it. Could you be at Caversham Lock to-morrow at three?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Then I'll meet you. Don't say any more now; he's watching us."

All this was mystery to Lilian, who had hitherto found her guardian ready to accede to her every wish. It had never struck her for a moment that he would object to her marrying Rodney Blake, and it had caused her a shock when she saw the two men enter the drawing-room. It was evident in a moment that things had not gone smoothly.

After making the appointment for next day, Blake did not remain long. He made

no further effort to speak to Lilian, and as he went he told the doctor that on him must devolve the duty of communicating to Lilian what was necessary.

This interview with his ward was scarcely more easy to the good-natured gentleman than the one with her lover. But Lilian received the news with more calm than he had anticipated.

"You don't think it unreasonable in me to wish to have you with us a little longer?" he asked her with a smile.

"No," she replied; "it seems all right enough. But why did not Mr. Blake come up to me when you came into the room?"

"I suppose he has taken my condition as equivalent to a refusal," he replied.

"But it isn't?" she persisted.

"Well, no; not at present," he said gravely. "Take my advice, Lilian, don't be in a hurry—be content to wait."

Lilian looked up, puzzled, but said no more. She was thinking that when to-morrow came she would hear all about it from Rodney, and have the mystery explained. Her guardian was pleased with her acquiescence, and hoped that her affection for Blake was not so strong as he feared.

Blake left the house with his mind made up. He had not lived for nearly forty years without observing his fellow-creatures, especially as he often had to live upon his wits. He had watched the doctor carefully during their interview, even at the time when he was speaking with most warmth.

Everything had gone on with pleasant smoothness in the matter of his wooing till that afternoon. Then he had been introduced to Fairchild. That was a name he was not likely to forget. One owner of it had nearly ruined his career years before, when he was a regimental surgeon in India.

He could not help fearing that this Fairchild might be a relation of the Captain Fairchild who had been the chief means of discovering his defalcations. If so the affair would probably have reached his ears, and he would naturally inform the doctor. When he saw the two men in close conclave he concluded that what he feared had occurred.

Before his after-dinner interview was over he was sure of it. It was evident the doctor suspected something. If he had been sure he would at once have accused him; if he had suspected nothing he would not have been so firm and unreasonable.

His course was clear. If he accepted the doctor's condition his marriage was

made impossible, for his history would be known long before the close of the year. He must marry at once, too, for it to bring him any good. He wanted money. If he could marry Lillian he could stave off his creditors, as he would have good security, but unless he married her very soon his affairs would become too involved for concealment to be longer possible.

Perhaps, after all, it was for the best. If Lillian loved him so ardently as he believed, she would not hesitate to give up all for him, even to the extent of eloping with him. It was with that idea that he endeavoured to impress Lillian with the notion that his pretensions to her hand had been rejected.

He felt very tired when he reached his hotel. He had not been well lately, his business troubles had been exceedingly wearying, and the shock he had received that afternoon in finding Fairchild on the scene had upset him. Doctor though he was, he had taken to the habit recently of indulging in doses of opium; he found that he was often unable to sleep unless he took a few drops. But he had sense enough to indulge himself as rarely as possible.

On this evening, however, he took a dose, knowing that he would not sleep unless he did so, and it was imperative that he should be at his best next day. He always carried a small phial with him in order not to be without it, should his need for it be imperative when he was out of reach of a chemist's.

He woke at eleven next morning refreshed. He had led Dr. Macpherson to believe that he intended to return to London the previous evening, so that he had no fear but that Lillian would be able to keep her appointment, as she enjoyed to the full the liberty of an English girl in the country.

He made his way by a circuitous route to the lock, arriving there at a quarter to three. He kept a sharp look-out, and soon descried Lillian at a distance. He hastened to meet her; they took a path where it would be improbable they would be seen.

"What does it all mean?" was her first question.

"Did Dr. Macpherson say nothing to you last night?"

"He told me you had proposed for me, and that he had given his conditional consent."

"Conditional on what?"

"On our not marrying till next year."

"Did he give you the impression that

on that condition we might consider ourselves engaged?" asked Blake.

Lillian hesitated.

"He did not seem to quite say he consented," she replied, "and he hinted that everything was not quite as he would like it to be. What did he mean?"

"He meant, that he would never give his consent, and that he wanted to soften the blow by simply postponing it. He will never consent!"

"Why not?" asked Lillian eagerly.

"Because he dislikes me."

"Why? How can he?"

"It is not so difficult," he replied with a slight smile; "but, as he would not tell me the reason, I cannot answer your question. I thought him open and generous till last night, and now—well, I dare say I am prejudiced against him, because he wishes to separate us."

"I cannot believe it," she cried.

"It is true. Has he said a word to make you think he looks upon me as even possibly engaged to you?"

Lillian reflected, and unconsciously interpreted all the doctor had said in the most unfavourable way.

"He cannot—he shall not separate us," she said firmly.

"He can, and he will."

"Rodney!" she exclaimed, stopping suddenly, and laying her hand on his, "do you mean it?"

He took her hand.

"Yes, unless you love me as much as I hope."

"I love you more than my life."

"My own!" he whispered.

The terrible dread which had seized her heart died away as he spoke, and a fit of sobbing relieved her. When she was calm again, Blake put before her, with all the power he was capable of, the necessity of acting for themselves. He invented reasons of a powerful kind why they should marry at once, not scrupling to draw on his imagination, in view of the terrible probability that, unless he won her consent to his wish, every chance of winning her would soon vanish.

He need scarcely have pleaded so hard; she was only too ready to acquiesce. In her eyes, whatever he did was right; whatever he proposed, wise. Before they separated, she had promised to meet him the next morning but one, and be married in London. He was to return to London at once, and obtain the necessary licence.

Meanwhile Fairchild was expecting

every day to hear from his cousin. Blake had been very civil to him when they met at Glenfoyle, and Fairchild did not imagine that he would be identified as a relation of the Captain Fairchild who was formerly only too well known to the ex-army surgeon. Still, he was uneasy; he could not help imagining that matters had gone too far to be easily set right, and that even if Lilian were saved it would be at the cost of much suffering.

On Wednesday night the expected letter came. It left not the slightest doubt as to the identity of Blake, and showed him to be a man utterly unfitted to have the love of Lilian.

Fairchild put the letter carefully in his pocket. He thought at first of writing to the doctor that night, but on second thoughts resolved to carry his news himself the next morning.

He did not sleep well that night. The certainty that at last the field would be open to him excited him, and he spent some hours in vain imaginings of future happiness. He finally dropped off into a troubled slumber, and woke late with a bad headache.

There was only one letter for him; it had the Reading postmark. He did not recognise the handwriting. He opened it and glanced at the signature—"Your faithful old nurse, Susan Griffiths."

"What on earth is she writing to me about?" was his mental query. But as he read the short, strangely-worded letter, his interest became intense.

It told him shortly that Lilian, having first bound her not to say a word to her guardian or Miss Macpherson, had confessed that she was going to London by the train on Thursday morning to meet Mr. Blake. It piteously appealed to Fairchild to try and meet her, and prevent her doing what she would regret all her lifetime.

Fairchild crushed the letter into his pocket and seized his hat. He had not breakfasted, but what of that? He ran downstairs and snatched up the time-table. He found there was plenty of time for him to reach Paddington before the time named.

The train started immediately. When he was in the carriage it struck him that perhaps he might have reached Reading before Lilian started, but a reference to the time-table showed that it was doubtful. If only he had risen at his usual hour!

He had half an hour to spare when he reached the terminus. He went into the refreshment-room to get a cup of coffee; he felt weary and done up. He had not been there many minutes, when he felt a hand on his arm. He turned round quickly, and saw Blake at his elbow.

"Good-morning," said the latter, who had had time to decide upon his tactics. The moment he had caught sight of Fairchild he knew why he was come, or at least suspected it. "Are you going down this morning?"

"Yes, I expect so," replied Fairchild.

"So am I; perhaps we may travel together, if you are bound for Reading, as I am."

Fairchild reflected that if only he could keep close to Blake, he was sure of not missing Lilian. He would have preferred to see Lilian alone, but did not know exactly where she and Blake were to meet. So he responded as cordially as he could to his companion's advances.

"I see you are having a second breakfast," remarked Blake, "I think I will have some coffee too."

He ordered the waiter to bring it.

"You look very seedy this morning," he added to Fairchild; "I think a little brandy would do you good."

"I am rather unwell," assented Fairchild.

"Waiter, some brandy," cried Blake. "You must put some in your coffee," he added; "I'm a medical man, and prescribe it. Have you your ticket? I'm just going to get mine whilst my coffee cooks. Shall I get yours?"

Fairchild had to decide in a moment.

"Let me go," he said, rising; "I will be back in a moment."

"As you like," replied Blake.

Fairchild had argued that, if Blake left him, he could easily give him the slip. On the other hand he himself could leave the refreshment-room and get a porter to fetch the tickets whilst he kept his eye on the door. He did so, and was soon back in his place. Blake had not quit the corner in which they were sitting.

But during Fairchild's short absence, his companion had drawn a small phial from his pocket and quietly poured a few drops into the cup from which Fairchild had been drinking. There was no one about, and his action, hidden by a newspaper, was unobserved.

"Thanks, very much," he said as Fairchild gave him his ticket. "There's your brandy, don't spare it; you want it."

Fairchild poured some into his cup, and drank it off.

"It tastes queerly," he observed.

"They don't give you very good spirits at railway-stations," replied Blake. But Fairchild did not quite catch what he said. He felt his head was behaving strangely. There was a slight ringing in his ears, and he was losing power over his faculties. He made an effort to rouse himself, but a conviction gained on him that it was not worth while. He did not remember anything more.

When he awoke he could not make out what had occurred. He found himself lying on a bed in a large ward. He felt very sick and faint. An attendant soon came to him, and he discovered he was in a hospital.

An hour's rest and some refreshment revived him considerably, and with returning consciousness came remembrance of what had happened. He looked at his watch in dread; it was past five o'clock.

He sank back in despair. He was too late. Before this Lilian was married, and married to a man who had not scrupled to poison him; for he had no doubt that Blake had drugged him, though he could not guess how. It was just within the bounds of possibility that the brandy, taken before he had eaten any solid food, had overcome him, but it did not seem probable.

As soon as the house-physician gave him leave, and the necessary formalities were over, he drove to Paddington to make the journey to Reading. He would see the doctor, and tell him all—not that it would do much good.

He only just caught the train. He sat with the window open, and the cool air refreshed him. He felt himself again by the time Reading was reached.

He jumped out of the train, and stumbled against a man descending from the next compartment. He thought for a moment that he must still be dreaming, for it was Rodney Blake.

It was no dream, however. Fairchild took his arm.

"Are you going to Glenfoyle?" he asked.

"Yes," was Blake's short reply.

"We will go together, then. I have something to tell Dr. Macpherson which it may interest you to hear."

"What is it?"

"The contents of a letter from my cousin, Major Fairchild. You knew him in India when he was Captain Fairchild."

Blake shook himself free.

"You may go alone," he said with an oath.

Fairchild hesitated whether to let him go off or whether to pursue the subject of their morning encounter. He decided that no good could come of doing so. His illness had been noticed before his fainting, and Blake would be able to clear himself from all hand in it. So Fairchild turned on his heel, and left him.

He could not make it out. One thing was certain—Lilian and Blake had not met.

He took a cab to Glenfoyle in great excitement. When he arrived he found everything in confusion.

A few words put the doctor in possession of what had occurred.

"Thank Heaven!" he exclaimed. "By a most providential chance, a schoolfellow of Lilian's came unexpectedly yesterday, and my sister persuaded her to stay the night. Lilian behaved so strangely that I thought she was ill, and sent for the doctor, who was to come at ten in the morning. Lilian, however, insisted on going out, but I was so convinced that something was wrong that I insisted on my sister's accompanying her. Then she became hysterical, and Dr. Cope ordered her to keep her bed for the day."

It was a narrow escape. When she found that it was impossible for her to leave the house alone, she tried to persuade her old nurse to telegraph to Blake, but Susan firmly refused. Blake saw several trains in, and then returned to his house, hoping to find a telegram, but as none had arrived he returned to the station. At last he determined to go to Glenfoyle, and find out the meaning of Lilian's failure to keep her appointment. He kept a sharp look-out for Fairchild, who escaped being seen by only just catching his train.

The news of her lover's unworthiness, which had to be told her, affected poor Lilian painfully. At first she would not believe it, but was forced to do so at last, especially as further proof was not wanting in his silence. She was ill for some weeks; when she recovered, she asked that Rodney Blake's name might never be mentioned to her.

Fairchild acted wisely, and let some months pass by before he made any attempt to win her affection. She did not know what part he had borne in saving her from Blake, for Susan kept silent and so did the others. But she knew it afterwards—when they were married.

"EDELWEISS."

A STORY.

CHAPTER V.

THAT same evening, old Käthe sent the girl out on some errands. When they were done, she took the path through the chestnut-wood, and walked slowly on till she reached the little hotel by the lake waters, where the tourists and travellers from Lucerne usually stayed.

The lighted rooms and the pretty wooden balcony were all filled with people, many of whom had come to see the ceremony of opening the railway. Gay groups were sitting at the little tables. There were beautiful colours and fair faces; there were flowers, and fruit, and crystal on the tables, and busy waiters bustling to and fro. The girl paused for an instant, and looked at one of the groups on the balcony. There were two women—fair, young, exquisitely dressed—and talking and laughing with them, in gay fashion, was Conrad von Reichenberg.

He did not see her. She moved hurriedly away, her heart beating with slow, heavy throbs.

The difference between them came home to her in that moment as it had never done before.

"He is of their world. What can I be to him?" she thought to herself, and the hot tears dimmed her sight.

The vision of those beautiful women rose before her again and again. They were of his rank, his order; and he had looked so gay and happy, talking and laughing there in the moonlight.

Then a terror fell on her, unlike any feeling she had ever experienced. Why should his actions be of such importance? Why should smile or word of his lighten or darken her life?

Not even to her own heart could she answer these questions. She felt stifled, terrified, oppressed. She forgot the hour and everything else, and hurried on till she reached the little churchyard where Hans Krauss lay buried. There she threw herself on his grave, and buried her face in the dew-wet turf, and cried as if her heart would break.

For several succeeding days the girl only saw the young Austrian in the company of the same two women. She never spoke or looked at him, and he never attempted to detain her.

Indeed, he was in sore perplexity himself. His stepmother and the beautiful

girl who was his father's ward were inexorable in their demands on his time, and he was obliged to dance attendance on their whims from morning till night. It had always been an understood thing that he should one day marry the Fräulein von Erfurt, who was an orphan, and a ward of his father's, and very rich; but never had that tacit acceptance of his fate come home to him so unpleasantly as at the present moment. She was beautiful, and refined, and highly accomplished, and yet she had no power to touch his heart.

Even the good-natured tolerance and placid affection with which he had been used to regard her failed him now. He had grown impatient, cold, resentful; and her raillery and badinage on the subject drove him nearly desperate.

"When once the line is opened, they will go," he said to himself with a sense of relief, and was rejoiced when the important day came, and the first trial of the railway was pronounced a perfect success.

The whole village had turned out to watch the strange, slow engine and its quaint car creep slowly up that steep ascent. It seemed incredible that such a thing could be done, and yet there, before their eyes, was the miracle being accomplished. Edelweiss was among the crowd, and watched breathlessly as the passenger-car went creeping slowly, slowly up, pushed on by the locomotive at a steady, equal speed of some three miles an hour. The engineers were in the car, and she recognised the handsome, eager face of Conrad von Reichenberg.

She felt sick and cold, as she stood gazing up the almost perpendicular slope. She knew the train could be stopped anywhere and at any moment. Still, it looked perilous in the extreme, and she shuddered and hid her eyes, and thought of the risk more than of the wonder and triumph.

The eyes of the young Austrian were on her, and he saw the sudden gesture. It touched him as nothing else could have done. He knew perfectly well for whom her heart ached with fear and terror.

"I will see her to-night," he said to himself. "Poor little, tender, innocent soul!"

As the train went round the first curve, the girl turned away. She could not bear to look at it. She thought of that terrible bridge spanning the gorge—a spider-thread between earth and air. Her whole soul shuddered and grew sick. She turned away from the chattering, eager crowd,

and went down to the waterside, and took her book and sat down to read in a quiet little shady place where no one was likely to come. Her time was all her own. The wood-carver and his wife were going to spend the evening with a neighbour. She was free to roam where she would.

The interest in her book, and the consciousness of her own progress, soon absorbed her, and she lost all count of time. Only at last a voice that was like music to her ears, sounded through the stillness of the woods, and made her spring to her feet with a sudden little cry of joy. She saw Conrad von Reichenberg.

"Where have you hidden yourself all these days?" he asked her, looking down with kindling eyes at the face so softly flushed, at the drooping lids, and loose, rich hair that made her dower of beauty.

"I—I have been always in the village," she answered, trembling. "You saw me often, I think; only you did not speak. I did not expect it. You had those beautiful ladies with you."

He smiled a little.

"True. And did you mind very much that I avoided you—although, believe me, it was not for the sake of the beautiful ladies, but your own?"

"My own?" she echoed. "I do not understand."

"Sit down again, and I will explain," he said gently as he sank down on the soft green turf. "You see, my child, there is someone who cares for you very much, and he is jealous, and watches you very closely. I feared you might anger him, and he would be a cruel enemy, I fancy."

"You mean Franz Brühl," she said, growing suddenly pale. "Ah, I do not care for him, or what he thinks. He has nothing to do with me."

"I am glad of that," said the young man gravely, "for I should not like you to be fond of him—though, indeed, it should not matter to me one way or other. And now tell me, are you glad to see me safe again? You did not stay long to watch the Rigi-Bahn."

"No," she said with a shudder. "It was horrible; it looked so dangerous. I thought all the time—oh, if anything should happen to—to——"

"To me, dear?" he asked gently. "And would you care so much?"

She raised her eyes, and the look of passionate admiration in their depths startled him.

"Ah yes," she said in a strange sup-

pressed voice. "How can I help it? You have been so kind and so good."

"No—no," he disclaimed eagerly; "you are too grateful, little one. Like all your sex, you rush into one of two extremes. You take all and give nothing, or you take nothing and give all. And how did you like the books?" he went on. "Were they very difficult?"

"No," she answered with a glad smile; "I can read them quite well. I have nearly finished one. Shall I read you some?"

"No, not now," he said gravely; "I want to talk to you. It seems a long time since we had a chat—does it not?"

"Yes," she answered, looking at him with all her soul in her eyes, too utterly radiant and content for any fear or grief to cross her memory now. "But why should you care to speak to me when you have—them?" she added, nodding her head in the direction of the gay little hotel where she knew his friends were staying.

"Why?" he said slowly. "Why does one prefer night to morn, or shade to sun, or anything that is cool and restful, and simple and innocent, in contrast to what is garish, and brilliant, and loud? The brightness and the brilliance dazzle, but they tire one; the coolness and the simplicity refresh as well as rest. Does Franz ever tell you you are beautiful?" he added irrelevantly.

She started a little.

"Oh no, I do not think he would notice anything like that," she said simply. "We have grown up together since childhood. I do not suppose he thinks much about what I am."

"Oh yes, he does," answered her companion; "and he hates me in proportion to those thoughts. Tell me, child, have you a faithful memory? Would you soon forget?"

"Not anyone I loved, or who had been good to me," she answered readily.

"When I go away," he went on slowly, not looking at her, but keenly conscious of the growing whiteness of face and lips, "do you think you will remember me for—a little while, Edelweiss?"

Again that thrill of pain and horror ran through the girl's veins. Her eyes sank, her heart beat slowly and painfully.

"For all my life," she said at last, with a strange, despairing sadness that smote him to the heart. He looked at her silently and long. Right and wrong, duty and desire, set and arrayed themselves before him. She herself was not fully conscious of what her words betrayed; but he knew

it all, and read her heart like an open book, and knew, too, that never again on its white pages would there be aught but that dark shadow of himself standing between her and all the sunshine of her simple life.

"Do you mean that, really?" he asked, not, indeed, from cruelty, but from that innate sense of vanity and proprietorship which makes up so large a sum in most men's love.

"I have never told you what is not true," she answered simply, and her lips quivered like those of a grieved child.

With a sudden overmastering impulse he drew her to him and kissed them.

"For all your life," he murmured passionately. "Oh, child—child, and I shall think of you for all mine!"

She rested there against him, quite passive, quite silent, only her cheeks were crimson as any rose, and her eyes dared not meet his own.

"Fate is very hard on me," he said presently with a heavy sigh. "If I were free, if I could do as I pleased with my life, we would never part again, my child, you and I."

"Are men not always free?" she asked faintly.

The touch of his lips seemed still to thrill her senses, and the blue sky and the sunny leaves were hazy and indistinct. Half shyly she drew herself away from his arm, and he made no effort to detain her.

"Indeed, no," he answered, his face growing dark and troubled. "Sometimes it is their own follies that make their shackles—sometimes it is the force of necessity. With me, I think it is a mixture of both."

She listened, still in a half dream. That caress, that touch, that soft, sweet, unutterable delight which had throbbled in heart and pulse, were still too new to be forgotten. Nothing else seemed to matter very much just then.

"You—you do not quite understand, I think," he went on, as she did not speak. "Perhaps you do not believe it will cost me any pain to leave you?"

"Why should it?" she asked simply. "You are so wise and great, and your life is all so different. I am only a little peasant. You would be ashamed, no doubt, if those beautiful ladies saw you with me. I think you have only meant to be kind to me, because you were sorry I should be so lonely and ignorant."

"I don't know why you should persist

in saying I have been kind to you," he said gloomily; "and you are not ignorant—only simple and innocent of soul, and that is worth any other knowledge."

She looked at him wistfully with her soft, troubled eyes. It seemed wonderful that he should think of her at all.

"You say that because you wish to please me with myself. But I know what I am, and what I must seem to you beside—beside others."

"How those others trouble you!" he said with a half smile. "You have no need to be jealous. You have cost me a great deal more thought than those ladies, I assure you."

"And you are going away," she said with a little catch in her breath. "Shall you ever come back, do you think?"

For a moment he was silent, wrestling with a temptation whose strength she could not understand. In the golden evening light she looked so fair and appealing; there was such sweet trouble in her eyes—such childish beauty in the rosy lips, that he felt the task he had set himself was indeed a hard one. From the first he had never meant to be more than friendly and good-natured to her; he could not account, even to himself, for the change that had come over his feelings.

And now she loved him, though she hardly knew it, and when he went away her life would be harder, colder, more lonely than ever!

"I do not think I shall come back," he said at last, "or, at least, not for many years. Perhaps you will have married Franz Brühl by that time," he added somewhat bitterly.

She grew very white.

"Oh no," she said below her breath. "It is unkind of you to say that."

"Well, someone else, if not Franz Brühl," he went on lightly.

"If only you would come back some time," she said piteously, appalled by the sudden sense of desolation his words had brought.

He bent down and took her trembling hands in both his own.

"Listen!" he said. "When I was years younger than I am now, a beautiful child came to dwell in my home. My father was her guardian, and we grew up together. As time passed on we were betrothed. I did not love her as—as men love sometimes—but she was fair, and good, and fond of me, and I knew that some day we should marry. Then I came here, and

I saw you. Perhaps you will not believe me if I tell you how I have grown to care for you above and beyond all others whom I have met and known—above even the duty that I owe another. But whether you believe it or not, child, it is true. Now you know all. But there is one thing that you do not know, and that is that for your sake I am ready to break faith and honour, and set myself free. If you tell me that you love me—if you bid me do this, I will do it for—”

“Oh no—no!” she cried wildly. “You are wronging yourself. A promise is a sacred thing—so my father always told me, and one should always keep the word one has pledged. And, after all,” she added more calmly, “what could I be to you? I am not of your order. I should only shame you, and all the love I could bring would not alter that. I—I only knew how different I was when I saw her. If—if sometimes I saw you—if I thought you would come back just once or twice as the years go on, I should be happy enough. I could not ask for more, or accept it.”

“Then,” he said coldly, “you do not love me. For I could not be content to see you set yourself so far apart from me. But you do not mind whether I am unhappy.”

She looked at him with so piteous a reproach, that it silenced him.

“How can it be in my power to make you that?” she said. “You have so fair a life before you, and I can only be a memory. It will be nothing to you that you ever saw me when once you are back in the great world again.”

Amidst the pain and anger of his heart, her simple words went home to him as a plain truth always does. Forgetfulness would be so easy to him in comparison with herself. She was only a little mountain-flower, blooming fair and sweet in her humble solitude. To transplant her would be cruel, to pluck her for his own selfish fancy would be base, and he knew well enough that no love outlasts a shamed pride, or bridges an unequal distance.

“Tell me which it shall be,” he said again. “There is no reason why you should not be my wife, if you will. You have native grace and aptitude, and you are beautiful as a dream, and are quick to learn. Besides, half my life is spent in travelling, and no one would know.”

She rose slowly to her feet. How could

she tell him that the very fact of making excuses such as these, only served to show her how great must be the need of them?

“You have pledged your word,” she said gently. “You must keep it. Do not think of me. It is not your fault that I cannot forget.”

“But stay!” he cried, springing hastily up; “your words seem like a reproach. I can never forgive myself if I have made you unhappy.”

“You only meant to be kind,” she said gently. “I shall always remember that. And I will think of you in your great world and in your own life—for she loves you, no doubt, and you will wed her, as you have promised; and for me—it does not matter for me—I, who have not even a name to call my own.”

Her tears fell softly. She moved away, but in a second he was beside her, and had drawn the drooping golden head down on his breast.

“You might be happy, and I also, if only you would listen,” he murmured tenderly, and once again he bent and touched her lips. She trembled, and turned cold.

“Do not ask me,” she said piteously. “There is only right and wrong. There is no middle course. Oh, you know that just as well as I myself! Oh, let me go now! You are cruel to me.”

He released her in a moment.

“It is you who are cruel,” he said with sudden anger. “And you do not love me. If you did—”

But she had fled away down the little path like a startled hare. Only at his feet lay the books he had lent her.

He stooped down and picked them up, and then went on through the green woods, restless, and angered, and miserably conscious of some wrong he had done, and vainly sought to excuse.

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1884.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER X.

"PAPA, what happened twenty years ago?" asked Edie, a little abruptly, the next morning.

She and her father were seated one on either side of the fire; breakfast was over, but the table had not been yet cleared, and the steaming kettle was still keeping up a cheery little song on its own account.

The squire folded his newspaper and laid it across his knee. Reading, he knew by experience, was out of the question when Edie intended conversation, and her tone of voice showed that she was bent on conversation now.

"Twenty years ago?" he repeated slowly, rubbing his forehead. "Well, my dear, a good many things happened twenty years ago. Let me think. There was the death of the Prince Consort, and the great Exhibition in London——"

"Papa, you know I don't mean things of that sort. I mean what was happening here in Stanham about twenty years ago."

"Here in Stanham," answered the squire; "ah, that's another question altogether. Well, I suppose harvesting, and hunting, and poaching, and pilfering, went on much about the same as they do now."

"Papa, if your memory really is too weak to be able to tell me what was going on twenty years ago here at the Hall and over there at Wickham Place, please don't trouble to test it," said Edie, who was rapidly getting exasperated.

"Now, now, little girl, my memory is as good as yours any day of the week, and perhaps a little better. I can go back a good forty years, let alone twenty, and you

can test me by the parish-registers if you like."

"Forty years ago is too remote a period of history. I want to know what you were all doing here and at Wickham Place exactly twenty years ago."

"At Wickham Place, too," said the squire, slightly arching his eyebrows at her. "Well, then, to begin with home first. Twenty years ago I was just putting off my mourning for my mother (you know she survived my father many years), and looking about me, and beginning to think I sadly wanted a wife, and the house a mistress."

"Yes, so I thought. And at Wickham Place?"

"At Wickham Place, Colonel Wickham had just taken possession on the death of his grandfather; in fact, had quitted the service, and come home from India on purpose to take possession of the estate. He brought with him a widowed sister——"

"Yes, I know, Mrs. Overbury, who died ever so long ago."

"Exactly, Edie; and Mrs. Overbury brought with her a young and very particular friend—Miss Edith Maynard."

"Yes, of course I know that—that was dear mamma," said Edie, her voice falling into that soft reverential tone which young girls always adopt in speaking of a dead mother.

Then there fell a momentary pause, during which the squire's thoughts wandered away down a shady avenue filled with all sorts of debris of bygone years—dead friends, dead hopes, dead ambitions. He woke up with a start to answer Edie's next question—"Was Colonel Wickham twenty years ago very much what he is now?"

"Eh—what, my dear?" and once more

the squire rubbed his forehead. "Was Wickham very much what he is now, do you ask? No, I can't say he was. He very soon grew into what he is now, and such he has remained ever since. But twenty years ago he was a very different man to what you see him to-day—very different."

"I suppose," said Edie, who for some reason of her own seemed bent that morning on unearthing this precise period of Colonel Wickham's history; "I suppose he wasn't for ever doing his multiplication-table and rules of three—went in more for field sports and that sort of thing."

"Well, no—not exactly that either. He was always a bit of a bookworm, and never cared much for hunting or shooting. I suppose sport here seemed tame to him after the big game he had had out in India. But for all that he was a different man to what he is now. There was more spirit and go in him; he loved to rule and to have his own way in things. Master Phil wouldn't have quite such an easy time of it if the Colonel were altogether what he used to be; he'd have to knock under a trifle now and again."

Edie's next question seemed not a little irrelevant at first sight:

"Was dear mamma very—very—very beautiful?" she asked, and her eyes wandered from her father's face to a picture of her dead mother hanging on the opposite wall.

The picture was that of a fair, serene, smiling woman—a face one could never fancy careworn, sorrowful, or old; it seemed expressly made and reserved for happiness and youth. It owned to a more dazzling complexion and more regular features than little Edie's, but the eyes, large and luminous though they were, scarcely possessed the depth of meaning, the intensity of expression, which were Edie's glory, nor did the mouth carry that nervous, tremulous sweetness which Edie's so frequently wore.

The father's eyes followed his daughter's.

"Surely you can judge for yourself, Edie. As I have so often told you, a better likeness than that couldn't have been had for love or money."

He spoke in the tone of a man who felt it a positive personal injury to have to establish a fact that was patent to all. To say truth, the beauty of this young wife of his had been a special cause of pride and pleasure to him throughout his short wedded life.

Edie did not answer her father's remark. Her eyes were still fixed on the picture.

"Mamma must have had many admirers," she said slowly at length; "I wonder if Colonel Wickham was ever in love with her."

The squire shook his head.

"I must have found him out if it were so—you see, we were so much together in those days."

"But how could he help it—being in love with her, I mean? There they were, in the same house together, mamma so sweet, and beautiful, and young, and he—well, he wasn't so very old; of course, he was getting on—"

"Bless my soul, child, he wasn't eight-and-thirty in those days."

"Well, eight-and-thirty is 'getting on'—that was all I said. Not too old to fall in love, of course, papa. How could he help it?"

"Well, really, Edie, to tell you the truth, I have never bothered my brains on the matter. It might be that Wickham left his heart behind him in India, or it might be that your mother's beauty was not his style, after all. You see there are so many 'might be's' in a case like that—"

"Papa," interrupted Edie very earnestly, "mamma was very—very sweet—she must have been. Sweet seems to be the right and only word for her."

"Aye, Edie, you are right, my child," and here the squire's voice grew somewhat tremulous. "Sweet is the right and only word for her. Before anything else, her sweetness struck everyone who met her. Rich and poor, it was all one; they all took to her and loved her. Even now, you see, Edie, she is not forgotten. Not a Sunday passes that I visit her grave after service but what I see a little bunch of cottage flowers laid upon it of one sort or another."

"Papa, the little bunches are only of one sort—mignonette."

"Ah well, mignonette. It must be laid there, I suppose, by some of the poor people she used to visit, and who knew it was her favourite flower. I can't remember, myself, that she had any special liking for the flower; it is sweet, like herself."

Edie's next question was a difficult one to answer—difficult for the squire, at any rate, under the circumstances. She fixed his eyes full on his face, which was looking at that moment, perhaps, a little absent, a little sad.

"Papa," she said, bluntly, peremptorily, "where can I get my quick, bad temper from? Not from mamma, for certain!"

The squire's answer, no doubt, would have been to the effect that Edie's quick temper must have been organic, not inherited, had time for answer been given to him; but at this moment a servant opened the door and announced "Mr. Rumsey."

"Early visitor, am I?" chirped the vicar, making his way to the fire and loosening his white silk neckerchief as he went. "Well, the proverb says, you know, that the early bird catches the worm, because, I suppose, the worm can't catch him—eh, Edie? And as I am not half so sharp-sighted as the bird, and am after something much more difficult to catch than a worm, I thought I couldn't well be too early. In other words, I thought I would come over before you had made your arrangements for the day, so that you might make your visit to the schools and almshouses fit in comfortably."

"Visit to the schools and almshouses!" repeated Edie blankly.

"Aye. Didn't Miss Yorke tell you? Last night she expressed a wish to see our local charities, and thanked me very much when I volunteered to escort her."

The squire's eyes began to twinkle. Edie tried to explain.

"We couldn't know anything about Ellinor's arrangements for the day—she never appears before luncheon."

"Come in and lunch with us, Rumsey," said the squire; "then you can arrange with Ellinor a time that will suit you both."

But his eyes twinkled still more, as he thought of the extreme improbability of Ellinor putting in an appearance at the parish schools.

The vicar looked slightly disconcerted.

"Thanks, no. I half promised Wickham to look in there at lunch-time. By-the-bye, where's Phil? I saw him making his way through the shrubbery half an hour ago, while I was chatting with Nancy Benson just outside the park."

"The shrubbery" was a little bit of woodland, which lay between Wickham Place and the Hall, and formed a short cut between the two houses.

Edie's face flushed with pleasure. Phil was coming over, then, before he started for London, and she would have the opportunity for saying to him the one or two things she had in her mind to say but half an hour ago. What could

he have been doing all this time in the shrubbery?

Her one thought now was to get her hat and find out for herself. It was a glorious morning—soft, breezy, sunshiny as any day in spring. How pleasant it would be down there, amid the tangle and shifting shadows, to whisper her words of kindly sympathy in Phil's ear, and remind him that the year would spin round, and the first of October be back again before they either of them well knew where they were.

The squire seemed to guess at her thoughts as she made for the door.

"My dear," he cried after her, "I suppose you are going nutting for half an hour or so; just tap at Ellinor's door as you go by, and find out if she really would like to see the schools, and, if so, at what time she'll be ready. Tell her the vicar is here, and would like to know."

"Oh, papa," cried Edie back to him as she picked up her sun-bonnet from one of the hall-chairs and tilted it over her nose, "half an hour hence will do for that. Ellinor never dreams of putting a foot out of bed till half-past ten; it's barely quarter-past nine now;" and, before the squire could utter a second remonstrance, she was gone.

Gone, and had flown half-way down the narrow winding path leading to the shrubbery, like any fleet-winged swallow making for a pleasant haven on a stormy night, before the squire had time to turn round in his chair and reply to some complimentary remarks the vicar was making anent Miss Yorke, her wonderful beauty, her grace of manner.

"Now if I were some fifteen years younger, and a bachelor, I should be in positive danger——" he had begun.

"Have some breakfast, Rumsey," interrupted the squire, giving a violent pull to the bell, and ordering "hot coffee" in a very loud voice. "Edie might have thought you would like to play with a chicken-bone after your long walk, if she hadn't been in such a desperate hurry to gather her filberts this morning."

But Edie's "desperate hurry" had come to an end almost as suddenly as it had begun. There in the little winding path she stood silent, wondering, mystified. The ground sloped down from this path somewhat abruptly, and the little shrubbery with its plantation of slender hazel and quivering larch trees, its tangle of sweet-briar and rank grasses, lay, a pretty bird's-eye landscape, almost at her feet. A

light fence bounded the shrubbery on either side, broken by two rustic gates—one giving entrance to the gardens of Wickham Place, the other to the Hall pleasure-grounds.

Edie, as she stood thus, could get a full view of each at one glance, and there—and it was this sight that had taken away her breath and almost her power of motion—issuing from the farther gate, and turning his steps towards his own home, was the stalwart figure of Phil Wickham; and here, swinging back the near gate with her accustomed slow grace of movement, was Ellinor Yorke, evidently on her way back to the Hall.

Edie looked, and looked, and looked, scarcely believing her own eyesight; then she gave a sudden bound, and clearing the few yards of lawn and gravel that lay between herself and Ellinor, confronted the latter in the middle of the pathway.

Ellinor paused, slightly raising her dark eyebrows at Edie's sudden swoop down upon her. She was dressed with an almost nun-like plainness that morning, in straight, long black dress and cloak; her hat was small, black also, and drawn very low over her eyes. She looked tall, dark, thin, as Edie had never seen her look before.

"Good-morning," said Edie, trying her hardest to speak calmly, while her face was flushing the brightest of bright crimsons, and her heart beating fast as though some actual bodily danger threatened her. "Good-morning, Ellinor! Are you not very early—unusually early this morning?"

"Good-morning, little Edie," returned Ellinor composedly. "Are not you a little late this morning?"

And there was that in her voice and manner which gave the finishing-stroke to Edie's power of self-control, and made her feel that unless she wished to commit some altogether unpardonable piece of rudeness, she had better make her escape from Ellinor's society as quickly as possible.

Ellinor saw her advantage, and pushed it a little farther.

"Do you wish to know why I am out so early this morning, where I have been, and what I have been doing?" she asked, her lips parting into just the very faintest semblance of a smile.

Edie's temper deserted her.

"I? Oh dear no! what possible interest can I take in the matter?" she retorted, and without another word drew back and allowed Ellinor to pass on to the house alone.

CHAPTER XL

"DEAR MR. WICKHAM,—I wish particularly to see and speak to you this morning, and am waiting, at the present moment, in the shrubbery in the hollow, in the hope that you will give me ten minutes before you start for London.

"ELLINOR YORKE."

This was the note which had been put into Phil's hand as he was sitting down to breakfast that morning. What could he do but dispose of his coffee at a draught, and there and then make his way to the shrubbery to confront Ellinor Yorke?

As he swung back the rustic gate leading from his own garden, he could see her standing slim and tall in her straight black garments among the hazel-roda. Her face showed pale, her eyes looked large and mournful in the glinting morning sunshine amid the dancing, shifting shadows.

"Good Heaven!" he thought to himself, "that a woman should be created of such surpassing loveliness, and the merest husk of a heart be denied her!"

And Ellinor's thought, as he came nearer, the angry feelings rife in his heart giving a careless, rapid impetus to his footsteps, was:

"He looks handsomer out here in the open than he did with the drawing-room background of silk and wax-lights. One might risk even one's chance of a peerage for such a man as that."

Her thoughts did not show in her face, however. She might have been carved out of marble, or out of the rough bark of the larch-tree against which she leaned, for any trace of feeling those pale, straight features of hers showed.

A yard off from her Phil stopped, taking off his hat with the briefest and coldest of good-mornings.

She did not stretch out her hand to him.

"It is very good of you to come," she said, turning her eyes, though not her head, towards him.

Again Phil bowed, and then there fell a pause.

"You will wonder why I sent for you," she said at length, speaking slowly, and as though her words came with difficulty. "It was because I wished to speak to you about Rodney Thorne."

"About Rodney Thorne! You!" was all Phil's reply, but he threw a world of bitterness into his emphasis of the pronoun.

"Yes—I. I know what you fear—about Rodney, I mean. I know you imagine his death was not accidental, but dealt by his own hand. I know, also, what you choose—what you have always chosen to think about me in reference to Rodney, and I have sent for you this morning to tell you that you are altogether mistaken in your thoughts—mistaken from beginning to end."

Phil slightly inclined his head, but said not a word; what, indeed, could he say? How could he tell this beautiful young woman to her face that she was a liar, as he would have told any man who had stood before him with words such as these on his lips?

Ellinor went on composedly. Silence, be it never so unsympathetic, had never yet been known to disconcert her.

"I repeat, you have been mistaken from beginning to end in your thoughts of me and my conduct towards Rodney Thorne; in fact, you have bitterly wronged me in this matter, and I owe it to myself to convince you of your mistake."

"If I have wronged you I am sorry." And now Phil threw an altogether unpleasant emphasis on his "if."

"If I!" repeated Ellinor, slightly raising her voice. "There is—there can be no 'if' in the matter. You have wronged me in your thoughts. In your heart you have accused me of a coquetry which made Rodney forget his duty and lose his sense of honour. I repeat, you are mistaken, and I have brought with me this morning two letters which will prove to you your mistake. Both are from Rodney—mad, wild, foolish letters they are, too. In the first he implores me to marry him at any cost to me, to him, to the whole world. In the second he reproaches me bitterly for my refusal to do so, and for my bidding him forget me, and go back to the girl he was pledged to marry."

She held out two letters to him as she finished speaking. Phil did not offer to take them.

"I will not read them; they were not meant for my eye," he said coldly. "I will take your word for what is in them, Miss Yorke; I will take your word for what was in your reply. No doubt it was word for word exactly what a lady's ought to be—"

He broke off abruptly. It was difficult for him to keep his smouldering anger from leaping into a quick, bright flame.

"A man," so he thought to himself,

"would have burnt those letters as soon as read. A woman keeps them, produces them months after they were written, and calls them 'mad, foolish letters.' Poor boy! They were written with his heart's blood."

"I see," said Ellinor as she slowly put back her letters, "that you are bent on misjudging me. What shall I say to convince you that I did my best to keep Rodney true to the girl he had promised to marry?"

Phil felt as though his self-control must desert him now—as though he must forget he was talking to a woman whose assertions the commonest laws of social courtesy compelled him to receive unquestioned. His face was growing white and whiter with his efforts at restraint.

"Will you kindly tell me at what period of your friendship with Rodney you tried to recall him to a sense of honour? Was it in the early or late days of your acquaintance?" he asked curtly, peremptorily, with a ring in his voice that was not pleasant to hear.

Ellinor flushed crimson.

"It was," she answered slowly, "so soon as I knew he was engaged to Lucy Selwyn—I did not know of this in the early days of our acquaintance."

Phil bit his lip till it blanched, but not a word escaped him.

Ellinor pushed what little advantage she had seemed to gain yet farther.

"Am I to blame," she went on in the same slow, soft tones as before, "because a man does not tell me on the very first day that he is introduced to me, that he is engaged to marry some girl whose name even I have never heard?"

Still not a word nor a sign from Phil.

"Or," she went on, "will you blame your friend for not coming to me on the morning after he had made my acquaintance to inform me of the fact? Would it not be more charitable to say, 'It was a thousand pities things should happen so, but neither of them, after all, was very much to blame?'"

Still only silence—dark, lowering, ominous silence—on Phil's part.

Ellinor quitted her position beneath the larch and went slowly to his side.

"Come, be honest with me," she said, laying her hand upon his arm and looking up in his face. "All I ask of you is simple justice; nothing more. Your eyes are blinded to the truth because Rodney was your friend, and you loved him. Forget

for a moment, that he was your friend; forget, too, that I was the woman for whom he made "Lucy Selwyn miserable; think of the whole matter as happening between two strangers you have never known; and I know you will say, if you will speak out honestly, 'How could he help it, both being what they were?'"

Phil drew his arm from beneath the pressure of her hand. His eye looked full into hers. He bit his lip harder.

"Yes, I repeat," Ellinor went on, and her voice had lost its slow softness now, "how could he help it? How could I help it? How can I help it if men will fall in love with me, and break their hearts over me, and then be ready to curse me because I do not break my heart in return?" Here her voice rose to a passionate emphasis. "How can I help it—how can I, I ask you? You have no right to lay the blame of this on my shoulders. You had better far look up to Heaven, and ask why I was created as I am!"

She threw back her head, as she finished speaking, proudly, impetuously. The movement, slight as it was, sent her low-crowned hat a little from her brows. One stray half-curl of auburn-gold fell athwart her white forehead; the pale face, upturned, caught the fulness of the autumn sunshine.

Never before, surely, had woman's eye deepened and glowed with such an intensity of beauty—never before, surely, had woman's mouth grown so sweetly tremulous with a passion of feeling!

Phil, looking down on her, felt his whole soul within him thrilled, and could keep silence no longer.

"Ask," he repeated in low, almost quivering tones, "why you have been given this beauty! I do ask it—I have asked it before now. Or if you like it better, I will ask why, having given you this beauty, Heaven has denied you what is generally bestowed unasked on the smallest and meanest creatures—a heart to feel, to suffer, to love."

He paused a moment. Ellinor remained motionless before him, her face upturned still, its glow of passionate beauty in no wise diminishing.

He went on, and now there seemed to come a something of pity into his voice:

"Aye, Miss Yorke, you are—I tell it you to your face—the most beautiful woman I have ever seen, or ever hope to see, but I tell you this also to your face—

the man who is thrown much into your society is to be pitied, not envied."

Again he paused. Ellinor's face drooped a little—a very little. Then he went on once more:

"You have told me a tale to-day which no man living should have repeated to me without being made to answer for his words. If Rodney stood now where I stand, would you dare say to him what you have said to me—that you were in no sense to blame for his broken heart? Would you not rather have cried to him for forgiveness, and have implored him not to charge you with his falsehood and dishonour? You told me, and I stood patiently and heard you, that when you let Rodney spend long mornings making love to you, write you passionate letters, and forget every duty he had in life, that you did not know that he was engaged to be married to another woman? That may be true. But I will tell you something that you did know, and that was that, let him make as much love as he would, you had not the remotest intention of ever marrying him."

There could be no mistake now. Ellinor's head was drooping low, lower—almost on to her bosom.

"And I will tell you something more than this," and here Phil's face grew white and stern, his voice hard and metallic, "I will tell you something that Rodney, poor boy, if he had stood here would not have had heart to say—and that is, that if it be truth that he has died by his own hand, his blood will be on your head; of your hands it will be required."

Those who heard Phil speak these final words would not have recognised him for the easy-going, light-hearted young fellow who was wont to take life so comfortably, and swim with the tide whenever such swimming were possible.

He turned on his heel and left her as he finished speaking. He did not wait to see the effect of his words upon her, but went with rapid footsteps through the gate leading to his home.

In the old days he would have gone straight to Edie to shake off his troubles, to confide in her and be comforted, but in the present condition of things he felt that to be an utter impossibility. In his state of mind at that moment he would not have cared to be met with a formal shake of the hand and perchance a reminder that the first of October was still a good eleven months distant.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Of all the English counties Northampton is the most favoured with neighbours, for its borders are formed by no fewer than nine other counties. Leicester and Rutland hem it in to the northwards, the great fen-country touches it on the east, and it joins with Lincoln, Cambridge, and Huntingdon in that quarter, while the chief rivers that soak as well as drain the fens, rise within the borders of our county. On the south the more solid land is shared with Bedford, Buckingham, and Oxford, and here our county supplies the Cherwell, which ends its course with such crowning magnificence in the bosom of the Thames by Magdalen Bridge. In the west Warwickshire owes its renowned Avon—Shakespeare's Avon, to its neighbour Northampton. Thus, well-watered, fertile, and pleasant, holding out hands alike to east and west as it stretches across the verdant midlands, our shire has experienced both the good and evil of its central position, often a battleground of race or tribe, or of the contending factions in civil wars. In more settled times the district had its advantages as a mart and meeting-place for the whole country; and while York and London were rival capitals, and it was yet uncertain whether the balance of power would fall to north or south, Northampton town had a fair chance of being adopted in compromise between the two, as a seat of legislation and administration for the whole realm.

But narrowly as Northampton may have escaped greatness, the escape is definite enough. The thriving modern town has nothing of the air of a capital. Only a tower and some scattered fragments remain of the "eminent castle ruynous," with which we may link the records of its ancient history, when Kings held their courts within its walls, and Parliaments and Councils followed in rapid succession. There has been no Parliament here, however, since the one that passed the poll-tax, that miserable exaction which was the exciting cause of the Wat Tyler rebellion. It had seemed likely, too, in the earlier times that Northampton would have become the great university town; since the students, both of Oxford and Cambridge, for a time deserted their ancient seats of learning, and settled in large numbers at Northampton. That there

must have been potential wealth in the place is testified by the number of Jews who settled there after the conquest. A very uneasy settlement it was, it must be said, for the history of the Jews in Northampton is, as elsewhere, a record of cruel persecution. That the Jews of Northampton crucified a boy one Good Friday in mockery of the Christian celebration of the day, is told as a veritable fact by the chroniclers of the period. Terribly veritable are the massacres and cruelties which followed, and the trembling sons of Israel and the fair daughters thereof knew no more peace till their final expulsion. Of the Jews in Northampton, we have a kind of memorial in the curious church of St. Sepulchre, one of the few existing round churches, which are modelled on the supposed proportions of Solomon's Temple. St. Sepulchre's was built by the Knights Templars, whose presence in the town could have boded no good to the descendants of the builders of the Temple itself. Two other ancient churches—St. Giles, with a fine embattled tower, and a pile of buildings of all ages beneath, and St. Peter—date from the Norman age. This last may have seen within its walls the haughty Judith, the Conqueror's niece, who is said to have betrayed her Saxon husband, the noble Waltheof, to his death. The Conqueror rewarded his niece's treachery by offering her as a wife to some Vulcan of a man, lame and ill-favoured, known as Simon de St. Liz. And on Judith's refusing the ill-favoured husband offered her, the Conqueror gave to Simon instead her young daughter by Waltheof, with possession of all the manors and of the Earldoms of Northampton and Huntingdon—all that he had bestowed upon Judith or that Waltheof had inherited.

It was this Simon who is supposed to have built the castle that looked down, over the river, upon the tanpits that were there established, and the skins that were stretched on the banks. The forests of oak which stretched almost up to the castle walls, afforded in their yearly thinnings the best possible bark for the tanners whose trade probably flourished in the neighbourhood from Saxon times. It is likely enough that the Conqueror, whose maternal grandfather, it will be remembered, had been in the business at Falaise, brought over some of the skilful craftsmen of Normandy, who, imitating the processes which in the hands of the Moors of Spain had made the

leather of Cordova so famous, perpetuated their memory and the origin of their art in the various guilds of cord-wainers. So that Northampton was noted for its leather and its shoes from a very early date, and as well as shoes, for great leathern-bottles and black-jacks, as well as the leathern-buckets used by water-carriers.

There were shoemakers enough at Northampton at the time of the civil wars to make the place a centre of Puritan influence, while all the country round was under the dominion of hearty Royalists. A fragment of the old town-wall may recall the stand that was made against the King, when "fanatic Brook," the Parliamentary champion of the Midlands, manned the walls with his militia.

It is not only Northampton that is occupied so strongly by the makers of shoes; the neighbouring villages are also full of them. There is Kingsthorpe, which, village as it is, once owned an ancient municipal constitution, with its bailiff and common seal; and a few miles farther along the north road stands Boughton, famous for its fair, and for its green, on which the fair is held, beginning on Midsummer Day. "The first day for wooden ware; the second day the neighbouring families of distinction breakfast in the tea-booth and mingle in the rustic holiday; the last day is for horses and cattle." Where are the families of distinction which join in such popular rejoicings in these days?

And here we are on the way to Naseby field, which lies a few miles to the westward of road and railway; in the midst of a country of rolling hills and fine pastures, with villages scattered here and there—more populous, perhaps, in the seventeenth century than now, for the district was once noted for its woollen manufactures, and colonies of weavers clustered under the village spires; but the industry has now almost vanished from the soil; and here is Naseby described by a master's hand:

"The old hamlet of Naseby stands yet on its hill-top, very much as it did in Saxon days. A peaceable old hamlet of some eight hundred souls; clay cottages for labourers, but neatly thatched and swept; smith's shop, saddler's shop, beer-shop, all in order, forming a kind of square which leads off southwards in two long streets; the old church, with its graves, stands in the centre, the truncated spire finishing itself with a strange old ball, held up by rods; a hollow copper ball, which

came from Boulogne in Henry the Eighth's time, which has, like Hudibras's breeches, been at the siege of Bullen."

King Charles had marched a day or two before from Leicester, and might have thought ominously, or perhaps hopefully, of another King who from the same town had sallied forth to set his crown upon a die, and had perished at Bosworth, in the centre of his land. Nor far from the centre was the wide plateau about Naseby, the land lying in great common fields, in places hardly reclaimed from the forest. Charles may have had some notion of striking at the Parliamentary levies from the south before Cromwell's cavalry had joined them; but, if so, he was too late, and, as the armies swept into position, the trumpets of the Ironsides rang out with boding clearness.

The King's forces were in difficulties from the first; badly-marshalled on broken, bushy ground, among the boggy places where the streams of the Nen and the Welland first appear as springs and runlets. But Rupert on the right, free from all these embarrassments, and fighting for his own hand as usual, launched his Cavaliers recklessly against the left wing of the enemy, and riding through them, his men fell upon the baggage-waggons and artillery train, and began to plunder. Meantime, Cromwell, on the other wing, sweeping away the scattered bands which opposed him, wheeled round upon the main body of infantry in the centre of the King's position, many of whom, thinking the day was irretrievably lost, threw down their arms and surrendered. And with that the King's army broke up altogether and fled, so that Rupert, gathering his men together, found that all was lost, and had nothing to do but to gallop after the rest.

And then, as Cromwell writes to the Speaker: "We pursued the enemy from three miles short of Harborough to nine beyond, even to the sight of Leicester. whither the King fled." But the King stayed only a few hours at Leicester, "and rode on that same night to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, which he reached at daybreak—poor wearied King!—and then swiftly westward, to Wales, to Raglan Castle, to this place and that, in the hope of raising some force, and coming to fight again, which, however, he could never do."

In the King's hasty flight, he abandoned his private coach with his cabinet of letters in cipher, which were captured by the enemy—a stroke which eventually proved fatal to the King, for the letters were

deciphered, and those who read them could divine the secret heart of the King, and how little trust could be reposed in his promises.

Other less important battlefields may claim some attention. Thus, returning to Northampton, just beyond its limits to the southward lies the park of Delapré Abbey, in a corner of which stands a cross, originally placed there in memory of the fact that there rested the body of Queen Eleanor, conducted by Edward the First in solemn march from Lincoln, to Westminster. But this cross may also remind us of those slain at the battle of Northampton, so-called, but actually fought on Hardington Field, close by, for many of the slain were buried in the cemetery of the convent, by the care of the pious nuns, where now are lawns and pleasure-grounds about the modern house. Here one of the many unfortunate Dukes of Buckingham was killed, and Henry the Sixth was taken prisoner. Another battle of the "Roses" series was fought at Edgocott, near the Oxfordshire border, thus described in our old county history:

"A great battayle fought in the tyme of Edward the Fourth in the yeare of Christe 1468"—really in 1469—"betweene the Welchmen and the Northern men, where Sir Henry Nevell, sonne to the Lord Latymer, was slayne, and of the Welchmen five thousand. There are three little hills about this place, standing, as it weare, in a tryangle, where the battle was fought."

The historian does not seem clear on which side were which, and probably the greater part of those slain fell in equal ignorance of the cause for which they were fighting. The northern men had been generally Yorkists, and the Welshmen Lancastrians, but on this occasion the parts were changed. For, in truth, this battle was rather one between two great families, the Neviles, with their long descended inheritance of nearly half England, and the Widvilles, but lately risen from the ranks of the country gentry, but who, since the daughter of the house had become Queen of England, had been putting together lands and lordships, and acquiring powerful connections in a way that threatened to make them the rivals and conquerors of the proud house of Warwick.

And thus, when the Welshmen were defeated by the sturdy men of the north, who were fighting, no doubt, in the interest of the Kingmaker and his son-in-law, the Duke of Clarence—when the Welsh

were defeated, and their leader, William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, whose wife was a Widville, put cruelly to death, a rush was made for the Widvilles themselves, whose chief seat was at Grafton, in this same county, and the father of the Queen and one of her brothers were hurried to Northampton as prisoners, and there executed, without any but a drum-head trial.

The little village of Grafton Regis, which now gives the title of Duke to the Fitzroys, long before their time had been the manor of the Widvilles, obscure country knights, as has been told, till one Sir Richard, the handsomest knight of his time, it is said, was serving in France, during the minority of Henry the Sixth, in the train of the regent, Bedford. On the death of his patron it fell to his lot to escort the young widow of the tough old Duke, herself a Princess of the house of Luxembourg, back to England. On the way the fair young widow fell in love with the handsome young knight, and a secret marriage followed, which was only avowed when the presence of sundry little cherubs, the duchess's children, rendered the avowal necessary. One of these children, Elizabeth, inheriting the beauty of her father and the pride of her mother, was much sought after by the young knights of the period, and married at last the heir of the Greys of Groby, a sufficiently wealthy and distinguished family. And this Sir John Grey was wounded to death in fighting for the house of Lancaster. So far Widvilles and Greys were thorough-going partisans of the Red Rose, and in the downfall of the cause the spoils went to the victors, and the dower of Elizabeth Widville, with the possessions from which it issued, was swept up into the sack of the new King.

How Elizabeth appealed personally to the monarch's clemency, and how the King fell in love at first sight with the suitor, is told in Shakespeare's Henry the Sixth, Part Third; but local tradition places the scene, not as Shakespeare, "London: A Room in the Palace," but under the green-wood tree, beneath a royal oak, which stretched its arms over the forest way between Grafton and Whittlebury Forest, not far from where the by-way crosses ancient Watling Street, where a venerable hollow oak was, within recent date, pointed out as the scene of the interview.

From this point we may follow ancient Watling Street in its course right across the county, which it enters near Potterspury,

a tract of clayey land lying between the two great forests of Whittlebury and Salcey. And Potterspury, as the name denotes, was formerly colonised by a band of working potters, who, squatting on the borders of the forest, and still within reach of the great highway, supplied the country round with rude earthenware porringers, crocks, and rough cooking-utensils, of which probably few, if any, specimens remain.

If we follow Watling Street, we shall find the way long and dull at times, but full of archaic interest. There is Towcester, a military station of old times, where once the Roman legionaries halted on their march. Then there is Daventry, which was also a Roman station, with grand earthworks and entrenchments in the neighbourhood which probably are of pre-Roman date, such as the Daneshill, some two miles in circuit, a fit refuge for a whole tribe with their waggons and their cattle. Then there are the remains of walls and foundations close by, called Burnt Walls, which may be the site of the Roman station. At Farthingstone, too, to the southward, exist curious ruins and earthworks, which some have conjectured to be the remains of one of the Ethelfleda's castles erected to curb the Danish settlements beyond, while some have seen in these lines the work of Roman hands, and have attributed them to Publius Ostorius, who, it is said, drew a line of forts between the Nene and the Avon to protect that southern half of Britain which then paid tribute to Cæsar.

Among these relics of ancient wars, we come to the modern military station of Weedon Bec—the qualifying Bec recalling the existence of a religious house connected with the grand Abbey of Bec Hellouin in Normandy, which itself, by a curious coincidence, has got into military hands, and supplies cavalry remounts for the French army. This Weedon of ours was some years ago considered the central hub of old England in the way of military preparation, and store-houses and depôts were established all about; but of late years other notions have held sway, and Weedon has lost a good deal of its military importance.

Then there is Newham close by, in its deep valley, with its ancient tower where Thomas Randolph was born—one of the minor poets of the Shakespearean age, of whom we may have glimpses as a Cambridge scholar haunting London taverns in his threadbare gown, and tagging verses as his share of the reckoning. Over a

tankard looms the jovial visage of rare old Ben, who hails the young truant as "My son Randolph," one of the most pregnant young wits of the time, but ere long a victim to the loose life which young wits affected at the period, or perhaps to the hardships of poverty :

What lands had Randolph or Great Ben
That plow'd much paper with his pen !

But it is pleasant to find that Randolph, if landless himself, found an asylum among the Northamptonshire squires, and when he could no longer drink or rhyme, he was handsomely buried and provided with a laudatory monument by Sir Christopher Hatton, the nephew and heir of Elizabeth's Lord Keeper.

The Hattons, indeed, had been long connected with Northamptonshire, and Holdenby, or Holdenby House, a fine Elizabethan mansion, was built by the Lord Keeper described by Gray :

His bushy beard and shoe-strings green,
His high-crowned hat and satin doublet,
Mov'd the stout heart of England's queen,
Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it.

This same house fell to the Crown after the Lord Keeper's death, and was frequently occupied by King Charles the First. Here it was that he was detained in honourable captivity by the Parliament after the Scots had sold him to his enemies. And hither came Cornet Joyce, with a troop of horse, as an emissary from Cromwell and the army, to bring away the King into their power.

A large area of the county of Northampton was at the time of the Conquest forest-land, and the great forest of Rockingham in the north was separated from similar forests on the southern border by only a narrow slip of fertile cultivated land. Here and there, where veins of ironstone cropped up to the surface, small colonies of ironworkers established themselves, and this industry was encouraged by the Conqueror, who probably introduced some Norman settlers from the ironworks on the banks of the Rille; and here, as in Rutlandshire, gave his Earl-Marshal sundry manors in the county, the tenure of which was to provide his men with horseshoes; and from this settlement we get the name of Higham Ferrers, a small town near the Bedfordshire border.

It seems, too, that the Conqueror had in view the safety of these iron settlements when he built his strong castle of Rockingham, which commands the river Welland and the borders of the Danelagh. The

grand gateway of this castle still remains in witness of its former magnificence. when this secluded village was the seat of Court and Council. The famous assembly of Rockingham summoned to settle the difference between Anselm the Archbishop and the Red King, will be familiar to those who have read Mr. Freeman's history of the reign. The castle is thus described :

"On a height just within the borders of Northamptonshire, looking across the valley of the Welland to the Danish land to the north, the Englishman, Bofig, had in King Edward's days held sac and soc in his lordship of Rockingham. In the havoc of William's invasion, the home of Bofig became waste, and on that waste spot William ordered a castle to be built. . . . The mound of Bofig is yoked on to a series of buildings from the thirteenth century to the sixteenth, but we can still trace the lines of the walls and ditches which the Conqueror or his successors added. The site is a lordly one. . . . When the forest was still a forest in every sense of the word, the castle of Rockingham, one of the wilder retreats of English kingship, must have been at once lonelier and busier than now."

On the border of the forest lies Geddington, where stands the most perfect existing Eleanor Cross. That a halt was here made in the funeral-march was probably due to the existence of a royal house or hunting-lodge, which stood upon a field now called Castle Close—a house which appears in history for a moment in 1188, when a Parliament was held to raise money for the crusades, shortly before the death of Henry the Second.

In the bosom of the ancient forest on the slopes looking down on the Welland, is another ancient site, Fineshade, once Castle Hymel, which has a fine legendary Arthurian touch about it, but demolished as long ago as the reign of King John. Within the moat a priory was built, which took the name of Fineshade Abbey, and the priory in its turn gave place to the mansion which now occupies the site, while not far off is Cliff Regis, or King's Cliff, where tradition has placed a hunting-lodge of King John; while following the banks of the stream that flows towards the Nen, we shall come to historic Fotheringhay.

The shame and remorse that moved the sluggish heart of our first Stuart king when he thought on the unhappy fate of his mother, and his own virtual acquiescence therein, seems to have moved King James

to suppress all that might recall the circumstances of Mary's execution. Thus Fotheringhay Castle was levelled to the ground, and there is nothing left to give local colouring to our attempts to realise that tragic scene, when before grave lords and weeping women, the executioner held up the once lovely head of Mary Queen of Scots.

The fine old collegiate church of Fotheringhay contains two royal tombs—of two Dukes of York. The first was killed at Agincourt, and his death is described in Shakespeare's Henry the Fifth; the other was Richard of the White Rose, whose head was fixed over York gates, and whose body was first buried at Pontefract, and then brought here, at the instance of his wife, Cicely, who lies beside him. The magnificent altar-tombs which once adorned this burial-place of the Plantagenets have vanished with the ancient chancel. The existing monuments were erected by order of Queen Elizabeth. It may be remembered, too, that here at Fotheringhay is the birthplace of Richard the Third.

The neighbouring town of Oundle, higher up the river Nen, is noted for its fine grammar-school, founded in the sixteenth century, by a citizen of London, Sir W. Laxton, Lord Mayor, who gave the management of it to the Grocers' Company, in whose hands it still remains, and who have recently rebuilt and enlarged the schools. There is also a bluecoat-school, as well as sundry almshouses of ancient date, while all around is a beautiful tract of country, finely ornamented with woods and water, abounding in the pleasant mansions of nobles and squires.

The whole county, indeed, is thickly studded with mansions and seats, and is described by one of its earliest historians as "worthy to be termed the Herral's garden, wherein they may gather such varieties of coates as in some degree or other matche all their coates in England."

The same author also gives a glowing account of the other advantages of the county: "For Hawkinge both on land and River it will hardly be matched. Game of all sorts too delighte the noble mynde," which was then thought to be synonymous with the mind of a noble. But our author is not unmindful of the general public, and recommends to them his favourite county thus: "The countrie most comfortable for travaylers not only in regard of the open prospects which are so

delightful to wayfaring men, but also in regard of plentie of Townes, parishes, and villages. In this shire a Travvyler may in the highwaies as he commonly travelleth number in some places twenty, at some stations thirty or more parishe churches. And so much the rather for that the most parte of the steeples in all that countrie are carried very high with a kind of spire like unto a Pyramys."

Just as at the southern end of the county Watling Street forms a dividing-line, so does another ancient road, British and Roman, cut off a slice in the northern part, where the county begins to show signs of the fen-district near at hand. For Ermin Street, here, strikes across the county—a highway that begins in Gracechurch Street and Bishopsgate, and traverses the country in its sternly Roman fashion, as if laid out with a straight ruler, pointing directly for Lincoln. There is a small Roman station near where the road crosses the Nen at Castor, while, farther north, it passes through Burghley Park, a fine old Tudor mansion, built by the wily Cecil, Elizabeth's Lord Treasurer, and now occupied by his descendant, the Marquis of Exeter.

In this corner of the county lies Peterborough, the ancient Medehamsted, the foundation of whose abbey dates from early Saxon times. The original founder was Peda, the son of the cruel Penda, the heathen king of Mercia, and the records of the subsequent history of the abbey might fill bulky volumes. The present cathedral, in its west front, surpasses, perhaps, any known example, but the rest of the structure is hardly so fortunate, and its central tower has just been pulled down, and is in course of reconstruction. The venerable abbey-church owes its preservation, through the storms of the Reformation, to having been chosen as the bishop's seat of the new diocese of Peterborough, and its last abbot became its first bishop. While the church was still an abbey-church, the body of the discrowned queen of England—Katharine, the divorced wife of Henry the Eighth—was brought here for interment, and, later on, the body of another uncrowned queen—Mary of Scots—found a temporary resting-place within its walls.

Seven miles north of Peterborough, at Norborough, an ancient Saxon settlement mentioned in the Chronicle—the Saxon Chronicle, that is—stands a farmhouse, the remnant of a large and curious manor-house; and this was the death-place of a woman who had been the mate of one

greater than a king. For here was the ancient residence of the Claypoles, one of whom—John—had married Oliver Cromwell's daughter; and here died the widow of the Lord Protector, having passed her last years in quiet retirement—here, on the verge of Cromwell's fen-country, where she was regarded, no doubt, with a good deal of silent reverence. Otherwise, this ex-protectress was not by any means a fanatic Cromwellite, nor had she ever risen to the height of her fortunes, but had remained ever a plain country dame, who had certainly had greatness thrust upon her, but who had always doubted its permanence.

To return to Ermin Street, which, as has been said, crossed the Nen near Castor, probably by some Roman bridge which has disappeared in the course of the dark ages. The older British road diverged at a point farther south in Huntingdon, and entered the county by a ford, which bears the name of Wansford—a village noted to this day as a junction-point of highways, and one of the pleasantest villages in England, it is said, with five capital roads branching from it, the direction-posts on which point respectively to London, Scotland, Northampton, Leicester, and Peterborough. A long bridge of some antiquity has rendered needless the ancient ford, and the village is thus sometimes called Wansford Brig, and oftener Wansford in England, from an old story of a flood in these parts, when a farmer's man was carried off asleep on a haycock, and awaking in some unknown part, and questioned as to where he came from, replied, "Wansford in England," a story which Drunken Barnaby has given us in Latin verse, and in the following English rhyme:

On a haycock sleeping soundly,
Th' river rose and took me roundly
Down the current; people cried,
Sleeping down the stream I hy'd,
"Where away," quoth they, "from Greenland?"
No, from Wansford Brigs in England.

IN COMING HOURS.

In coming hours, when all we say
Makes fulness of our bliss to-day
Has faded, as from summer sky
The sunset glories slowly die,
From gold and rose to dreary grey,

And I must learn as best I may
To watch it, as it fades away;
I think I will not moan or cry
In coming hours.

I think I will not utter "nay,"
Knowing that all things must decay;
Nor even weep, or question why;
But o'er our dead dream, tenderly,
For blessings for my darling pray,
In coming hours.

THE QUEEN OF THE MHEILLEA.

A STORY.

IT was a fine autumn afternoon; the sunlight streaming through a trellis-work of grey clouds, and a soft breeze making the poppies only toss their scarlet heads more saucily as it went whispering by.

In the midst of an undulating country, situated between a range of rugged mountains and the sea, which had woven a fringe of gulleys along the rocky coast, were several chains of low hills. Their gentle curves, all running in the same direction, showed that they had been formed in the bed of some prehistoric ocean; but they were now covered with cornlands and meadows, separated from one another chiefly by dykes crowned with yellow gorse, among which grew many a purple foxglove.

The nearest of these hills contained only one field, where an excellent crop of corn had lately waved. At its base ran a pretty little rivulet, which, after turning a mill and passing under an avenue of alders close by the side of a picturesque old ruin, arrived here to linger among mossy beds of forget-me-nots, and then to wind merrily down to the sea. A large number of buildings were studded about the distant slopes; here, a village nestled among the trees; there, a row of labourers' cottages faced a comfortable farmhouse, with its barns and cattle-sheds; and yonder, where the gulls were hovering in the air, rose the grey walls of a sleepy little fishing-town.

Part of the corn had already been carried, but some was standing about in stooks, each containing twelve sheaves arranged in the Manx style—a solid square of nine upright sheaves as a foundation, then two laid on the top of that, and lastly, one on the top of all. A small strip near the rivulet was still uncut. The linnets were making merry in the hedge-rows, but the landrail's harsh notes were growing more uneasy as the sound of the scythes drew nearer its retreat. Now and again the reapers stopped to indulge in wild shouts as a rabbit scampered off, evidently thinking that the crop-eared sheepdog in attendance was very unpleasant company.

As the dog was returning from one of these expeditions, looking greatly ashamed of his want of success, there approached an elderly man with reddish hair, an irritable cast of features, and a pompous

strut. In some mysterious way, Mr. Daniel Cosnahan contrived to support a large amount of dignity on a very small office, for he was merely the parish sumner. It has recently been suggested that a chicken, on emerging from its shell, pecks straight at a grain of corn because it remembers its mother having done so. On the same principle, I would suggest that the crop-eared sheepdog gave the sumner a wide berth because he had inherited a memory of that officer's functions in times past. At any rate, he slunk off to a heap of coats, and lay down, entrenched among several cans and mugs.

In the field, also, were a number of brightly-clad women, who had been engaged in binding and gleaning, and who were gathered around the Queen of the Mheillea, or Harvest Home. And a very pretty queen Esther made, with her merry sunburnt face, rosy cheeks, mischievous blue eyes, and flaxen hair. She was sitting on the ground plaiting corn-stalks into a figure as much like that of a human being as possible, while her subjects were giving her playful advice.

In this none was more assiduous than John Taylor, a tall, well-built, good-looking young man, who was standing before her, leaning on his scythe, his bare arms as brown as his face, and his muscles as hard as iron. His strength and skill in the harvest-field had won the approbation of even cautious old Billy Fargher, and the jaunty set of his cap showed that he was well aware of his powers.

He had long been anxious to "keep company" with Esther, and, now that she had been elected Queen of the Mheillea, thought more of her smiles than ever. But, notwithstanding a liking for his attentions, she hesitated to commit herself to an admirer who was not of her own people, at least while there were plenty of eligible suitors about—Dick Vondy, for instance, the fine young fellow nodding at her from his station among the corn.

Esther held up her straw-doll and laughed.

"That'll do nicely," declared John, eager to recall her notice to himself.

"Oh, but wait, though," she answered, "till she's got ribbons, an' flowers, an' all. You're in too much of a hurry to admire her, John."

But the approach of the sumner put an end to both talking and work. All turned round to watch him. With a grand sweep

of the hand, he gave the customary greeting to the reapers :

"Dy bishee Jee shiu!"*

"An' is it the Boandey Voddey thou'rt after, Master Cosnahan?" drawled old Billy Fargher, twisting up his bent head and staring very much like a parrot.

"Yes, William Fargher, that is my business."

"Aw, well, the Dhooney Moar † is away for a while, but——"

"His presence is unnecessary," declared the pompous sumner, selecting the three longest stalks he could find. When he had tied them into a band, he proceeded to collect inside it as much corn as it would hold, due allowance being made for the knots.

The Boandey Voddey, or Dog Sheaf, was the sumner's duty of corn, paid by every farmer, and the work that he once had to perform for it, was calling within the church "all such things as he is requested of the parish, that is gone or lost," and standing "at the chancell-door at time of service to whip and beat all the doggs." The duty is usually paid in money nowadays, but when the sumner has demanded it in kind, he has always been upheld by the court.

While the others watched him in curious silence, a grin was gradually broadening on John's face. The rustic swain feels under the painful necessity of being incessantly funny, while his opportunities and powers in this direction are so limited as to make his joke a peculiarly laborious proceeding. John, however, thought that he saw a capital chance of showing off before Esther, and putting Dick Vondy altogether in the shade.

He stepped forward on tiptoe until he arrived close behind the sumner, who was bending over his sheaf. Then he cautiously advanced the point of his scythe, cut the band, and, turning sharply, stood grinning at the sky with his mouth open and his unoccupied hand rubbing his chin—the very picture of innocence, as he thought.

There was a general laugh as the sheaf fell to the ground and mingled with the corn lying there. But faces became grave when the sumner turned upon the culprit and angrily exclaimed :

"May a stone of the church be found in thy dwelling, John Taylor."

This—perhaps the heaviest curse that

could be laid upon a Manxman—had little weight with an Englishman like John, who had not thoroughly imbibed the insular superstitions. Besides, he now found himself in a position in which it was imperative to keep up appearances, for Esther, and indeed everyone else, was staring at him. So he wheeled round, and replied with an uneasy laugh :

"A dozen, if you like, Mr. Cosnahan."

"One will be sufficient, my man," said the sumner, choosing some fresh stalks.

"Then one shall be in my house this very night."

"Hold thy tongue, man," remonstrated old Billy Fargher good-naturedly. "It may be a fine thing for a sprat to run on a hook as is baited for a mackerel, but I reckon it's sorry enough afterwards it didn't leave it alone. An' it'll be better for thee, John, to draw in thy horns."

John laughed scornfully, saying :

"You ought to go for a schoolmaster, Billy, only you won't do much good lecturing me at all. What I've said, I've said and mean to stick to, so there's an end on it."

"It's easy talkin' while the sun is shinin'," put in Dick Vondy, who naturally was not displeased at the chance of driving his rival into a corner ; "but wait till the darkness comes, if the oul' fellow gets a grip o' you then, there'll be a change in your note, I'll warrant."

"There will—will there ? We'll see."

"Aw, I know thou'rt as owdacious as a white stone," drawled Billy Fargher, preparing to sharpen his scythe ; "an' thou'rt a mortal good han' at playin' fodjeeaght,* too ; but if there's any truth in the things I hear tell on, I'm not so very sure that the fac's don't belie thee—sometimes, anyway."

"John," cried Esther, anxious to terminate a scene in which one of her admirers was playing an unsatisfactory part, "come here, I want you."

He cast a withering glance at Billy and the sumner, and then obeyed the command, stopping once on the way to look round as if about to hurl back a last retort, but changing his mind at a mute appeal from Esther. He could not resist her pretty pleading face, and as he knelt by her side, began to smile.

"Billy's a reg'lar old noodle !" he said in self-defence ; "and as for the sumner, that"—a snap of the fingers—"for him

* May God prosper you !
Big Man ; here, farmer.

and his words. I don't care—— But what's the use of talking? Can I help you, Esther?"

She laid her hand on his arm, and said: "But surely you'll never be so foolish—aye, an' wicked, too, as to do what you spoke of? You'll never have a day's luck afterwards, an' I, for one, will be afraid to come near you."

He hesitated for a moment, looking at her wistfully, but a laugh from Dick Vondy determined him.

"I'm sorry to hear that, Esther," he said, "for I've passed my word, and I can't go back from it."

The women around regarded him as a doomed man. They were staring at him with almost as much awe as if he had been going to the scaffold, and this close observation rendered him too uncomfortable to attempt to set himself right with Esther, whose vanity was not a little piqued at his obstinacy. He was unwilling to leave her, and yet, in the presence of these spectators, he could not speak as he would have wished; so he knelt there, silently watching her putting the finishing-touches to her task.

The Manx rustics are convinced that anyone who tampers with a ruined church will assuredly come to a bad end; a very foolish conviction, if you will; but, founded on a veneration for the place where their fathers worshipped, it surely has its admirable qualities. Hence it is that the island still contains so many ancient ruins, some of which are supposed to date back to the fifth century, when Germanus, the first Bishop of Man, and indeed in the British Isles, built no fewer than one hundred and ninety-three churches, all extremely small.* No Manxman would venture to lay a finger on them; it would, in his opinion, be a reckless and abandoned thing to do. Hence the feelings with which John was regarded by his companions in the harvest-field. Although he himself was not quite free from fear as to the consequences of his proposed act, this very fear only spurred him more resolutely forward, for it gave

* Bede puts the population at three hundred families in his day, which would give nearly two churches to three families. This is corroborated by their size. Chibber Vondey, near Granaby, is eight feet by four and a half feet, equal to thirty-six square feet. This would accommodate about seven persons. Besides, the style of architecture is the "herring-bone," and the stones employed show no trace of a tool. So, on all points, the tradition embodied in an old ballad seems well-founded. And here let me again acknowledge my indebtedness for many of my data to the valuable series of works issued by the Manx Society.

Billy Fargher's scepticism something to take hold of.

Shortly after the summer's departure, the last sheaf was cut, and the reapers gathered round their queen. She had finished her straw figure, which was now decked with poppies, and cornflowers, and ribbons. It was beautiful, they all declared, as she laughingly held it up for inspection. Carrying it in her arms, she led the way across the field, John walking rather in advance of the others with a can and several mugs. He talked loudly, and tried to look as if he had not a care in the whole world, but in this deportment was rather hindered by Dick Vondy's sly glances and Billy Fargher's silent disdain.

When the party gained the top of the hill, a round of cheers proclaimed the Harvest Home, and the ceremony was completed by the drinking of jough, plentifully sprinkled with black pepper, to give it a flavour, or, as Billy said, "to make it take a houl' o' thy throat, boy."

In the evening there was a supper in a large barn. The table consisted of a number of boards supported on barrels, and covered with a cloth of homespun linen. It was lighted by candles, which were also affixed to the walls by means of tin holders. There was an abundance of excellent joints and vegetables, and in the centre stood a row of jugs filled with foaming jough. The Dhooney Moar himself presided, his energies being concentrated upon the carving of a huge round of beef, which was continually menaced by empty platters. The Queen of the Mhaillea, looking very pretty in a pink dress, with a bunch of blue forget-me-nots at her throat, sat at the other end. Dick Vondy was on her right hand, facing John, who seemed scarcely happy, though he laughed more than usual. Indeed there was no lack of noise and merriment until the time came for proposing toasts, when those who had to speak began to exhibit symptoms of distress, gazing blankly for inspiration at every object in turn.

It may seem curious that at a harvest-home supper the toast that received the most enthusiastic rapping should have been, "Life to man and death to fish." But a glance at the men's faces, hands, and dress was enough to show that they belonged as much to the sea as to the land. In fact, the prosperity of the Manx peasant so greatly depends upon the success of the season's fishing that "No herring, no wedding," has passed into a proverb.

There was yet another toast—a toast dear to all Manxmen, but especially to those living in a far country, whether it be in the Australian bush, or in the crowded cities of the States. The sights and sounds around them may be strange, but when the wonderful bond of sympathy draws them together in their distant homes, faces brighten and hand grips hand, and there rises in every mind a host of loving memories at the words, "Ellan Vannin Veg Veen."* The glass is set down empty; there is a solemn silence; the eyes of each are averted from his neighbour's—they are too dim. It was different with these rustics, who drank with cheers and laughter, until the candles flickered to the verge of going out. They, you see, were safe in their island home.

"Well, Billy, how've you been gettin' on?" asked Dick Vondy of his neighbour.

"Aw, middlin', boy—just middlin'," replied Billy, who had stowed away a very surprising supper. Then he twisted up his gnarled features, and whispered: "Is that stupid fellow John goin' for to play the mischief this night, dost thou know?"

"I can't say for that at all. He's been cruisin' around with a face as bold as a weasel, but maybe he'll draw back when it comes to the push."

"John's uncommon stubborn, though. When he's got houl' of a notion, he's like a lobster with his head in the cleave—he can't draw back again, so he must go forward, though the pot's on the fire ready waitin' to boil him."

"John," said Esther, determined to make one more attempt to dissuade him from his adventure—she was as loth as any fashionable lady to part with an admirer, "remember, I've warned you what'll happen. A fine thing, pretendin' to care about me, comin' here with your soft words, an' then runnin' off to do the very thing I don't wish you to do, an' bringin' harm to yourself, an' maybe others! I won't dance with you once, so there! Just go and please yourself. Dick," added this forward young maiden with a coquettish smile, "don't forget I'm goin' to have the first dance with you."

"Well, Esther," said John in an undertone, "if you're so set against it as all that—"

"Hallo! you're gettin' afraid already," interrupted Dick slyly.

"Is this thing true that I hear about you, John?" demanded the Dhooney Moar from the far end of the table.

Every eye was turned upon the unfortunate young man, who had long since repented of his foolish boast. His face was aglow with colour as he glanced round defiantly, and then began to play with his knife. It was an awkward silence for him, and Billy Fargher's drawling tones only made matters worse.

"Maybe, John, thou hast thought better of it," he said with a good-natured grin. "Thou would'st fain be numbered with the flock, but thy bleat is the bleat of the goat."

John sprang excitedly to his feet.

"Nay," he cried, with an angry thump of his fist on the table, "but I haven't thought better of it. If you're afraid of doing a thing yourself, Billy, that's no reason why other people are. I'll go this very minute."

"Easy, John, easy," said the old fellow. "There's time enough with the whole night before thee, and some o' the lasses'll be hankerin' after a dance with a strappin' lad like thee."

While John was still hesitating, there was a general move to clear the room. The table was soon dismantled, and when the things had been placed out of harm's way, the men, who had clustered in one corner, trickled diffidently in twos and threes to seek their partners, who had clustered in another.

Among the company was a black fiddler with white hair, which caused him to look as if a singularly stupid mistake had been made in colouring him. Seated on a barrel at the bottom of the room, he was a very striking object even in the dim candle-light. After a little preliminary scraping, he struck up "The White and the Grey," the air with which it was once customary "to fetche" couples about to be married, "to the churche, playnge sweetly afore them," and afterwards "gentillye bringe them home agayne with back-pipe." Then commenced a real old country dance, very popular in England during the reign of Charles the Second, and now, perhaps, lingering only in the Isle of Man.

The smiles and laughter of the young people as the bright dresses of the women wove curious patterns with the dark-blue coats of the men; the excited stamping of feet which punctuated every fresh departure; the expression of thorough enjoyment on the weather-worn faces of the

* The dear little Isle of Man.

elders, looking on with an intense interest that would not allow them to miss a single movement; the ebony countenance of the white-headed fiddler shining from a galaxy of candles—all combined to form a very effective picture of rustic happiness.

One person alone looked ill at ease, and that was John Taylor. He stood near the door, fidgeting with his hat and feeling that nothing would give him so much satisfaction as to flatten Dick Vondy's nose. Although he did not like to leave the scene clear for his rival, he would not ask Esther, or indeed anyone else, to dance with him. It seemed to him that there was a vile conspiracy against his happiness, and he accordingly resented it by treating them all with sullen indifference. Not that they seemed to mind it much—that was the vexatious part of the thing—if only they had shown a little penitent grief, he would readily have forgiven them. But there was Esther smiling and laughing as if nothing had happened; it was extremely exasperating when he felt so miserable! To make matters worse, that irritating old fellow, Billy Fargher, kept glancing at him in a way that was enough to put anyone out of temper.

At last, John could endure it no longer. He put on his hat and rushed out, intending to prove that he was as good as his word.

It was a still, warm night, the stars shining brightly, but no moon. From the range of mountains lowering blackly against the northern sky, where "the merry dancers"* were treading their mystic measures, to the silvery gleam in the south, the landscape had a strange beauty which only the sea can give. It is not merely the beauty of reflected light falling upon the clouds and cliffs and filling the air with a soft shimmer not unlike the glitter of crisp snow, nor the shell-like murmur of the distant waves, nor the delicate fragrance that puts new life into every nerve; it is a beauty combining all these, and others too subtle for words, and appealing to every sense, so that he who has but one can nevertheless detect its presence. There are some animals that can feel the neighbourhood of water, and it seems sometimes as if man has a similar faculty upon which the sea exerts a most powerful influence.

At any rate, John Taylor no sooner found himself alone with the grandeur of

the night than he was struck by a certain sense of incongruity, which he could not exactly account for. If it was a ridiculously small thing that he was about to do, he could scarcely be expected to acknowledge that—yet he was dimly conscious of the fact. The immensity of the starry dome makes one feel his insignificance in a way that a single sun can never do; and in the uneducated peasant, unable to convert his feelings into reflection, and so to relieve the pressure, they invariably take the form of a vague superstitious awe, which any unusual occurrence crystallises into fear of bodily harm.

John's first sensation was rather as if he had inadvertently stepped into a brisk shower-bath; his resentment cooled down with astonishing rapidity, and he began to pity himself for having to leave a scene where everyone was so happy. He was not yet near enough to his act to entertain any dread of the consequences; he was occupied solely with his present position. Finding some relief in the mere act of walking, he quickened his pace, and strode along, with clenched fists and swinging arms, until the bank of the rivulet was reached. Here he stopped to look round, in order to satisfy himself that there was nothing to fear. More than once he had fancied he heard strange noises and caught sight of shadowy forms. It was an uncomfortable idea, but now that he came to examine it carefully, he could find nothing to justify it. Psha! it was all nonsense.

He resolutely went forward again, and soon arrived at the picturesque old ruin embedded among trees, which looked grim and spectral in the dusky night.

There was but little remaining of this ancient abbey, barely enough, indeed, to show what space it had originally covered. In one corner there was a crumbling tower, attached to a fragment of wall, from which the mortar had long since disappeared. It was moss-grown and lichen-stained, and the interstices between the stones were filled with tiny ferns, chiefly hartstongue and maidenhair spleenwort. The ground around was rough, and sprinkled with undergrowth, which made the shadows of the ruins assume weird shapes, arresting the attention the more forcibly because of the intense stillness of the night.

John approached the spot with a rush, for his nerves were getting decidedly shaky. It was not fear, he tried to persuade himself; but when one after another had con-

* Northern Lights.

fidently stated that some evil would befall him if he persisted in his intention, it was difficult to forget their words in a moment. There were a number of broken branches lying about, and when he trod on one it snapped with a loud crack—louder, he was convinced, than he had ever heard before. This never happened without giving him a severe shock, which obliged him to stand still and reconnoitre. He had begun to think that, after all, Billy Fargher's sarcasm and Dick Vondy's laughter were preferable to this ordeal. John, in fact, had changed his point of view, and consequently his opinions; the distance between him and his tormentors rendered them comparatively pleasant beside this present evil. However, as he was there, he resolved to finish what he had come to do.

The wall terminated abruptly, the end being almost perpendicular, with jagged edges and an overhanging block near the top. As the stones varied in size from a mere pebble to a large slab, John would have experienced no difficulty had he been content with a small one; but, curiously enough, he felt that the greater the stone he carried off, the greater would be his triumph. So he selected one of considerable size, which gave him more trouble than he had anticipated.

When he had nearly dragged it from its place, he was startled to perceive that it supported the overhanging block, which was even now threatening to give way. To loose his hold of the stone would be to precipitate the disaster, for its own weight would bring it to the ground; the only thing to be done was to force it back again. He planted his feet firmly, and began to push with all his might.

At the same moment three figures appeared at the corner of the tower. They looked shadowy enough at the distance of a few yards to have been taken for apparitions, and as such they would have been very appropriate to this dim old ruin; but they were, in fact, Esther, Billy Fargher, and Dick Vondy. They stood whispering together in the gloom, unnoticed by John, who was so absorbed in a task demanding all his physical strength that he had no time to think about any supernatural dangers.

Esther had persuaded the other two to accompany her, and, considering the horrors that haunted the place after dusk, it was a very brave thing of them to do. Her object was to save John

from what she dreaded would be the consequences of his act, and yet not to wound his pride—a combination which had taxed all her womanly ingenuity, until she hit upon this desperate way out of the difficulty. She had brought his chief opponents to bear witness to his readiness to carry out his intentions, and after that there would be no need to proceed to extremities, for he would have sufficiently proved that he was no idle boaster. It was a clever little plan, showing that she cared more about her admirer than she had hitherto allowed.

Esther's pretty face was flushed, and she was trembling a little from excitement, and perhaps also from fear. But it was with a mischievous smile that she said:

"Well, Dick, are you sure now that John is no poor coward?"

"I grant he's ready to do this, anyway."

"An' you, Billy?"

The old fellow was even more cautious not to commit himself to any statement that might seem to contradict his previous opinion.

"When one's in a hobble," he said in his deliberate way, "it's no use showin' the white feather at all, an' I reckon the lad'll be thankful to thee, Esther, for pointin' the road out of it—aye, an' none the less because it's backward, like a shrimp leapin' away from the net."

"Deed, but I don't see what he's got to be thankful to me for," declared Esther with a toss of the head. "It's not very generous you are, Billy, only I suppose I mustn't expect more from you."

She stepped forward and called softly:

"John!"

He heard the voice, and saw something darkly moving through the gloom, but could recognise neither. The shock was so sudden that he had no time to think; all the dismal warnings that he had been hearing rushed into his mind; he felt that he actually was in the presence of a supernatural being come to call him to account for his act. His strength had deserted him, and as he stared with glassy eyes at the approaching figure, the stone slipped from his hand.

There was a dreadful crash, and the unfortunate man lay groaning on the ground.

Several months elapsed before John Taylor was able to leave his bed. Not only had his leg been broken in two places, but also, instead of being placed under the care of a doctor, he had been laid in a jolting cart

and carried ten miles to a bone-setter, who did his work so badly that the leg had afterwards to be reset. Altogether it was a very miserable affair.

The rustics still point to it as a complete justification of their conviction that he who touches a stone of the church will assuredly come to harm; whereas, as in most cases of the sort, the accident was caused, not, of course, by any inherent truth in the superstition, but by the belief in it.

PUNCTUATION.

THE study of the art of punctuation nowadays is much neglected. Although the use of stops is necessarily dealt with in every grammar, and very many handbooks have been published on the subject, comparatively few know how to use points correctly. We do not pretend to set ourselves up as an authority on punctuation; our object is to draw attention to the importance of a correct knowledge of it. Punctuation is, to some extent, a matter of opinion. Mr. Bigelow, corrector of the University Press, says: "It has become a recognised principle that punctuation is as much a matter of taste as of rigid rule; and while certain rules are positive, and to be followed absolutely, much is left to the discretion of the author." Cobbett very properly observes that "it is quite impossible to give any precise rules for the use of points," and Professor Marsh says that the principles of punctuation are subtle, and that an exact logical training is requisite for their just application. But, however difficult it may be to "point," all authors should be able to punctuate their own compositions sufficiently well to avoid ambiguity. Unfortunately, however, a great many writers cannot even do this, and the responsibility thrown upon the editor and the printers' reader is sometimes great. Frequently the author is made to say something which is exactly the reverse to what he intended. "We have constant opportunities," says an editor, "of noticing how the remarks of a writer, when they appear in print, are altogether misrepresented, in consequence of the neglect of the full-point." We ourselves knew a reporter who never used any stop in his manuscript except the full-point; but he was an exception to the general rule, for most pressmen punctuate pretty accurately.

Bandertaine was wont to sneer, on the

margin of his proofs, against punctuation. Byron was unable to punctuate. In returning a proof to Murray, he wrote: "God knows if you can read through what I have written, but I can't. If you have patience, look it over for me. Do you know anybody who can stop—I mean point—commas, and so forth? For I am, I hear, a sad hand at your punctuation."

Some little time ago a writer in the Paper and Printing Trades Journal propounded a plan whereby punctuation might be abolished. He was of opinion that all ambiguity might be avoided by allowing a little extra space after the words where points should be. Although a volume of poems was published in which this plan was adopted, there is no fear of its being generally taken up; for besides confusion, the trouble to the printer would necessarily be great. The book of poems, however, was not the first to appear without any stops. When the eccentric Lord Timothy Dexter published his book, *A Pikel for the Knowing Ones*, there were many doctrines abroad regarding punctuation. To give everyone an opportunity of suiting himself, his lordship is said to have left out all marks of punctuation from the body of his book. At the end of the work, he had inserted a few pages of nothing but stops. "With these," he said, "every reader could pepper his dish to suit his own particular fancy!" Some of the Manchester daily newspapers have a style of punctuation peculiarly their own. A reader may often go through several sentences—sometimes almost an entire article—without seeing any stop, except the full-point at the end of sentences. Often this is very puzzling. Considering, however, the speed at which newspapers are produced, correct punctuation can scarcely be expected.

Macaulay was one of the most particular authors as to punctuation, and his works can be recommended as models to those who desire to gain a knowledge of the art.

Jeffrey, the first editor of *The Edinburgh Review*, prided himself upon his ability in punctuating. Lord Cockburn said of him: "There was no one of the friends of his later acquisition for whom he had greater admiration or regard than Lord Macaulay, and he testified the interest which he took in this great writer's fame by a proceeding which, considering his age and position, is not unworthy of being told. This judge, of seventy-four, revised the proof-sheets of

Macaulay's first volumes of *The History of England* with the diligence and minute care of a corrector of the press toiling for bread, not merely suggesting changes in the matter and the expression, but attending to the very commas and colons—a task which, though humble, would not be useless, because it was one at which long practice had made him very skilful; indeed, he used to boast that it was one of his peculiar excellencies. On returning a proof to an editor of *The Review*, he says: 'I have myself rectified most of the errors, and made many valuable verbal improvements in a small way. But my great task has been with the punctuation, on which I have, as usual, acquitted myself to admiration. And indeed this is the department of literature in which I feel that I most excel, and on which I am therefore most willing now to stake my reputation!'" Dean Alford flattered himself that he was able to punctuate. "I have some satisfaction in reflecting," he says, "that in the course of editing the Greek Text of the New Testament, I believe I have destroyed more than a thousand commas, which prevented the text being properly understood." To this, Mr. Washington Moon retorted, that the great enemy to understanding the dean's sentences was the want of commas!

Referring to the importance of correct punctuation, Cobbett gives the following instance: "A committee of the House of Lords made a report to the House respecting certain political clubs. A secretary of one of those clubs presented a petition to the House, in which he declared positively, and offered to prove at the Bar, that a part of the report was totally false. At first their lordships blustered; their high blood seemed to boil; but, at last, the chairman of the committee apologised for the report by saying that there ought to have been a full-point where there was only a comma! and that it was this which made that false which would otherwise have been, and which was intended to be, true." Dr. Brewer says: "When a certain prince consulted the Delphic oracle concerning a projected war, he received for answer: 'Ibis redibis nunquam per bella peribis.' (You shall go shall return never you shall perish in war.) It will be seen that the whole gist of this response depends on the place of the omitted comma. It may be, 'You shall return, you shall never perish in the war;' or, 'You shall return never, you shall perish in the war,' which latter

was the fact." A compositor got the punctuation in the wrong place in the toast, "Woman—without her, man would be a savage," and made it read, "Woman, without her man, would be a savage." A New York editor thus introduces some verses: "The poem published this week was composed by an esteemed friend who has lain in his grave for many years for his own diversion." This is rather good. But what a wag the compositor must have been!

Some years ago, the omission of a comma in a letter in the *Times* gave a horrible meaning to a sentence. The letter is on the American War, and the writer says: "The loss of life will hardly fall short of a quarter of a million; and how many more were better with the dead than doomed to crawl on the mutilated victims of this great national crime." It should have been: "than doomed to crawl on, the mutilated victims of this great national crime." The following sentence appeared in a newspaper a short time ago: "The prisoner said the witness was a convicted thief." This statement nearly caused the proprietors of the newspaper some trouble, and yet the words were correct. When their attention was drawn to the matter, and proper punctuation supplied, the sentence had an exactly opposite meaning: "The prisoner, said the witness, was a convicted thief." Dean Alford says that he saw an announcement of a meeting in connection with the "Society for Promoting the Observance of the Lord's Day" which was founded in 1831, giving the notion that the day, not the Society, was founded in that year." A comma should have been after "day," and then the sentence would have been correct. In the *Pall Mall Gazette* recently, the Rev. H. R. Haweis called attention to an awkward misplacement of inverted commas in an article by him on the late Duke of Wellington, whereby some words of the late Duke, about Mr. Gladstone's speeches, are attributed to the Duke's illustrious father.

Many more instances showing the importance of correct punctuation might be given; but enough has been said. Journalists and practical printers see errors of punctuation almost every day.

Young authors should avoid what may be called quaintness in style of punctuation. For instance, Sterne was very fond of the dash—which Cobbett calls a "cover for ignorance as to the use of points"—and used it to a ridiculous extent; and Cobbett was too fond of commas. It should be remembered

that the "style" of punctuation is very different now to what it was some years ago. Lindley Murray says: "A simple sentence, when it is a long one, and the nominative case is accompanied with inseparable adjuncts, may admit of a pause immediately before the verb;" and gives the following example: "The good taste of the present age, has not allowed us to neglect the cultivation of the English tongue." But not one writer in twenty would now use the comma in this case. The tendency of the age is to use as few commas as possible. We think it was Walter Besant who said that printers dislike colons; and an attentive reader, who has read any early English literature, cannot but fail to notice that the point is not used nearly so much as it was. The chief aim of the author, however, should be to avoid ambiguity; for, as Chaucer says,

A reader that pointeth ill
A good sentence oft may spill.

"EDELWEISS."

A STORY.

CHAPTER VI. REMORSE.

CONRAD VON REICHENBERG was in no mood that night to listen to his step-mother's gay chatter, or his fiancée's graceful platitudes.

He could not set his heart or his conscience at rest. He could not forget the look of those sorrowful blue eyes, whose dumb reproach had said more than any words. True, he might say to himself, "I have done her no harm." And he did say it again and again, but all the time he knew that the pure, innocent content of her life was spoilt for ever. That though he might forget, she never would.

He was not a bad man, as men go. That he had not felt it in his power to deny himself the amusement or interest brought into some idle hours, could scarcely have seemed a sin in the eyes of that world amidst which he moved.

He had said no word, breathed no thought, which might sully the purity of the beautiful, simple soul, but all the same he had sapped its content, destroyed its serenity, and killed its peace.

"If only I were free!" he sighed to himself to-night, standing apart there on the little wooden balcony, looking out with moody, cloudy eyes at the shining waters and the pretty moonlit village. "I would marry her then, let the world say what it might."

So ran his thoughts, in that strain of self-exculpation which few are honest enough to cast aside, even to their own selves. But he knew he would have done no such thing, for his love, sincere as he deemed it, was not the love that bears the test of the world's ridicule.

Still, he was young enough to have something of the poet in his heart, and this romance of the mountains had touched him very deeply, and left a lasting sorrow for the brave and unprotected life over which the shadow of his own had fallen.

So he felt discontented with himself and the world at large, and took himself away to solitude and self-commiseration, and blamed fate, as is the way with mortals when fate means something they desire irrationally, without chance of obtaining it. He had done many worse things in his life, and they had cost him no single pang of self-reproach; he could not understand why he should suffer such remorse now.

Finally he threw away his cigar, and went down through the grounds and up the little street with its quaint, pretty houses, and stood looking up at one window, where a light was burning.

No shadow fell across the blind; no face looked out—Juliet fashion—at the stars. He might long and wait as he pleased, there was no response from that aching heart within to the waiting heart without. Tired at last with his unrewarded vigil, he turned away.

A shadow stole out from a doorway close at hand, and dogged his steps at safe and unseen distance.

Had the young Austrian seen it, or the evil face whose murderous hatred followed him like a threat of doom, he might have gone to his rest that night with a heart even more troubled and disquieted than he knew his own to be.

Meanwhile, the girl into whose soul he had driven the first subtleties of doubt, was spending long, miserable hours in the endeavour to ease this new and cruel pain. Of course, it was her own fault that she suffered. How could she have known that a few kind words—a few simple attentions—the memory of a handsome face and winning manner, were to bring such an overwhelming change into her life? She seemed to have drifted out upon an unknown sea; its dangers appalled—its rough depths terrified her. The intensity of her own feelings seemed quite disproportionate to the simple cause which had awakened them; yet between them all she

only saw the light of one face, and felt the glory of one presence.

"If my father were here he would help me," she moaned again and again. "But I have no one now—no one; and he—oh, I ought not even to think of him. I have no right to a thought or a word of his. They all belong to the beautiful lady who will be his wife; his wife—and yet he said he loved me. Ah, it could not have been true!"

Her face grew scarlet as she thought of the kiss that had touched it, of the eyes which had gazed on it. In those eyes she had been beautiful—if only for a time—if only for those brief, bright hours when he had lingered by her side in the chestnut-woods, and talked to her as if no barrier of rank or honour divided their lives. Well, at least she would have that memory. She had been strong enough to resist the tempting of her own heart, and of his own pleading. There could be no harder thing for her to do in all the days to come, and he would soon go away now, and then she would, perhaps, feel the pain less sharply, and grow to be content with his memory only. She could not blame him for what he had done—for trying to enlighten her ignorance and bring some little happiness into her life; she could not tell him that he had left desolation where all had been peace and content. Ah no! for love was teaching her what indeed it teaches most human lives—that 'tis better to have known its hour of joy and its lifetime of regret, than never to have felt the pain of the one atoned for by the memory of the other.

So the light burned on at her lattice, watched by eyes that were despairing, and eyes that were fiercely jealous, while hers were blind with tears, and quenched in heavy sorrow.

"There is something wrong with the new railway," said Franz Brühl the next morning, looking in at the cottage as he passed. "They will take no passengers to-day."

Edelweiss looked eagerly up; something in the malicious tone and face struck sharply on her notice.

"What is wrong?" she asked calmly.

"Oh, it is only a trifle," he answered. "But the chief engineer and the Herr von Reichenberg have had a dispute. The young man, to prove his views are correct, is going to make a trial by himself. Only he and the stoker are to take the train up and down the mountain.

The girl's face grew very pale.

"Is there any danger?" she asked hurriedly.

Franz laughed brutally.

"That is his look-out, or—as the devil wills," he said, turning away. "Good-morning! I have no time to waste. I take the boat to Fluelen; I have business there."

Edelweiss scarcely heard him. A sudden fear had fallen upon her heart; she shivered in the bright, warm sunshine. All the rest of the morning she went about her usual homely tasks as one in a dream. At noon she went down the street, determined to ask if the news was true.

Yes, she was told, the trial was to be made in another hour. The girl went back to the cottage, where old Käthe was nodding in the chimney-corner.

"I am going up the mountain," she said. "Do not be anxious if I have not returned by supper-time."

Then she hurried away, and took the familiar path which she had trodden year by year with Hans Krauss. It was so warm and still in those green solitudes, with the blue waters gleaming far below, and the blue sky shining far above, that the girl's heart grew lighter, and her fears began to fade. Why should any harm happen to him to-day, more than any other day? Was he not clever enough and brave enough to defy danger—if, indeed, there was any to defy, save that which her own foolish fears had built up on account of this enterprise? Midway up the ascent she paused. In a little nook, sheltered and concealed by thick trees, she could see the train making its way along the line. She resolved to lie hidden there and watch it. Already she could discern the white smoke, and hear the faint puffs of the engine. Trembling like a leaf, she looked down from her vantage-point, and saw the little train creeping in its strange, slow fashion up the almost perpendicular side of the mountain.

She held her breath, and her heart grew cold and sick. It was terrible to watch it, and yet a strange fascination held her eyes glued to the spot.

On, on, nearer and nearer, it glided slowly and surely up. She could see the figures quite distinctly now. No one was in the car itself. The engine-driver and one other figure were visible, and the guard who worked the brake stood in the end compartment.

It was crossing the Schnürtobel bridge

now—that frail structure which, from her altitude, looked like a plank thrown across the dizzy gorge it spanned.

It crept safely over the bridge, and she breathed again.

On, still on, higher and higher, she watched it move, with steady and almost equal speed. Then it reached the Kaltbad station, and she saw it no more.

There was nothing to do now but watch for the descent, which to an onlooker seemed even more perilous and alarming than the ascent, in consequence of the steep inclination of the line. To go down an altitude of twenty to twenty-five degrees is bad enough, but to watch such a process is enough to make the strongest brain turn giddy and faint.

The girl, from her little nook, commanded a large extent of the line, and while waiting for the train to come once more in view, she sat gazing dreamily at the bridge.

The afternoon was growing late now, and some heavy clouds had almost hidden the sun. Across the stillness of the air broke one low, distinct thunder-clap. She started, and looked anxiously up, scanning the western horizon, where the storm threatened to burst.

As her eyes turned once more to the long incline, she saw far below, on the little bridge, the outline of a human figure. The glowing obscurity and the heavy shadows made it difficult to discern what the figure was about, and she followed its strange and hurried movements with wondering eyes.

Then, suddenly as a lightning-flash, a thought struck her, and she sprang to her feet with a low, terrified cry. All the blood left her face and seemed to curdle in her veins, and her limbs shook so that she could scarcely stand.

At the same moment a loud, shrill whistle sounded through the sultry stillness.

The train was about to leave the station and make its descent.

That sound brought back the life to her heart, the strength to her limbs. She dashed out of her retreat, and, fleet as an antelope, she flew down the path, crashing now and then through the bushes, taking every short cut with which long habit had made her familiar, her whole mind filled with but one frenzied longing—to reach the railway-line, and from thence the bridge where that fatal barrier lay.

"Shall I be in time, dear Heaven?—shall

I be in time!" she moaned as she sped on over the rough stones, and short hard grass, and tangled brushwood.

The clouds were growing denser and blacker. There was not a sound in the air save once again that low, ill-omened mutter of the thunder rolling from height to height of the surrounding mountains.

She reached the line—the train was not yet in sight; but far below like a spider's strand lay the bridge, and she flew on with panting breath and straining eyes as a racer flies to its goal.

Nerve, and brain, and courage were strung to their highest tension. The life she loved far better than her own was in peril, and that peril it lay in her power alone to avert. Had she paused to think—had she in any way remembered the details explained to her by Conrad von Reichenberg, she would have known that a word—a signal, as the train passed her by would have sufficed to stop it at any point on the line; but she could think of nothing now save the dastardly act she had witnessed, and the tragedy it threatened.

The road seemed long as it had never seemed before. The lines of her face grew set and rigid, her eyes looked black beneath their strained and aching lids, and still with headlong speed, and feet that dared not pause, she flew along the rugged mountain way.

One who had known her in her childish beauty would scarce have recognised her now, so altered was her face beneath this terrible strain. The swiftness of her speed made her dizzy, the rush of the blood through her veins turned her sick, but she never slackened speed, only rushed on and on through the current of the cleft air and the dusky whirling shadows as though the death-shrieks of a doomed life were already ringing in her ears.

How long it was—how long! How her feet stumbled and her limbs shook, and the quick breaths panted through her pale lips! A child no longer, but a creature desperate and mute as death, and nerved to an ordeal from which the bravest man might well have shrunk.

The bridge—at last the bridge! She seized the post as her feet touched the little structure, and for one moment paused and looked back to the slender line of rails. The train was in sight now, and moving more swiftly than she had seen it move yet.

There was not a second to lose. She rushed forward; in the very centre of the

bridge, and drawn across the line, lay a huge log. In case that obstacle might be seen, and the train checked, the cog-line for the centre-wheel had been hewn away, and it would have been almost impossible to have stopped the train. An accident—the slightest overthrow to the balance, and the whole thing must have been hurled over the bridge into the terrible depths of the gorge below. The girl's wild eyes took in the danger only too promptly. With all her strength, she seized the huge block and strove to roll it aside.

Louder and longer rolled the thunder-echoes once again. Darker and denser fell the shadows all around. In the heavy gloom, she could scarcely see the approaching train, though the sound of the engine's laboured beats were painfully distinct in the oppressive stillness of the air. The train was on the bridge. She could feel it throb beneath its weight. With one last effort of her almost failing strength, she seized the heavy log and moved it from the line. At that same moment her eyes fell on the rough and mangled rail, and recognised a new danger—perhaps a worse one.

There was no time for thought. As that new danger flashed upon her, there flashed also the sense that in the gathering darkness the train was close upon her. She rushed forward a few steps. A faint gleam through the darkening clouds showed the swaying figure nerved for one last effort.

"Stop!" she cried wildly. "Stop! The rails are loose!"

Then a sound as of a thousand hammers clanged in her brain, and deaf, and blind, and senseless, she fell face downwards across the engine's path.

CHAPTER VII. THE WITHERED FLOWER.

"WHAT is it? What is the matter? Is she killed?"

The train had paused—motionless as the mountain itself. It seemed to Conrad von Reichenberg as if long hours had passed since the darkness was rent by that warning cry; since his own hand had seized the heavy brake and arrested the train in its downward course.

He was kneeling now beside a prostrate figure; and in the dusky light he turned the white, cold face up to his own, and saw to whom he owed his life. The mangled rails, all jagged and hewn, told their own tale; but he scarcely thought of that, or his own recent peril, in the shock

which the first look of this pale, altered face had brought.

"What is it? I hardly know," he muttered stupidly, as the men crowded to his side. "Is she dead?"

There was a dark bruise on the white temples, where the engine had struck her. A second more—a foot of space—and she would have been crushed to atoms.

"She came to warn us, no doubt," said the driver pityingly, as he lowered his lamp. "Only for the darkness and the storm, we should have seen her before. Poor child! how white she is, and still. What are we to do, mein herr? We can't get the train on till the line's mended."

Conrad scarcely seemed to hear him. His eyes were bent in agony on the girl's face. He knew he had never loved her as he loved her now, reading all the bravery and courage of the pulseless heart that thrilled no longer beneath his touch.

"Dead, and for my sake!" he groaned, as he saw the cold hand drop from his grasp, and the grey hue steal over the beautiful, calm face.

"Oh, child—child, my little mountain-flower! I was not worth such love as this!"

The full meaning of her sacrifice, the full strength of her devotion, came home to him in this hour at last, and shamed him for his own selfishness, which had only brought sorrow, and suffering, and death upon this fair youth and innocent heart.

He suffered in this moment as in all his life he never could again, seeing laid at his feet in unasked devotion the beauty and glory, and tenderness, and truth he had left unrecompensed.

The loud slow thunder filled the air once more with warning sound, the pine-boughs rustled as they caught the wind, and so, with the music of her own mountains sounding her requiem, they bore her slowly homewards through the summer's dusk, with Heaven's light of peace upon her calm dead face.

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1884.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XII.

"PHIL went away in low spirits this morning. Naturally, he was very much cut up at poor Thorne's death; they were such great chums at one time," said Colonel Wickham, looking in upon the squire that afternoon.

"Yes, yes," agreed the squire. "Terrible ending to a promising young man! Awful shock it must be to his poor mother. Thorne Hall goes to a distant cousin, doesn't it?"

"I'm not sure. You see I never had much intercourse with the Thornes. I didn't know them in the father's time; the mother was always a little too much of the fine lady to suit me. Poor woman! It'll take it out of her now, anyhow. Phil was round, of course, this morning to say good-bye to Edie!"

"Suppose so," answered the squire. "Edie's eyes have been uncommonly red all the forenoon, and there have been sundry distant rumblings and threatenings of an approaching storm. Poor little woman! No doubt Phil's starting off in such a hurry has upset some of her plans, and she's not one to take disappointments easily."

"An approaching storm!" It would have been nearer the truth to have said that the storm had come, and was now at its height, for there was little Edie in her own room sobbing out her sorrows into the sofa-pillows, wailing and declaring that everything in life was horrible, and miserable, and ugly, and bad; that she knew something dreadful would happen to Phil, or to her, before they set eyes on each other again; that Phil ought—ought—to

have known, no matter what she might have said, that she loved him better than all the rest of the world put together, and that her heart would break if he didn't write to her at least once every day!

And all these tears, forsooth, because Phil had started off to London without going through an elaborate and fervid farewell with the young lady—a farewell which, if he had attempted, no doubt she would have cut short with a toss of her curly brown head, a distant shake of the hand, and a little formal prepared speech that "it was quite too ridiculous to make a fuss over saying good-bye now that they were to be friends and nothing more to each other."

Ellinor, in spite of her early rising that day, did not join the family till the evening. The vicar called again and again, in the hope of seeing her and taking her the round of his pet charities. Thirdly and finally he sent a note, saying that, if Miss Yorke would name her own time on the following day, he would be only too happy to place himself at her disposal.

"I'm afraid, my dear," said the squire to Edie, eyeing askance the vicar's note, and guessing at its contents—"I'm very much afraid our respected vicar is going to make a fool of himself."

"I'm sure I hope not, papa," retorted Edie crisply, and looking right up into the squire's face. "I do hate to see old men making themselves ridiculous over young girls who are only laughing at them all the time."

The squire winced, and said no more.

When Ellinor at length made her appearance at the dinner-table that evening, she, like Edie, seemed limp, languid, and indisposed for conversation. If the two girls had been rival Grand Duchesses at an

impecunious German Court, they could not have rendered a stricter obedience to the minute laws of social etiquette. To get a laugh out of either was an impossibility; almost equally an impossibility was it to induce either to evince the faintest show of interest in the various "topics of the day" which the squire started in succession for their especial benefit. At last, in despair almost, he bethought him of a certain item of local news which he had heard that morning, and which must surely stir them up a bit to say something sour, sweet, or startling, as the whim might take them.

"Ah, by-the-bye, I've a little bit of news for you," he began, looking furtively out of the corner of one eye, and thanking Providence that both the girls had declined dessert, thereby shortening the already long dinner by at least ten minutes. "I meant to have told it you at luncheon, but forgot it. Lord Winterdowne arrived at the Castle last night, and already appears to have made a good impression; no end of people were singing his praises this morning."

If he had been looking at Ellinor's face, instead of at the walnut he was peeling at the moment, he would have seen a curious expression pass over it—a look of sudden interest, a nervous contraction of the forehead, and then a tightening of the lips, and a drooping of the eyelid. Just such a look it was, as man or woman might wear who, having resolved upon a certain career in life, sees suddenly spread beneath his or her eye all the glories and splendour of an exactly opposite course, and, turning away the head, will not look upon it. She did not open her lips, however.

Eddie did.

"Well, papa," she said, speaking crisply, as she had been speaking all day, "if everybody is singing his praises, I should say he must be a very disagreeable person—milk-and-water, and all that. I always detest the people everyone praises. And, in any case, he must be a remarkably foolish person. Didn't you say he had come from Florence, or somewhere nice? Well, then, the idea of anyone leaving a dear, bright, beautiful place in Italy to come to dull, dingy, miserable little Stanham is quite beyond my comprehension."

Speechless, the squire arched his brows at her. The fact of his little daughter characterising the place of her birth and home, which she had been wont to call the

"dearest, brightest spot in all the world," as "dull, dingy, and miserable," was a thing quite beyond his comprehension. The weather must be getting very murky indeed.

Ellinor did not go with Eddie into the drawing-room after dinner, but proceeded straight upstairs into her own room.

Gretchen was in attendance in a moment, and Melanie had in another moment disappeared. This was the routine of Miss Yorke's dressing-room.

"You may bring the writing-table, Gretchen; I want a letter written to my uncle Hugh," said Ellinor, though not with quite her usual decision of voice and manner.

Gretchen promptly arranged pens, paper, and envelopes.

The letter, however, seemed somewhat difficult to dictate. Apparently the words did not come with their wonted readiness to Ellinor's tongue. She made one or two turns up and down her long dressing-room; she even wandered into the adjoining room (her bedroom), thence slowly back again; brought her chair close to the brightly-burning fire; and leaned back with her hands clasped over her eyes, as one might who had an intricate and not easily adjusted subject for thought.

The well-trained Gretchen "stood at attention" in a distant corner of the room.

Presently Ellinor asked a slow question.

"Where did Mrs.—the housekeeper here, I mean—say you could get the best view of Winterdowne Castle and Park?"

"From the hill at the back of the church, madame—Frog's Hill, I think the people about here call it."

Then there came another pause, a longer one than before, during which the logs hissed and sang on the bright fire, the clock on the mantelpiece above ticked and chimed the hour, but the letter to Uncle Hugh advanced not by one single pen's scratch.

At length Ellinor had an order to give. It was: "Put away the pen and ink, Gretchen. I won't write to my uncle Hugh to-night."

CHAPTER XIII.

"I SHOULD like to ride over those hills at the back of the church, they look quite tempting from my bedroom-window," said Ellinor, coming down quite early—for her,

that is—the following morning, in riding-habit and gauntlets.

Eddie, occupied in feeding her bullfinch with breadcrumbs, and trying to entice him out of his cage, made no reply, and did not so much as turn her head.

“Eh? Capital idea, my dear,” said the squire cheerily, delighted to welcome even the faintest sign of returning animation in his home-circle. “Only, unfortunately, I can’t go with you this morning. I have made an appointment with Farmer Rodwell, to go through his farm-buildings and see what repairs are wanted; he’ll let me in for a pot of money if I don’t look after him a bit. But, Eddie, you can go with Ellinor, of course. A canter will do you good this morning.”

Eddie shook her head.

“I have to go into the village; some of my Sunday class are ill, and I couldn’t neglect them for any amount of canters over the hills.” Then she added a little maliciously: “Send a note round to the vicar and ask him to go; it might do instead of the schools.”

Ellinor did not condescend to reply to this remark, did not even look in Eddie’s direction.

“Can I have one of the grooms?” she asked, looking at and addressing the squire.

“Certainly, my dear—Thomas, John, or any one you like. I’ll tell them to bring the horses round; I’m going out through the stables.”

And, as he finished speaking, the squire made a rapid exit from the room, fearful of any further dispute arising between the two girls, upon which, possibly, he might be required to adjudicate.

So Ellinor, attended by Thomas, enjoyed her canter over the hills that morning, and drew rein on the summit of Frog’s Hill, for a full fifteen minutes taking a leisurely survey of the landscape it commanded on either side.

Frog’s Hill, or, more correctly, Frogatt’s Hill, from the name of the farmer who, in a previous generation, had owned and tilled its steep sides, was the highest point in that part of Berkshire, and commanded as extensive a view of hill, dale, wood, and open as any to be found in the home-counties. At its base lay the picturesque, irregular little village of Stanham, dominated by its ivy-covered church with its ancient steeple. On its north side—the side up which Ellinor had ambled on the pretty chestnut the squire had placed at

her disposal—lay Wickham Place, with its small, well-kept park, its acres of undulating pasture-land. A glimpse of the square-built Elizabethan structure could just be had through the scant-leaved October elms and beeches. A gentleman’s house, and, above all, an English gentleman’s house it looked, neat, trim, comfortable in the fullest sense of the word, and devoid alike of ornamentation or pretension.

On the south side of this breezy hill lay another and more striking landscape. A long stretch of wild moorland, a desolate, rugged heath, bounded by dark, thick woods. Over these woods loomed the tower and turrets of Winterdowne Castle, a noble edifice, which had been kept up in princely style for generations, and which carried with its title seigniorial rights over much contiguous land, and river, and wood. In fact, the Lords of Winterdowne were, without cavil or dispute, the lords paramount of that part of Berkshire and the adjoining portion of the sister county.

Ellinor sat silently in her saddle, surveying the two domains. Now her head would turn this way—to the north, now that—to the south. A slight frown knotted her forehead; her eyes had a thoughtful, appraising look in them. Had she been a prospective purchaser of one or other of these two estates, and had mounted the hill for the whole and sole purpose of forming an estimate in outline of their respective value, she could not have surveyed them more deliberately, keenly, scrutinisingly.

Presently she signed to Thomas that she had something to say to him.

“That pasture-land and that river belong to Winterdowne Castle, I suppose?” she asked, as Thomas brought his horse forward.

“Yes, ma’am, right on as far as you can see, east and west, it all belongs to Lord Winterdowne,” answered Thomas.

“He must be enormously rich,” pursued Ellinor, as though she were uttering aloud her own thoughts.

“That he is, ma’am; people say he has between eighty and ninety thousand a year,” again responded Thomas, with not a little pride that this corner of the county could boast of so wealthy a magnate.

Ellinor’s thoughts were very busy during her short ride back to the Hall. Her thinking was, generally speaking, conducted in practical, logical fashion, unlike that

of most girls of her age, with whom thought comes and goes in flashes, or else merges into dreams where fact and logic are alike unknown. Her thoughts this morning, put down on paper, would have run somewhat in this fashion :

"Here am I, as it were, at a great auction-mart, with a certain fixed amount of money in my purse, choosing which of two lots I shall bid for. Here is lot number one : A magnificent country home, a house in London, and contingent advantages ; a princely income, a scientific, rather middle-aged man for a husband, and—a coronet. Here is lot number two : A comfortable country home, a comfortable but moderate income, a handsome, light-hearted young fellow for a husband, and—no coronet."

Was there not, however, something difficult to define—hard to call by any name save that of personal liking, which, in this latter lot, might be put in place of the coronet—might, in fact, almost, if not quite, outweigh it in value, and make it better worth her while to bid for the second lot, and let the first go by ?

It took her all that morning, all that afternoon, and half that evening to decide this point. Sometimes one lot would seem to her better worth bidding for, sometimes another. She took Edie's album up into her own room and sat with it open at Phil's photograph, staring into his honest, open face till she knew every line and curve of every feature.

"If he had only been ever so little in love with me it would have cost me nothing to give him up," she said to herself over and over again ; "but to be scorned—to be anathematised—to be despised, as he so evidently despises me, is beyond bearing !"

Then, too, how handsome, how distinguished he had looked as he spoke all those hard words to her in the shrubbery, among the hazel-rods ! If she could only have put the coronet into this lot, she could have let the princely income go without a sigh.

And so on—and so on, till she, Ellinor Yorke, the dispassionate—the serene-tempered—the calm reasoner, began to grow sick and giddy with her own thinking, and made up her mind desperately to end it one way or the other.

It wanted but a minute to six o'clock ; dinner was to be at half-past seven, and the great business of dressing had not yet been begun. She shut up the photograph-

album with a vehement bang—there was no other word for it—and jumped to her feet.

"It shall be the coronet," she said aloud. "I can do more than one thing in life, surely, and it will be just as easy to bring this young man to my feet as Lady Winterdowne as it would be as Miss Yorke."

Her vehement handling of the album had dislodged one of the photographs ; it slipped to the ground, and now lay face upwards at her feet. It was Edie's portrait. Bright, sparkling, imperiously happy, it looked up at her.

"Are you so sure of doing two things in life, Miss Ellinor ?" it seemed to say. "Do you think it will be such an easy thing to bring this young man—this lover of mine—to your feet ? Do you forget he belongs to me—he is bound to me, body and soul ?"

This was beyond endurance. Farewell to the coronet now ! Once and for ever Ellinor's mind was made up. She rang the bell for Gretchen.

"Put the album and this thing away," she said when her maid entered, pointing with her foot to little Edie's face on the carpet ; "and before I begin dressing I want a letter written to my uncle Hugh, so as to save the night-mail."

This was the letter Uncle Hugh received from his niece on the following day :

"The Hall, Stanham.

"DEAR UNCLE HUGH,—I find this place doesn't suit me, and if I stay on much longer I shall be downright ill. Will you, therefore, kindly arrange for my coming up to London one day next week. I shall amazingly like to keep house for you.—Ever your affectionate niece,

"ELLINOR YORKE."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE following correspondence took place between Uncle Hugh and Ellinor Yorke before the close of the week.

From Hugh Pelham Yorke, Esq. :

"The Albany, London, Nov. 1st.

"DEAR ELLINOR,—Your letter nearly knocked me over. London for you in November ! Impossible ! You are not like me, an old fellow who knows how to make himself comfortable anywhere, and who has made a study of London, its weak and its strong points, till he knows, in the season or out of it, exactly where to go and what to do. It's not to be thought of,

my dear. Everyone you know is away—every house you could go to is closed. You would simply die of ennui before the first week was over your head. I am sorry you don't 'get on' with the Fairfaxes. I suppose that is what your anxiety to get away from them really means. I know very little of them, but they always seemed to me genial, kindly people, if a little provincial. Try them for another week or so, then write again and let me know how you get on.—Your affectionate uncle,

"H. P. YORKE."

From Miss Yorke :

"The Hall, Stanham, Berkshire, Nov. 2nd.

"DEAR UNCLE HUGH,—I 'get on' with the Fairfaxes quite as well as I do with most people. I agree with you they are kindly people (Mr. Fairfax is, at any rate), although decidedly provincial. My reason for wishing to leave Stanham is that the air does not suit me. It is rough and breezy—I can hardly breathe in it. Kindly therefore tell me which day you can meet me in London, and what arrangements had best be made. I should think there must be a number of comfortable furnished houses to be let now within a mile or so of Piccadilly.—With much love, always your affectionate niece,

"ELLINOR YORKE."

"Ugh!" shuddered Uncle Hugh when he read the latter part of this missive, "is the girl mad? Does she think I would give up this"—here he glanced round his spacious luxurious apartment—"to rough it with her in a small furnished house in a by-street, and have my spirits crushed and my digestion injured by petty botherations and domestic worries. Stuff!"

This was the note he sent in reply :

"The Albany, London, Nov. 3rd.

"DEAR ELLINOR,—On second thoughts, why not join your mother at Mentone? You will find the air there the reverse of rough and breezy, and I should say the change would do you a great deal of good. You know I proposed, in the first instance, that you should go with her instead of going down into Berkshire.

"I know several people just starting for the South, and can easily find you a suitable chaperon. Your affectionate uncle,

"H. P. YORKE."

From Miss Yorke :

"The Hall, Stanham, Nov. 4th.

"DEAR UNCLE HUGH,—I may be very glad to go to Mentone a little later in the

year, or perhaps at the beginning of next year, but for a time I must be in London. I want to consult a physician as to my lungs—if I'm not careful I may get into just as bad a way as Juliet.

"I don't care in the least what arrangements you make for me (I could go into rooms if that would suit you better), but I feel that my coming to London is an absolute necessity. I dread the idea of getting ill here, and falling into the hands of some incompetent local practitioner, more than I can say. With much love, ever your affectionate niece,

"ELLINOR YORKE."

Two days elapsed before Ellinor received Uncle Hugh's reply to this. When it came it ran as follows :

"The Albany, London, Nov. 6th.

"DEAR ELLINOR,—I am sorry to have such a poor account of your health. By all means come up to London—to-morrow if you can manage it. Telegraph to me by which train you will travel, and I will meet you at Paddington. I have been thinking over what arrangements can be made for you during your stay, and have come to the conclusion that it will be best for you to make your home with two old friends of mine who have just taken a house for the winter months in Grafton Street, Mayfair. I dare say you have heard me speak of them—they are Sir Peter and Lady Moulsey, great invalids, and, like yourself, desirous of consulting the best London physicians—Sir Peter for his gout, Lady Moulsey for her deafness and weak eyesight. As they are both on the wrong side of sixty, as every room in the house has to be kept darkened for Lady Moulsey's eyes, you will not, I am sure, expect a very gay time of it. But a little rest will not do you any harm after the very hard season you had this year. Also, as you know, in Grafton Street, you will be within easy reach of the best medical practitioners.—Your affectionate uncle,

"H. P. YORKE."

"And if this doesn't drive her to Mentone in less than a fortnight," said Uncle Hugh as he signed and sealed his letter, "her name is not Ellinor Yorke, and I don't know my own niece."

Ellinor's reply to this, telegraphed, ran as follows :

"I am delighted at the arrangement you have made for me. I leave here to-morrow by the 11.40 express." gle

PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH BURGLARS.

It has happened that I have been led to cultivate, in the course of my career, a considerable relationship with the subject of burglars and burglaries. In very childhood, dwelling in lonely parts of the country, I was intellectually brought up by thrilling narratives of this description, such as that of the Long Park, a well-known tradition which is religiously maintained in the North of England. In that story, an uncanny-looking pedlar asks leave to deposit an enormous packing-case in an old hall, and movements of life being observed, a gun is fired, and a dead burglar is discovered, armed to the teeth, and supposed to have been ready to sally forth at midnight to rob and murder. Our library contained many old volumes of the Annual Register and of The Gentleman's Magazine, and the pages of those volumes devoted to criminal matters contained many a thrilling and authentic story. Indeed, I am afraid that burglary, considered, like murder, as one of the fine arts, to use De Quincey's phrase, has considerably fallen off, for I have seen nothing in the newspaper law-reports, except, perhaps, the achievements of the late Mr. Peace, which have been further intensified by Madame Tussaud's Gallery, which quite come up to the details of my juvenile reading. Some years ago, I obtained a Secretary of State's order to visit all the convict-prisons in England. They were exceedingly like each other, and having minutely visited some half-dozen, I came to the conclusion that it was not worth while prosecuting my researches any farther. In the course of these visits I obtained a second-class acquaintance with all the modern burglars of any standing. I also had the honour of an acquaintance with a distinguished barrister, who had a great success in winning verdicts for burglars and other criminals, and who might have said, in the words of the comic opera, Trial by Jury:

And many a burglar I've restored
To his friends and his relations.

Curiously enough, when this gentleman was raised to the bench, he passed very heavy sentences on all his old friends.

My ideas of burglary were sharply accentuated in early life by a burglary that took place in my own home. It occurred in the neighbourhood of the fashionable town of Cheltenham, where we were staying. It was a cold, snowy, wintry

night. An enterprising burglar commenced his professional business one night at the very reasonable hour of nine o'clock, and proceeded to try various doors and windows without any success until he came to our house. A careless servant had left the window of the schoolroom unfastened. We were all at family prayers, forgetting that we ought to watch as well as pray, and the burglar, viewing the state of things with much approbation, quietly stole upstairs, and, entering a large sleeping-room, settled himself comfortably beneath a big four-poster. It was the father and mother's room, and the unwitting pair quietly went to bed. It very curiously happened that my mother had left on the dressing-table a valuable watch to which she was much attached. For some reason, which she could never define to herself, she awoke, hurried out of bed, seized her watch, and deposited it beneath her pillow. In the dead of the night the burglar arose, and was able to make a very clean sweep of everything. Thirty-five pounds in notes and gold were carried off, and almost the whole of our modest family plate. Finally, the burglar made an excellent supper in the dining-room off cold meat and wine, and leisurely took himself away.

When we came down to breakfast there was a great scarcity of spoons and forks. One of the little girls excited a certain amount of amusement and derision by saying that she saw a big black man enter the room where she was sleeping, look at himself in the glass, and heard him mutter aloud, "I wish this job was done!" When we came to look about us, her narrative did not appear at all so improbable. A very serious burglary had occurred, with a loss to us which could be ill afforded. A small reward was offered for the discovery of the offender, and a letter was received from one of his traitorous confederates remonstrating on the unreasonable smallness of the reward proffered. It was accordingly increased to fifty pounds, and then our burglar was betrayed. The danger of such betrayal is one of the great perils ahead for such cracksmen. In due time he was tried at the assizes, and, despite his asseverations of innocence, was convicted on very clear evidence. The presiding judge was an old man who remembered the time when burglary was punished by hanging. He passed a sentence of transportation for life. Then came a curious dialogue between the judge and the prisoner. "Thank you, my lord," said

the prisoner to the judge; "that is all I wanted." "You needn't thank me," snarled back Mr. Baron G. "I would hang you if I could. Some years ago you would have been hanged for this. I can't hang you now. I am very sorry for it. I would hang you if I could."

My dear mother was strongly moved by the prisoner's protestations of innocence. She was in the utmost terror lest an innocent man should suffer in any way through her means. She visited the scoundrel several times in gaol; she made him a present of a handsome Bible; and, if she had been allowed, she would, perhaps, have sent him beef-tea and jellies. At last the prisoner, whether touched with her simplicity and kindness, or in some degree repentant, made a clean breast of it, and told how the whole matter happened, which took a great burden off the good mother's mind.

There is a lonely, remote village in Derbyshire, remote from railways, which I used to know very well. There is a fine painted-glass window in the venerable church, which has underneath it the words, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings." This window, with the inscription, is connected with a daring burglary. I know well the house where it happened—an old manorial house, for the old rector was a Squarson, living in the ancestral hall, and leaving the rectory to others. The old rector had married a young wife—an arrangement, by the way, which in this case worked exceedingly well, and by-and-by there came the inevitable baby. The old rector, at his time of life, could not stand the noise of the baby, and took himself off to a separate room of his own. One night, in the very depth of the night, the infant made a most howling, precocious noise which awoke the young mother. She attended to her child, and then went to the window and drew up the blind, to "take a look at the night," as people say. To her horror, there was an atrocious-looking man standing on the window-sill. She caught her babe in her arms, and, with a shriek, rushed off to her husband's room. Presently there was a crash of glass, and the burglar, followed by two other men, had dashed into her deserted bedroom. If I remember aright, she had locked the bedroom door on the other side; but this, too, was broken through by the invaders. She awoke her husband, who, on hearing the state of things, lighted a candle by the bedside and produced a pistol. The three

men appeared at the bedroom door. The old rector presented his pistol, and said that if they advanced another step he should fire. One of the men advanced; the rector fired his pistol, and the man fell. The whole house was now alarmed, and the men made off, taking their wounded comrade with them. They were traced by the blood-marks on the snow. The wounded man recovered, and, with the others, received a long sentence.

The worthy clergyman, who was also a magistrate, knew what he was about when he gave the men notice that he should fire if they advanced. It is a mistake to suppose you can shoot a burglar with impunity. A man must threaten actual violence or receive such a warning as was given by my friend, before there is a right to fire. At least such is my impression, but at the same time, I do not employ my solicitor to correct any flaw in my magazine papers. I have a friend, an Australian, who keeps a nugget of gold beneath a glass-case in his drawing-room. I suppose news of the nugget had got abroad, for there have been several felonious attempts to relieve him of it. He keeps a loaded blunderbuss, which he is fully resolved to discharge whenever he has a chance. In vain I pathetically ask him whether he would rather destroy life, or keep a piece of metal, "slave of the dark and dirty mine?" He replies that, of the two, he would prefer keeping his nugget. I tell him that he will run a chance of being tried for murder or manslaughter, to which he replies that he is perfectly willing to take the chance. In my opinion that nugget ought to go to the bank. A friend of mine had a little house with a disproportionate amount of plate in it. His wife, who rejoiced in her glittering stores, was superintending its cleaning, when looking up she saw at the window a pair of evil eyes covetously regarding the plate. That night there was an attempt at a burglary, which was frustrated. Ever since that time the plate has been at a banker's, and the family use nickel.

Coming back to the case of my old clergyman, I should say that he was greatly impressed by the Providential circumstance that the waking of the child had roused his wife, and perhaps had been the means of preventing robbery and murder. Under this impression, to commemorate his gratitude, he placed a painted window in his church, and with an allusion to the crying of the child,

he placed beneath the words of the Psalmist: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings."

I know one or two cases in which there has been great courage on the side of the attacked party and great cowardice on that of the burglars. In fact, this is generally the case when burglars have to deal with the police. I have a friend—a slight, delicate lady, who has shown marvellous courage in cowing a burglar. She went into her kitchen one night when the servants were out or had gone to bed, and found a man in the act of packing up all her silver plate. She resolutely locked the kitchen door, put the key in her pocket, and told him that he should not leave the room until he had placed back every article of silver where he had found it. The man obeyed her in a most abject manner, and was then allowed to sneak out of the place.

Some friends of mine have been giving me an account of a burglary they experienced abroad a short time ago, under circumstances sufficiently remarkable. It was in Switzerland. The husband had carefully secured the door before going to bed. He was, nevertheless, awoke by the noise of someone moving about his room. Suddenly there was a noise at the window, and getting there he saw a robber just getting off a ladder and moving it away. He rang the bell violently, and presently half the population of the hotel was crowding into his apartment. On overhauling his losses he found that he had lost a rouleau of napoleons, and, what he valued more, an old family watch and some jewellery. He told the police that they were welcome to keep the money, but he should be very glad if they could recover the other articles for him. To his great astonishment, before very long he received the watch and jewellery, but the police had taken him at his word about the money. The following was the story of their recovery: It seems that this burglar had systematically followed the plan of using the ladder in his robberies, and limited himself to this one mode of action, which he had found very successful. One night, however, his good fortune deserted him. Hurrying down his ladder, at some height, he missed his footing. Both his legs were broken. He was taken to a hospital, where he died. The locality of his abode being discovered, a search was made, and there my friend's property, with various other goods, was discovered.

I have often visited Dartmoor, which

may be considered a sort of headquarters for burglars, during their periods of involuntary retirement, and have on several occasions gone carefully through the prison, also Millbank, Wormwood Scrubbs, Woking, Chatham, Portland. A released prisoner has published his experiences at Dartmoor, Five Years Penal Servitude, in which he tells us something of the secrets of the prison-house, and speaks of burglars. He mentions the case of a celebrated gentleman crack, who would not only carry on his profession at home, but who would go abroad in the practice of his profession to Paris and the United States. One man who made a celebrated burglary on the abode of a great lady, declared to his brother-convicts that the countess had jilted him, and her jewellery that was found on him was simply a gage d'amour. One of my burglaries took place in this very district—Dartmoor, and the very house where I have often found myself. I believe it is the only case in which an escape has been successfully made from the great prison. A convict, finding the principal gate, through some mischance, for one moment left unguarded, ran across the road and made a burglarious entry into the premises of a clergyman, who lived just opposite the prison. There was no one in the house. He went from room to room until he got to the reverend gentleman's bedroom. There, in one of the drawers, he found a neat suit of clerical black, and leaving his convict-suit in exchange, he sallied forth into the open. A Dartmoor convict who makes his escape is invariably overtaken. He is easily seen from the high watch-towers, and his garment at once betrays him. In this case the burglary proved a fortunate one for the offender, for he got off scot-free.

The literary convict, to whom allusion has been made above, has some more observations about burglars, which may have a quiet, reassuring effect on nervous people in the country. The commercial element enters much more into burglaries than many suppose to be the case. The housebreaker wants to be assured that the booty he is after is really worth his trouble. He does not see why he should give up his peace of mind and his night's rest, with the chances of resistance and the perils of the law, for a small or dubious return. In these banking days the chances of picking up coin are greatly lessened. Our convict says that a burglar will be at immense pains before "cracking a domicile." He

will have a correct plan of the house, duplicate keys, and a description of the plate and valuables. The ordinary way, he tells us, is for the burglar in his private capacity to make love to one of the women-servants, and worm out all the private information he can. Another plan is to "plant" some male or female confederate in the house to "work" out the design. These people get some sort of situation in the house, and are scrupulously honest in all little matters, and so win confidence in order to betray it. Sometimes they report that the "swag" is not worth trying for. Of course, inferior artists will not be so grand in their notions, but turn their hands to anything which may turn up. I knew a poor farmer once who had a burglary on his premises. He lost a great deal more than he could afford, but hoped that one burglary would last him his lifetime. In this, however, he was disappointed. The wretches returned the following week, and looted the leavings of their last visit.

It must be said that the burglaries of the present day are much less numerous and much less violent than in "the good old times." Despite the disapprobation of the eminent judge to whom I have referred, the abolition of the punishment of death for burglary has worked well. Formerly, when a criminal knew that he would be hanged for burglary, and that the law could do no more if he added murder as well, burglary and murder in horrible combination used often to go together. When the graver crime arises, it is generally in resisting capture by the police; but even these cases, though they occasionally occur, are few and far between. There was a burglar who told a man, in a burst of confidence, that there was no house in England which could resist the attack of a well-trained burglar. The two circumstances which they found most baffling were locks on the inside of shutters or the presence of a little dog inside a house, both of which would give an alarm. Of course the simple expedient of locking doors is often a baffling circumstance to the members of the profession.

I remember having a conversation with the chaplain of a convict-prison, who really had a very great regard and affection for his queer parishioners. He seemed to think that they were more unfortunate than criminal, in that they had broken the eleventh commandment, "Thou shalt not

be found out." He considered that they were quite up to the average of any ordinary congregation. The governors of such prisons give a very different account. Governors and chaplains are sometimes in collision on points of prison discipline, and I am afraid that the governors are more frequently in the right. The governor of one convict-prison told me that he had detected no fewer than six conspiracies among the convicts to murder him in the course of a twelvemonth. Their lives would not be safe for a day except for the deterring influence of a flogging on the triangle. I am thankful to think that I saved one convict from this terrible and degrading punishment. I do not, however, know whether he was a housebreaker or not. I was going along the corridor of a prison, when, at a cell-door, I saw a prisoner in fierce altercation with a warder. The prisoner was in a violent passion, and seemed to be on the point of assaulting the warder. If he had done so, in all probability he would have been tied up to the triangle, and would have received his three dozen. I laid my hand kindly on the man's shoulder and expostulated with him. I told him that he was only running his head against a wall, that the warder was only doing his duty, and that resistance would provoke punishment. I tried also to slip in a few words of sympathy for him. It is wonderful what a kind word is often able to do. I had the satisfaction of seeing the man soothed and quieted, and saved from a very serious position. I went once to see a prisoner who was working out his six months in a county gaol for an offence something like a mild kind of housebreaking. The effect was certainly painful. The man was caged behind bars in a compartment very much like the den of a wild beast in a menagerie. A warder was stationed in the space in front of the bars. I was not permitted to give the poor fellow a shake of the hand, which I would willingly have done. It is a great thing that even a prisoner should not lose altogether his self-respect.

There have been some curious narratives which have been repeated to me by friends, but the accuracy of which I have not been able to verify. One night a dear old lady was going to bed in a remote chamber in a big house when she accidentally perceived a man hidden under the bedstead. She knelt down by the bedside and repeated aloud the beautiful collect of the

evening prayer of the Church of England. She then blew out her candle, and quietly got into bed. Presently a voice sounded underneath the bed telling her not to be afraid, and that he would do her no harm. The burglar then came out, and said that this was his first offence, and that he had been driven to it by poverty. He added that the words of the collect had recalled to him the time when he was still innocent, and that if she would only forgive him, he would go away quietly, and never offend against the law again. The story goes on to say that the man was truly repentant, and that the good lady saw him earning an honest living.

I have some reason to believe that this story is really authentic. I am by no means equally sure of a similar story which comes to us from America.

There an amiable spinster calmly watched a housebreaker make a felonious entry into her apartment. "My poor, dear man," she exclaimed, "I am sure you must have been in very dreadful distress before you could think of doing such a very wicked thing as breaking into a house. I am afraid your wife and children must be starving. Sit down and tell me all about it." The repentant burglar immediately burst into a flood of tears. "You must have some bread-and-cheese and beer at once," said the lady, "before we talk anything more about it." How this supper was extemporised is not stated in the narrative. I should like this story to be true, but I am afraid that it is so good as to be good for nothing.

But what I am glad to say is quite true—that there is a material diminution in this dread province of crime. Of course there are men who are altogether equally as bad as Mr. Bill Sikes, and some of the heroes of Gaboriau's fictions. But for the most part they have been brought up in an atmosphere of wickedness, have never learned a useful trade, and have never had the least notion of honesty. To such persons penal servitude is often a most salutary education. The convict-prisons themselves are the healthiest places in the country; a man is taught a good trade during his confinement, and is dismissed with a gratuity in his pocket. The stories of his being hunted down by the police seem to be greatly exaggerated, and if he would only report himself faithfully in the proper quarter, he will receive help rather than interference. Of course there are many men who, with fatal celerity,

recur to the old crimes, and find their way back to the old quarters. On the other hand, there is probably a number of burglars who are leading an honest life, and have become deserving members of the community. It is a most satisfactory fact, as shown in the Government statistics of crime, that as the population of the country increases the number of burglaries and many other offences steadily diminishes.

MY DREAM-LOVE.

THROUGH the sweet early morning doth she come,
When, dim with dew, and tremulous with sleep,
The scented flowers give out their sweetest sighs;
When nature wakes, and standing peaceful, dumb,
Upon the hill-top, knows not if to weep,
Or smile upon us from the changeful skies.

Sweet dream-love that I never see when day
Drives all our finer thoughts from earth in haste,
Lest they should be entangled by the world,
I would not have thee 'mid this misery stay,
I would not have thee of my life's cup taste,
Nor would I that thy sweets were all unfurled.

Thou art mine own, when night's worst hours have
fled,

And faint with fighting phantoms do I lie,
Waiting for that the dawn shall truly bring—
Thy sweet calm eyes that tears may never shed,
Thy pretty hands that touch me silently,

Thine arms that fold me like some angel's wing!
What does it matter that thou canst not tell
Of all thou know'st, nor whisper of thy bliss,
Or kiss me on the lips that speak thy praise?
Words—sweetest words could only break the spell;
Thou canst not now betray me with a kiss,
So leaving me in sorrow all thy days.

Thou art my own; mine only; none can share,
Thy touch, thy presence, none may hear thy voice,
Nor twine thine hair, nor press thy small white
hand.

'Tis but to me thou art so wondrous fair,
'Tis but my heart that thou dost bid rejoice,
'Tis but beside me thou canst take thy stand.

I will be true to thee, mine own, my dream;
With thee once more I tread the ways of old,
And wander at the dawning, mid the hills.
For after all, our lives are what they seem,
'Tis fancy's wand that turns their grey to gold.
So real art thou, that all my dream hours fills.

ANNE BERGUNION, THE BLIND WOMAN'S FRIEND.

How much is done in this world by personal effort, by the strong man or strong woman in the right place! Carlyle may well be forgiven for a good deal of the pettiness that comes out in the *Life and Letters*, because he preached so well on that often-forgotten text.

Sometimes, in spite of Carlyle, I begin to doubt its truth; and then, when a wicked whisper suggests

That the individual withers and the world is more
and more,
that one human being is for the most part

powerless in this age of big cities, and monster companies, and huge demonstrations, I think of John Pound, cobbler, of Bradford, in Yorkshire, the founder of ragged schools. That is, I used to do so until I read M. Maxime du Camp's account of Anne Bergunion and her work. Since then I have transferred my allegiance to her, feeling that hers was a still more uphill task than that which the Bradford cobbler set himself.

Anne was born in Paris in 1804, the sickly daughter of a small tradesman. In England she would nowadays have become one of those female Ritualists who are always egging their parson on to offend the steady old stagers, or she would have been a "Latter Day Saint," or one of Mr. Besant's "Seventh Day Independents"—anything where there was plenty to do among the poor, combined with unlimited "means of grace" and an absence of the rowdiness which frightens off minds like hers from the Salvation Army. In France a few years earlier she would have had, like many other good people, to worship by stealth, for the penal laws of a Republic which tolerated everything except Christianity, had closed the churches and made it a crime to hear as well as to say mass. As it was, she was free to go to as many "functions" as she pleased, and under an Emperor whose aim it was to stand well with the clergy, the sensitive, impressionable little girl found plenty of "functions" to go to. Then came the Restoration, and monks and nuns had it all their own way; and Anne, who had been sipping at the sweets of a cloistered life, joining in processions, delighting in matins and primes and litanies, thought she had a vocation, and, being then sixteen years old, began, strongly against her parents' wishes, her novitiate at the Mère de Dieu Convent at Versailles. At the end of eight months she was called home by the total break-up of her mother's health, and from this time till she was eight-and-twenty she was as devoted a nurse as one who was herself little better than a confirmed invalid could be. Her own health, always weak, several times gave way so entirely that she was thought to be in a dying state, and actually received extreme unction. This did not prevent her from accepting a dying brother's legacy—a little doubly-orphaned girl of three years old, her care of whom gave her mind the turn which by-and-by made her so useful. Meanwhile, at home, business was not thriving; the

father was a Micawber for whom nothing turned up; and Anne, dividing her days between nursing her mother and training her niece, sat up stitching the greater part of the night to earn enough to keep the household together.

In 1837 a lady who knew Anne's worth was founding a home for young girls, and said to her: "Will you be manager?" "I'll try," replied Anne, and she succeeded; such firmness and tact and power of influencing girls through their affections were centred in that wretchedly feeble frame. She developed, too, what it is the fashion to call "a power of organisation," and before long her twelve girls were in full work for one of the best ladies' ready-made linen shops in Paris.

But, as I said, Anne had that fondness for special services and special rules and dress for which Rome offers so much scope and Protestantism so little. This, which after all is human nature, is at the bottom of all that playing at soldiers which General Booth's followers have made an essential of true religion. If there were in England plenty of sisterhoods there would not be any room for "Hallelujah Lassies;" and that would be a great gain. We think the sisterhood system a tyranny, forgetting that it is a self-imposed rule that these daughters of the Roman obedience lay upon themselves. They are free to alter it if they like. Just as from Little Bethel, by a sort of religious gemmation, there often breaks away a yet littler Bethel, so from one Roman community there often grows out another, held together by a more or less modified rule.

Still, it is a little startling to find that after seven years' successful work Anne, set free by the death of her parents, handed her girls over to a trusty friend, and went into the Convent of the Sacred Heart. Here she might have stayed all her life, but for her health. In vain they gave her dispensations, allowing her meat, and what not, even on Good Friday. She got worse and worse, and at last her brothers persuaded her to come back to the home in what was then the Rue des Postes. Here she met with Dr. Ratier, physician to the College Rollin, and parish doctor (as we should say) to the Bureau de Bienfaisance of the Twelfth Arrondissement—one of the poorest in Paris, out by the Observatory. The good doctor was an enthusiast about teaching the blind. Every day he used to gather some dozen little blind boys and

girls in his consulting-room, and give them, not only a good meal, but such teaching as they, too young or too dull to be received into the Institut des Jeunes Aveugles, were able to take in. "Now, Annette," he would say to Mdlle. Bergunion, "why do not you take in a few blind girls to work with the rest of your flock?" And while she was deliberating, the Secretary of the Paris Indigent Blind Society joined in urging her to the work. "The Institut, you see, takes them at six, and turns them out at eighteen; and what are the poor things to do then, thrown, many of them, literally on the streets? We try all we can to find them homes, but we cannot deal with all; and there are scores who live haphazard, in wretchedness, if not in sin, with nothing before them but a possible admission into the Quinze-Vingts, if they live to be forty."

Before Anne had seen her way to do what was wanted, the secretary actually sent her two girls, whom she was to feed and teach for three hundred francs a year each; and, as she did not care to shut her doors in their faces, what was to be thenceforth her life's work, and was destined to outlive her, was thus begun.

It was rather hard on Anne to send her two "incorrigibles" for her first attempt. The pair of blind girls refused point-blank to do anything in the way of work. They were sent there to be waited on, and waited on they would be, by Mother Anne, and by no one else. They made fun of the prayers, and when a priest was set to scold them, they went off humming an opera air. This was a bad example for Anne's girls, now increased in number to thirty-five; but, instead of turning the rebels away, she determined to conquer them by kindness, treating them like grown babies, and yet without wounding their morbid sensitiveness. Her good-humour must have been as great as her tact not to be wearied in such a seemingly hopeless task; but she did win them over so thoroughly that she was able to set them to teach some of Dr. Ratier's little ones. The secretary was determined not to let her rest. He soon handed over to her six more blind girls, three of whom had been sent back to the institute as incorrigible. Their hearts, too, she won, and before long she had some of them working in the kitchen, others house-cleaning, others combing and dressing the babes who belonged to some of the girls in the home. Another she actually ventured to send out on errands, and one

turned out bright enough to be such a wonderful sewing-mistress that, while sitting among a group of stitchers, she was able, by her acute sense of hearing, to detect when a stitch was too long or too short.

But Anne was not satisfied. Hers was a lay work, under the direction (as far as she was directed at all) of laymen, like the Indigent Blind Secretary and Dr. Ratier. Her dream had always been to found an order; and, reading in the life of Mdlle. de Lamourous, the foundress of that House of Mercy at Bordeaux, which has now four daughter-houses in other French towns, that "with the promise of a week's work, three rooms, and a crown-piece in one's pocket, one can found a communauté," she, smiling, but in thorough earnest, proposed to her girls to put themselves under a "rule." They would form a body of sisters—some blind, some seeing, and they would manage the school and workshop attached to the home, which should still, as heretofore, take in blind people of all ages, and keep them all their lives, if they liked to stay.

Good Dr. Ratier entered warmly into her plans. He felt that one who had shown so much self-sacrifice deserved to have her way in trifles, and he got the vicar-general of the diocese to interest good Archbishop Sibour in the matter. His Grace paid her and her girls a visit, and allowed them a special dress, and thenceforth Anne became "mother-superior," and the dozen girls (seven of them blind) who felt a call and stayed with her were styled the Sisters of St. Paul.

How were they to get a chaplain? They were too poor to pay one; and so they had to put up with anyone who would come twice a week to hear confessions and say mass. That was by no means Anne's ideal; she liked to live in an atmosphere of devotion, and so she was delighted when a man of private means, the Abbé Juge, lately returned from Rome, volunteered for the work. "I won't take a sou," said he. "If you find you can spare anything for a chaplain, let it go, after dressing up your chapel a little better, to pay for one more blind girl." They had long outgrown the house in the Rue des Postes, and had moved to Vaugirard; but their new home, besides being too small, was damp. "You will live much more cheaply in the country," said their chaplain, "and it will be far healthier for you all." So he found them an old chateau of Henry the Fourth, at Bourg la Reine, and

paid for it almost wholly out of his own pocket. The grounds were beautiful, but the house small and inconvenient, and the good abbé had left one thing out in his reckoning. When you live on alms, you must live within easy reach of the almsgivers. This would not tell so much in England; but in France, where they do not spend much in advertising, but prefer to make a collection, or house-to-house gathering, it threatened to be fatal. There was nothing for it but to come back to Paris, and, after a world of trouble in finding anything cheap, and any house-owner who would agree to be paid by instalments with no security beyond the word of the sisterhood, at last they got a building belonging to the Maria Theresa Infirmary, founded by Madame de Châteaubriand in the early days of the Restoration. Here there was a good deal of building to be done; but the result was a pleasant, suitable home amid cedars grown from seeds which the author of the *Génie du Christianisme* had brought from Lebanon. Mother Anne and her indefatigable abbé had to spend many weary months between Paris and Bourg la Reine; but at last, towards the end of 1858, the whole communauté was settled into the home which still holds it.

And so Anne saw her dream fulfilled. She had founded a sisterhood, and grafted upon it a blind asylum, and had arranged that the asylum should be the chief feeder of the sisterhood. But for her, these blind sisters who look (and are) so full of loving intelligence, must, humanly speaking, have fallen into the clutches of some wretch who would have lived on what they got by begging or doing worse.

And yet, we are told, there was nothing in Anne's appearance like that of the ideal saint. She was a plain, heavy-looking woman, with purpy cheeks, and anæmia stamped on her whole appearance, and nothing attractive about her except a look of indescribable sweetness in her blue eyes.

She was not spared to do much more than give her work a fair start. In the spring of 1863 she broke down, and in spite of change of air, her dry cough showed that there was fatal mischief. Gathering the sisterhood round her, she told them, day by day and week by week, how to act when she was gone, whom to choose as her successor, whom to put into subordinate posts. She could not lie down, the asthma was too bad; at last, in September, the end came. But the sisters were ready for it, and they are going on still, though the

war of 1870 tried them greatly, and the Commune yet more.

As soon as Paris was besieged they packed themselves as close as possible, and made part of their house into an infirmary for sixty-three soldiers. They ran up the Geneva Cross; but the Prussians were bent on destroying the dome of the Panthéon, and the home of the Sisters of St. Paul, being in the line of fire, got three shells through its roof.

How the place was kept going through the siege, none of the sisters could understand. Subscriptions, of course, came to an end; a collection was no use when people were living on rats and sawdust-bread. Happily the cellars of the home were full of potatoes, and they had a good store of dried vegetables. No sooner was the siege over than the Commune began. The sisters kept on their infirmary as a protection; but at last, when May was more than half gone by, the Communards came in, crying, "Come, you nuns, clear out!" And, despite the prayers of the wounded soldiers and the tears of the school-children, they had to go. The women of the neighbourhood, who knew how good they were, called the Communards all the names that an angry Frenchwoman can use, and took the sisters to their own homes. The Abbé Juge, being "a parson, only fit to be set up against a wall and fired at," was put in prison. Had he been locked up in the fourth section, he would have shared the fate of the Archbishop, the Abbé Deguerry, and the rest; but he was put into the third section, where the prisoners, encouraged by their warders, showed fight, and held out till the Versailles came in. Before the end of May the sisters came back to find their house gutted, but their beloved chaplain safe. The Prefect of the Seine thought that housing and training little blind girls was a work deserving State help; so they got four thousand francs that year, and received a gradually lessening sum up to 1876, when it was finally withdrawn.

And what sort of girls are those for whom Anne Bergunion gave up her life? Those who want to know something about them should read M. du Camp's paper in this year's *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April 1st. However much they may know of English blind-asylums, they will learn a great deal from what he says about the ways of blind people. What are their dreams like? It seems the simplest thing in the world when one comes to think of

it; and yet, if you were asked, you would hardly answer off-hand that the dreams of one born blind must needs be dark, colourless—all the life that is in them being in the way of noise and touch. With those, on the other hand, who have lost their sight, the dream-memory grows dimmer and dimmer, forming, while it is fresh, a sort of double life which a blind poetess, Berthe de Calonne, who, as a girl, saw the Swiss lakes, very prettily describes.

I said that many of those described by M. du Camp are affected with nervous disorders, and no wonder, for many come of a half-mad stock. Among Anne's girls was one poor creature whose mother caught her as she came back from a visit to her grandmother, and, sharpening a knife, deliberately put out her eyes. She would have cut her throat but for the neighbours, whom the child's cries attracted just in time. Dr. Dupin got her sent to the institute; but, at eighteen, she had to leave, and, finding it impossible to get a livelihood in her own village, she came to the sisterhood. M. du Camp found two other girls who had lost their eyes in a most remarkable way; pet birds had, in an instant, pecked at them. Their case touched him, for, when a child, he was very nearly blinded by a pet partridge.

The great value of the sisterhood is that the blind sisters, knowing what blindness is, and how it inverts the usual order of thought, have been able to train the novices so successfully, that almost everyone about the place seems to have two sets of faculties—those which are peculiar to the blind, and those which belong to the seeing. One knows how wonderfully the former are developed; it is as if they saw with their foreheads, knowing at once whether the blinds are down or not, whether there is a table in the middle of a room, and so forth, by the sensation of fulness or otherwise, which they receive on coming into it. This sense is in the forehead, or rather below the eyebrows; for if you bind a handkerchief across a blind man's eyes he is helpless; you may see blind children "blindfolded" and playing blind-man's buff with as much spirit as if they had their eyesight. Of course the sense of touch is also greatly intensified; the children never make a mistake in naming whom they catch. That is why everything about these Sisters of St. Paul, their own dress included, is so scrupulously clean. We usually couple blindness with dirt, but a well-trained blind person cannot bear a

particle of dust on dress or person; it is a real annoyance to the nerves which nature, by way of partial compensation, has refined to such a pitch of sensitiveness.

And what are all these blind girls taught to do? It is knitting—knitting from morning to night; none of the manifold works which are attempted more or less successfully in our blind schools. The blind can be taught to do these, but not so as to compete with those who have their eyesight, thinks M. du Camp. He does not speak of mat and basket making, but he mentions turning; and there, he says, the work of the blind is a total failure. They can be taught to use the lathe, but what they make is so badly made, that nobody would buy it except as a curiosity. Knitting seems to come naturally to blind fingers. Sewing is too hard; embroidery cannot be managed at all; and so Mother Anne's girls knit—and, like knitters in England, get very poor prices for their work; three-halfpence for a pair of children's "booties," which have to be finished off and the buttons sewn on by someone who can see. They certainly do not live by their work, and yet, small as is the pay they get, the Paris needlewomen grumble. We hear the same thing in England—prison-work brings down prices. During the Commune all prison-work was stopped (of course, the convents being suppressed, their competition was not to be feared); but, before long, work had to be given out in the women's prisons—there was no other way of keeping them quiet.

If the pay were better, the diet would be more generous, for that is M. du Camp's only grievance. These self-denying sisters feed their poor pupils very well, but they rather starve themselves. "Blindness is so often a sign of scrofulous temperament that something better is needed than the thin beer which is brewed on the premises." M. du Camp is clearly not an abstainer; he believes in the virtues of that wine which so many of his countrymen are abandoning for baser liquors. Of course, there is plenty of writing in the Home. The strangest thing in the world is to see a blind man or woman reading with one hand, and with the other making a copy of what he or she is reading. The sisters have a printing-press, and, besides printing their own class-books, they print M. de la Sizeranne's blind-magazine, the "Louis Braille," which comes out every month, and contains not only practical advice,

but literary, scientific, and musical news. M. de la Sizeranne lost his sight when quite a child, and has, since he grew up, devoted himself as ardently as Mother Anne herself to the welfare of his brothers and sisters in affliction.

The books of the sisterhood are, thinks M. du Camp, too much of one class—the goody-goody. He remarks how delighted a class of the blind children were with the reading of *Robinson Crusoe*, and recommends that something should be done to cultivate the fancy as well as “the soul.”

But, even though they starve themselves, and starve, too, the imaginations of their girls, Anne Bergunion's sisters are doing a wonderful work. The home contains sixty-six blind girls, some of whom pay a little; others are partly paid for by their parishes; the majority are wholly supported by the sisterhood. There are many good works going on in “frivolous Paris,” but none which is so markedly the outcome of one woman's energy as the Home of the Sisters of St. Paul.

WIFE-SELLING.

THE singular belief that a husband was able, with impunity, to part with his wife for a consideration, by public auction, seems to have prevailed, among the lower orders, from a very early period, but how this erroneous impression arose is difficult to say; and it can only be cited as a proof of the ignorance of our lower-class population, an ignorance which is not wholly eliminated at the present day. Strange to say, the perpetrators of this outrage on decency never reflected that they were breaking any law of the land when performing the rough-and-ready divorce; but, on the contrary, imagined that the marriage-tie was lawfully dissolved by this simple process, and that they escaped all its legal obligations.

The custom of selling and purchasing wives in England certainly can claim a very respectable antiquity, and, probably, is based upon the ancient laws of the Anglo-Saxons. If a freeman took away the wife of a freeman, he was to pay his full wergeld, to buy another wife for the injured husband, and deliver her at his home. In the reign of Canute, the law received some modification; no guardian could compel his ward to marry a man she disliked, and the money paid for her was

to be a voluntary gift, and not a compulsory payment. It is not unnatural to suppose that the commodity thus obtained by money was transferable to another for a similar consideration, whenever it may have become useless or disagreeable to its original purchaser. It seems, however, not impossible that the commencement of the custom would be found even in times antecedent, when women, guilty of unfaithfulness, were either put to death or sold as slaves.

An attempt has been made to give a modern origin to the popular belief as to the legality of these transfers; a writer in *Notes and Queries* stating that, after the close of the war in 1815, many soldiers and sailors, on their return, found that their wives had married again—innocently enough, probably, having every reason to believe that their husbands had perished in the battles that were so frequently taking place. How to arrive at a settlement of this awkward situation without having recourse to the tedious and very expensive method of divorce then in vogue, was a difficult problem; so a convenient belief was generally held that to sell a wife in open market was lawful, the first husband being thus free to marry again, and the second marriage standing good, *ipso facto*. It is needless to point out that there was not a shadow of legality in the transaction, but it was, nevertheless, very prevalent all over the country, especially in the Midlands, as the human war-material was mainly supplied thence.

Alas for the ingenious theory of this writer, and the good manners of our countrymen! Wife-selling must be dated back far earlier than 1815. In an old deed, dated 1302, John de Camoys, son and heir to Sir Ralph de Camoys, “delivered, and yielded up, of his own free will, to Sir William de Paynel, his wife, Margaret de Camoys, and likewise gave and granted to the said Sir William all goods and chattels of which the said Margaret was possessed, and consented and granted that the said Margaret should abide and remain with the said Sir William, during his pleasure.” This deed was sought to be legalised by the Parliament of that year, but, the lady not being a consenting party, legal sanction was refused.

We come to another old instance, showing that the notion of a wife being a marketable commodity had survived the test of two hundred and fifty years, and was entertained, to his misfortune, by one

Parson "Chicken," in the reign of Queen Mary. In his diary, Henry Machyn notes, under the year 1553: "The xxiiiij of November, dyd ryd in a cart, Cheken, parson of Sant Nicolas Coldabbay, round about London, for he sold ys wyff to a bowcher." The real name of the cleric was Thomas Snowdel, or Sowdley, nicknamed "Parson Chicken," and he seems to have led but a loose life, for Strype, in his Ecclesiastical Memorials, Volume Three, mentions him as an instance of the depraved clergy of the period, and relates that he had been carted through Cheapside, with every species of indignity, for a breach of the Seventh Commandment. He was instituted to the rectory of St. Nicholas Coleabbey, 25th July, 1547, and to that of St. Mary Mounthaw, 23rd March, 1548; was deprived of both in 1554, but restored again in Elizabeth's reign. We have not far to seek for the reason for the sale of his wife. In Edward the Sixth's reign, Parliament, by two Acts, had allowed priests to marry wives, and great numbers of the clergy had availed themselves of the liberty; but one of the first steps that Queen Mary took in re-establishing the Roman Catholic religion was to turn out of their livings all priests who had taken wives, and to divorce them; and it is apparent that, to retain his benefices, Parson Chicken had recourse to the very questionable method of getting rid of his encumbrance as above stated.*

The custom would have come to a speedy end, and these lines would never have been penned, if the matrimonial sales had oftener proved abortive from the absence of buyers, as indicated in the following old ballad, for the length of which no apology is needed to the reader, as he will find it well worth perusal. It is as follows:

JOHN HOBBS.

A jolly shoemaker, John Hobbs, John Hobbs;

A jolly shoemaker, John Hobbs!

He married Jane Carter,

No damsel look'd smarter;

But he caught a tartar,

John Hobbs, John Hobbs;

Yes, he caught a tartar, John Hobbs.

He tied a rope to her, John Hobbs, John Hobbs;

He tied a rope to her, John Hobbs!

To 'scape from hot water

To Smithfield he brought her;

But nobody bought her,

Jane Hobbs, Jane Hobbs;

They all were afraid of Jane Hobbs.

* It may be here noted that "Parson" was not always the name for a beneficed priest, but was applied sometimes to persons in the minor orders of the Church.

Oh, who'll buy a wife? says Hobbs, John Hobbs;
A sweet, pretty wife, says Hobbs;

But, somehow, they tell us,

The wife-dealing fellows

Were all of them sellers,

John Hobbs, John Hobbs,

And none of them wanted Jane Hobbs.

The rope it was ready, John Hobbs, John Hobbs.

Come, give me the rope, says Hobbs;

I won't stand to wrangle,

Myself I will strangle,

And hang dingle-dangle,

John Hobbs, John Hobbs;

He hung dingle-dangle, John Hobbs.

But down his wife cut him, John Hobbs, John Hobbs;

But down his wife cut him, John Hobbs.

With a few hubble-bubbles

They settled their troubles

Like most married couples,

John Hobbs, John Hobbs.

Oh, happy shoemaker, John Hobbs!

In the search for instances of this reprehensible custom, we must again pass over a considerable number of years, until the middle of the eighteenth century, when the cases were numerous, owing, probably, to there being more opportunities to bring them before the public in the newspapers. We are indebted to The Annual Register for 1773 for the following: "On the 31st of August, 1773, three men and three women went to The Bell Inn, in Edgbaston Street, Birmingham, and made the following entry in the Toll Book, which is kept there: 'Samuel Whitehouse, of the parish of Willenhall, in the county of Stafford, this day sold his wife, Mary Whitehouse, in open market, to Thomas Griffiths, of Birmingham, value one shilling. To take her with all faults.'" Probably this last clause in the contract had a good deal to do with the very low price the lady produced. The account, however, goes on to state that "the parties were all exceedingly well pleased, and the money paid down, as well for the toll as purchase." The amount of toll is not named, otherwise it would have been instructive to have learnt under what head the lady was classed, to assess the amount.

In another case, extracted from the Times of the 30th of March, 1796, the amount of the toll is stated, but the wife-market appears to have been in a very depressed condition, and to have fallen to a very low level at that time; unless, perhaps, she was notoriously a bad investment. "John Lees, steel-burner, sold his wife for the small sum of sixpence to Samuel Hall, fell-monger, both of Sheffield. Lees gave Hall one guinea immediately to have her taken off to Manchester the day following by the

coach. She was delivered up with a halter round her neck, and the clerk of the market received fourpence for toll." Whilst on the subject of tolls in these cases, in an instance of wife-selling which took place near Brighton, it is shown how the assessment is arrived at. A woman was sold publicly by her husband, in 1826, for thirty shillings, upon which sale a toll of one shilling was paid. The matter was taken up by the local bench of magistrates, who summoned the toll-collector to justify his strange conduct in charging toll; when he at once referred them to the market bye-laws: "Any article not enumerated in these bye-laws pays one shilling."

An exceedingly curious arrangement, with regard to wife-barter, occurs in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1764, where it is stated that a man and his wife falling into conversation with a grazier at Parham Fair, in Norfolk, the husband offered him his wife in exchange for an ox, provided he would let him choose one out of his drove. The grazier accepted the proposal, and the wife readily agreed to it. Accordingly, they met the next day, when she was delivered to the grazier, with a new halter round her neck, and the husband received the bullock, which he afterwards sold for six guineas.

Another instance is taken from *The Public Advertiser*, of September 19th, 1768: "On Thursday last a publican in Shore-ditch sold his wife for a ticket in the present lottery, on condition that if the ticket be drawn a blank, he is to have his wife again as soon as the drawing of the lottery is over." In this case, nothing is said about the lady's feelings as to this transfer and retransfer; but it is to be presumed she was complacent.

The Times of July 18th, 1797, gives the following example of the trade in wives: "On Friday, a butcher exposed his wife to sale, in Smithfield Market, near The Ram Inn, with a halter about her neck, and one about her waist, which tied her to a railing, when a hog-driver was the happy purchaser, who gave the husband three guineas and a crown for his departed rib. Pity it is there is no stop put to such depraved conduct in the lower order of people." A few days later, July 22nd, the same paper made the following sarcastic remarks: "By some mistake, or omission, in the report of the Smithfield Market, we have not learned the average price of wives for the last week. The increasing value of the fair sex is esteemed

by several eminent writers, the certain criterion of increasing civilisation. Smithfield has, on this ground, strong pretensions to refined improvement, as the price of wives has risen in that market from half-a-guinea to three guineas and a half." Again, on September 19th, 1797, it says: "An hostler's wife, in the country, lately fetched twenty-five guineas. We hear there is to be a sale of wives soon at Christie's; we have no doubt they will soon go off well."

Of course, we all know that it was a dogma in which nearly every Frenchman believed, that it was the national custom of Englishmen to relieve themselves of their wives at Smithfield by auction, with the orthodox accompaniment of an halter round the neck; and really it is not to be wondered at that the idea took so firm a hold of their minds, seeing the numerous instances which were brought to their notice in past days; not, indeed, that the present era is by any means guiltless in the matter, as will be seen later on.

In a book written by a French visitor, entitled, *Six mois à Londres, en 1816*, and published the following year, is given an account of a visit to Smithfield, to study, by ocular inspection, the national custom. A seller soon presented himself, leading his wife by a cord attached to her neck; and, taking his stand, he began to bawl, "My wife, for fifteen shillings! Who wishes my wife for fifteen shillings!" but all seemed in vain; the four-footed animals around him disappeared, but no one was in need of a wife. The poor man continued his cries, and was becoming despairing when an amateur presented himself, who began to examine the wife, "Comme il avait examiné quelques instans auparavant une jument que je l'avais vu marchander." Being satisfied with the inspection, he offered the price demanded, and the husband having failed to procure a better bid, pocketed the money, and the purchaser gave his arm to the new wife, who was, says the chronicler, about twenty years of age and sufficiently good-looking.

The tables may be fairly turned upon the French, at all events in one instance, for, according to *The Birmingham Journal* of 25th March, 1865, a case of wife-selling occurred in that year at Maratz, near Lille. The price was a fairly good one—a hundred and twenty-six francs, and a deed of sale and bill of exchange for the purchase-money were drawn up by a notary.

Neither buyer nor seller was conscious of any wrong-doing, but the authorities viewed the matter in a different light, and both parties had to answer for their conduct before the "Tribunal Correctionnel."

Probably many other instances might be found of the custom in France, but there is not the publicity given to them by the press as in this country. It is some consolation, however, though a poor one, to find that we do not possess the monopoly of the public market for wives.

In a great many cases the affair was prearranged between the buyer, the seller, and the sold, who all seem to have quieted their consciences by going through the ceremony of a mock auction; but, in other instances, the wives found chance purchasers, as the following paragraph from *The Doncaster Gazette* of March 25th, 1803, will show :

"A fellow sold his wife, as a cow, in Sheffield market-place a few days ago. The lady was put into the hands of a butcher, who held her by a halter, fastened round her waist. 'What do you ask for your cow?' said a bystander. 'A guinea,' replied the husband. 'Done!' cried the other, and immediately led away his bargain. We understand that the purchaser and his 'cow' live very happily together."

From another cutting, from the same newspaper of February 3rd, 1815, the populace had something to say to the affair, and all did not "go merry as a marriage-bell." "On Wednesday, a most disgraceful scene took place in Pontefract. A fellow of the name of Smith—what a blessed anonymity this name confers!—brought his wife from Ferrybridge, and had her put up for sale by auction at the market-cross, at the small sum of twelve pence; but, after some liberal advances, she was knocked down at eleven shillings. On the purchaser leading away his bargain in a halter, they were pelted by the populace with snow and mud"; but the "fons et origo mali," the husband, seems to have been out of this poetic justice, more's the pity!

There is one case recorded by *The Farmer's Journal*, May 5th, 1810, in which it is pleasurable to find that the biter got bit, in a way almost dramatic. The scene was laid in a village in Cumberland, where a young man, who was not on good terms with his wife, resolved to dispose of her by auction; and the lady, seemingly, acquiesced in the arrangement; but her

feminine quickness of wit had prepared a pit for her lord. Not being able to find a purchaser in the place where they resided, she persuaded him to proceed to Newcastle for that purpose. Accordingly they set out, and this modern Delilah laid her plan so well that, immediately on his arrival, a press-gang conveyed him on board a frigate preparing for a long cruise.

But the law sometimes stepped in to vindicate itself, and was not always allowed to remain in abeyance, for the punishment of this crime of wife-selling, and it is satisfactory to read that at the West Riding sessions, June 28th, 1837, one Joshua Jackson, convicted of selling his wife, was imprisoned for one month, with hard labour, as a misdemeanant. As a rule, however, the offence was winked at, and treated as a joke, especially in the rural districts; the offender being let off, usually, with only a reprimand; and it is no wonder, therefore, that the custom prevailed to a considerable extent, when punished so leniently.

The value of a wife seems to have been mostly held in light esteem, for one was sold at Gloucester market, by auction, in 1841, for half-a-crown, and it is recorded that the purchaser frequently congratulated himself on his "bargain." Even in a commercial sense he could well afford to be jubilant, for the "lot" was attired in a new white bonnet and a black gown, the usual ornament in the way of a halter being included, which was not bad consideration for his money, let alone the lady's charms.

In the year 1859, another instance of this moral degradation was furnished by the town of Dudley, where hundreds of people were assembled in Hall Street one evening, to attend a wife sale. The first bid was three-halfpence, and ultimately reached sixpence. Her husband, in his ignorance, thought that after the ceremony had been repeated three times, she actually had no claim upon him. One wonders whether there were any magistrates in Dudley, and also if there was such a functionary as a policeman among the crowd who followed shouting after the vendor. But "black country" manners and customs are not to be judged by the standard happily existing in other parts of the kindom.

The Annual Register for 1832 gave an account of a singular wife sale. Joseph Thomson, a farmer, after a brief married

life of three years, finding that the union was irksome, agreed with his wife to separate. Acting upon the prevalent notion that by putting his spouse up to auction, and so parting with her, the marriage-bonds were legally unloosed, he came to Carlisle with her, and by the bellman announced the sale. At noon the auction commenced in the presence of a large number of persons; the wife, a spruce, lively damsel of about two-and-twenty years of age, being placed on a large oak chair, with a halter of straw round her neck. Thomson then spoke as follows: "Gentlemen, I have to offer to your notice my wife, Mary Anne Thomson, otherwise Williams, whom I mean to sell to the highest and fairest bidder. Gentlemen, it is her wish, as well as mine, to part for ever. She has been to me only a born serpent. I took her for my comfort and the good of my home, but she became my tormentor, a domestic curse, a night invasion, and a daily devil. Gentlemen, I speak truth from my heart when I say may God deliver us from troublesome wives and frolicsome women! Avoid them as you would a mad dog, a roaring lion, a loaded pistol, cholera morbus, Mount Etna, or any other pestilential thing in Nature. Now, I have shown you the dark side of my wife, and told you of her faults and failings; I will introduce the bright and sunny side of her, and explain her qualifications and goodness. She can read novels and milk cows; she can laugh and weep with the same ease that you could take a glass of ale when thirsty. She can make butter, and scold the maid; she can sing Moore's melodies, and plait her frills and caps; she cannot make rum, gin, or whisky, but she is a good judge of the quality from long experience in tasting them. I therefore offer her with all her perfections and imperfections for the sum of fifty shillings." This man must have been a humourist, and if he had turned his attention to the profession of auctioneer, would have run the famous George Robins pretty hard. The sequel of the story is that after waiting about an hour, Thomson knocked down the "lot" to one Henry Mears, for twenty shillings and a Newfoundland dog, and the parties separated, being mutually pleased with their bargain.

Ah, but the reader will say, these cases occurred years ago, when men's manners were much coarser than now! Surely education and the great social machinery which has been at work so long to elevate the people's tastes, must have eradicated

such monstrous breaches of decorum? Would that such a flattering idea could be borne out by stern facts! A few instances out of many which have occurred in recent times will dispel the notion that men are very much different now to what their fathers were.

A few years ago the practice certainly was not dead in Lancashire. During the second week of November, 1870, a person residing in Bury sold his wife for eight shillings to her supposed paramour, who led her away by the halter to his house immediately after the sale. The inhabitants, however, seemed to have retained some little idea of decency, and did not take the matter altogether apathetically, for they burnt in effigy both the buyer and the person sold. It was said that the woman was nothing loth to change masters; in fact, the women concerned in these unnatural transactions seldom seem to have raised any objections. One case is recorded in The Annual Register for 1807, where the lady was rebellious, and it is also remarkable for the large sum that was bid for her—the highest amount that a wife is stated to have fetched. An innkeeper, at Grassington, agreed to dispose of his spouse to a gentleman upon payment of one hundred guineas, the latter depositing one guinea, as "hand-money" on the bargain. When, however, the buyer went the next day to pay the remainder of the amount, and to bring home his purchase, the fair dame proved obstreperous and flatly refused delivery of herself, and the disappointed man went wifeless home again—a sadder if not a wiser being, for the innkeeper declined to return the earnest-money.

In 1881 a wife was sold at Sheffield for the paltry consideration of a quart of beer, and in 1862 a similar purchase was made at Selby market-cross, at the cost of only one-half that amount, merely a pint of beer—which was thought sufficient for a man's helpmate!

The tariff would seem to be on a downward-sliding scale as we advance in the century, for a case occurs, recorded by the South Wales Daily News, May 2nd, 1832, at Alfreton, where a woman was sold by her husband for a still lower valuation, in a public-house. The *modus operandi* had the charm of simplicity: in a room full of men, he offered to sell her for a glass of ale, and the offer being accepted by a young man, she readily agreed, took off her wedding-ring, and from that time

considered herself the property of the purchaser.

Another case, in the autumn of the same year, given in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, October 20th, illustrates the modern valuation of a man's partner in life; this time the sister is responsible for the occurrence. At Belfast, George Drennan was charged with having assaulted his wife and a man named O'Neill. The woman was in hospital, and O'Neill did not appear. The extraordinary feature in the case was that the prisoner had actually sold his wife to O'Neill for one penny and a dinner. There was a certain amount of formality about the transaction, a document being drawn up between the accused, on the one part, and O'Neill on the other, which stated that, for the considerations mentioned, he had agreed to assign and transfer to one Patrick O'Neill, all his right, title, and estate in his lawfully wedded wife. The sum of one penny and a dinner seem, indeed, but a sorry exchange for a living woman!

These few instances are enough to afford reflection to the student of nineteenth century morals and civilisation, and return but an unsatisfactory answer to the query: "Are we so very much better than our fathers after all?"

LEFT OUTSIDE.

A STORY OF KENSINGTON GARDENS.

CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG lady and a little girl were sitting on a bench in Kensington Gardens. It was one of those perfect days in early June, when we Londoners are wont to say with enthusiasm, "How lovely it must be in the country!" but when our inner consciousness tells us at the same time that, while it is so lovely in town, we have no wish to go to the country, or anywhere else. The May was over, of course, and so were the horse-chestnuts and the rhododendrons, save for an occasional coronet of deep crimson or palest pink crowning some spray among the dark-green masses of the last-named shrubs; but to make amends for this, there was such a wealth of verdure there, of still un sullied emerald grass beneath, and fluttering, tender, vivid green above, here massed together in richly solid luxuriance, there tossed high in the air like a fairy plume, there again swaying softly downwards in long, feathery lines, whose

shifting shadows swept the grass beneath, that one scarcely missed the spring blossoms, and was content for the most part to think that a world made up of such green and blue, such trees and grass, such turquoise sky and sapphire water could not have anything very serious wanting to it. For the rest, the people scattered here and there along the walks, and more especially the swarms of children dotted about everywhere in their bright summer garments, and encircling the Round Pond like a wreath of living flowers, quite made up the complement of warm colouring desirable under a sunshine as cloudless and glowing as that of an Italian sky.

Perhaps there was a little too much of sunshine and colour altogether where the young lady was sitting; for though the bench itself was under the shade of a broad-spreading chestnut, it faced the dancing, sparkling circle of water about which the children were gathered, with the wide ring of bare, sun-scorched ground around it, and the red roof of Kensington Palace winking in the sunshine beyond; but the smaller maiden wished to see the water and the ducks, and therefore it was necessary for the elder one, not only to keep near them, but to turn her face in that direction, lest her little charge should run off to the water, or get into other mischief without her guardian's knowledge.

It was a very young face, not telling at all that it had seen one-and-twenty summers already; but that was owing to the almost infantile softness and purity of its outlines, the slightly parted lips, and innocent and limpid eyes. It was grave enough for thirty—wearing, indeed, that settled gravity which looks so pathetic on a young face—and was not by any means beautiful, the eyes being simply grey, with no hint of blue in them; the nose too short and straight; the hair a dull light brown, drawn plainly back with no attempt at fringe; and the complexion so devoid of colour as to give you the impression of a plant which has been reared altogether in the dark. Yet it must have known sunshine somewhere or at some time of its budding, for if she laughed—which was very rarely—or if anything startled her, there came into her cheeks such a sudden rush of exquisite rose-colour as made her for the moment almost beautiful; but it was gone again almost as suddenly; and then she looked once more a plain, pasty-faced girl, just the sort of "young person" to be taking care of the white-frocked,

black-stockinged little girl with the big sailor-hat, the crinkly mane of very bright red hair, and the immaculate white silk gloves, who was no sooner seated on the bench beside her than she wriggled off it again, and rushed away, flinging a bright-coloured ball before her with shrill shrieks of laughter.

Her favourite game seemed to be to throw it into a clump of shrubs at a little distance, and then call out in her shrill child's voice :

"My ball's gone among the bushes, Miss Lane. Please get it out."

On which the young lady (for the title "Miss" conceded her that dignity, though there was nothing in her cheap, simply-made gown of grey gingham, her plain black jacket and bonnet, and thread gloves to show that she was the child's governess, and not her nurse) got up obediently, and going to the bushes, poked and burrowed among them with her umbrella till she got the ball out.

This had already occurred six times. Now the cry was raised again, and she was just about to rise as usual, when another voice, with a certain sharpness of intonation in it which gave it a peculiar though not unpleasant accent, exclaimed :

"I do declare that child's real ugly ! Why in wonder do you mind her ?"

Susan Lane turned round with a start sudden enough to bring the pretty rush of colour afore-mentioned into her face. Perhaps it was that which took the speaker's fancy. She was seated on the other side of the bench—a girl about Susie's age, and also wearing a grey gown, but such a girl and such a gown as seemed to be removed from Susie by a whole antipodes of quality and circumstances. She had a very pretty face—wanting, certainly, in the purely oval shape and soft outlines of the young governess's, but all the more piquante and brilliant by comparison, with a delicate, sharply-cut little nose; a rosy Cupid's mouth; a little pointed chin, so determined to come forward into the world that, for its sake alone, no one could have dared to overlook the owner; eyes more blue than grey; hair more golden than fair, drawn up high on the neck behind, and curled in an elaborate fringe in front; and a complexion so dazzlingly pure in its pale roses and lilies as not at all to need the slight touch of powder with which she had thought proper to adorn it. Her gown, too, though grey, as I have said, like

the other's, was such a one as no English fingers ever made or conceived—a cobweb-coloured cambric, trimmed with ruffles of grey lace, and looped back from the front with knots of satin ribbon over a petticoat of flowered salmon-coloured sateen. The bodice was made like a little jacket, ruffled round with lace, and opening over a waistcoat of the flowered sateen, with sleeves to the elbow, and terminating in long grey kid-gloves; on her head she wore a broad, fantastically-shaped hat of grey straw, adorned with salmon-coloured plumes; and on her feet, which were scarcely bigger than a child's, a pair of marvellous boots, with little embroidered tabs over stockings of salmon-coloured silk, and with heels so high and pointed that the marvel was that she should be able to balance herself on them for a moment. I am afraid that those boots alone would have condemned her among nine out of ten even of the male members of London society, and would have prompted any well-brought-up young woman, with even a grain of knowledge of this wicked world, to rise from the bench and withdraw herself as speedily as might be from the siren possessing them.

But in the first place Susan Lane, reared in a quiet country village, and transplanted thence to the dullest of London school-rooms, had even less knowledge of the world about her than her shrill little taskmaster with the ball; and in the second, those innocent grey eyes of hers, with their wide-open, liquid glance, were sufficiently short-sighted not to take in the boots at all, and only received an impression of a bright, lovely face, and a costume so gorgeous, and yet so unlike anything that the most gorgeously-appointed English girl is in the habit of wearing at eleven o'clock in the morning, that she instinctively connected it with the peculiar accent of the speaker, and set her down as "foreign;" in which innocence—not for the first time—hit the mark more truly than wisdom would have done.

"I—I beg your pardon! Were you speaking to me?" she said, with the little nervous smile of a very shy person. The other girl smiled too, not shyly, but good-humouredly.

"Well, I was. I said I wondered you let that child tease you so. That is the seventh time she has done the same thing. You must be real good to stand it. I should have been mad with her long ago."

"Oh, she is not bad enough for that," said Susie, smiling a little more easily because of the exaggerated phrase. "Children are always rather troublesome, you know, and—and I am only here to amuse and take care of her."

"Well, I should quit," said the gaily-dressed girl briskly. "I am not fond of children, and I would rather help, if I had to, with anything else than nurse work. I guess you are not so strong as I am, either. You don't look it."

"Thank you, I am quite strong, and—and I am not little Flo's nurse. I am her governess," Susan said, with just sufficient touch of dignity to bring a faint shade of colour to her soft cheeks. She had not much to be dignified about, poor little girl! Yet to be taken for a servant—though, indeed, how much better off was she?—hurt and mortified her. She was startled, however, to see the other's vivid blush and quickly outstretched hand.

"Well, I do beg your pardon," she said cordially. "I hadn't the least thought of offending you, though I did take you for the nurse-girl, and that is the truth. You see I knew you were a real lady the moment I heard you speak, and that was why I felt so bad for you. I should not have cared else, but I know ladies do go out to help, and——"

"I know they do," said Susie. It was quite impossible for her not to feel cordially towards this warm-hearted girl—she who got so little kindness from anyone. Why, it was the most delightfully rare experience even to feel the clasp of those slender, grey-gloved fingers; and then the stranger's quick, impetuous speech, and odd verbal lapses, unusual, to say the least, in young ladies of the upper ten, as Susan imagined them, gave the latter a feeling of being quite old by comparison, and took away some of that sense of mental and cultural inferiority which generally oppressed her in the presence of others. There was a pathetic glistening in those short-sighted grey eyes of hers as she surrendered her soft, shapely, bare hand, with its needle-pricked fore-finger (for she had taken off her gloves when she sat down) to the other girl's kindly pressure, and added:

"I am not at all offended, and indeed, when I said I was a governess, I think—that is, I meant that I was engaged as one; but I dare say I should only be called a lady-help in some houses; for though little

Flo has a nurse as well, there are four other children, and I do nearly everything for her—make her clothes and mend them, and see to her hair and—and all that."

Poor Susan was blushing terribly. It seemed to her now that she had made herself supremely ridiculous by her previous boast; but all the same the necessity for entire honesty at all costs was too imperious within her to be silenced, and at this moment little Flo herself interrupted the discourse.

"Miss Lane," she said, coming closer and lifting a small, pale, freckled face, on which righteous indignation was written in a hundred little vertical lines, to her teacher, "I said my ball was in those bushes, and you won't get it for me."

"I am going to get it, Flo," said Susan, "but I was speaking to this lady, and—and you should try to keep it out of the bushes, dear."

Flo turned round instantly, and stared hard at the lady. She did not speak for a moment, during which her small, sharp eyes were taking in every detail of the latter's magnificence, and then delivered herself of the abruptly childish speech:

"You're not a friend of Miss Lane's, I know. Are you one of my mamma's visitors?"

"I am not," said the young lady briskly, "and what's more I don't want to be. I shouldn't care for visiting any house that had in it such a downright ugly little girl as you."

"Oh, don't, pray!" broke from Susan in a tone of distress as real as if the epithet had been applied to her; "it—it isn't kind, and indeed I think—I mean many people think—that she is quite—not that it matters though, Flo," turning to the child with sudden remembrance of what it was right to say on such occasions, "for people like little girls because they're good, not because they're pretty. That doesn't matter at all, really; but——"

The other girl burst out laughing.

"Do tell!" she exclaimed; "if I'm not offending you again, and I didn't mean that sort of 'ugly' at all. I forgot how you English use the word. When we say 'ugly,' we mean ugly-mannered and ugly-tempered; and a child might have the cunningest little face in creation, and I wouldn't care a butternut for her if she was mean enough to make her teacher go

burrowing under those bushes half-a-dozen times in a minute, and never even say, "Thank you."

"I shall tell my mamma if you say I'm mean and ugly," said Flo, whose vanity had a vindictive sentiment in it. "And she says Miss Lane is to play with me. You know you are to," she added, frowning on Susie, who was, however, given no time to answer.

"And I know," put in her pretty champion, "that if you tease teacher, and tell tales, I sha'n't feel like giving you any candies. Say now," holding up a tiny velvet bag, "who's going to sit still, like a good child, and have a lovely time eating the nice things I've got here, while poor teacher gets a rest?"

Flo hastened to declare that she was the child in question, the greed of seven-years-old proving too much for the more precocious pangs of wounded pride; and though Susie remonstrated very honestly, her opposition received no attention, the stranger only laughing as she emptied a handful of bonbons into Flo's lap, and observed:

"I guess they won't hurt her. Calton—that's my brother—says they're the best sort, real wholesome; and he buys them for me himself at Duclos's. You know his store, don't you? It's a mean kind of one to look at, but I will say the things there are most as good as any you get in Paris; don't you think so?"

"I—I don't know," said Susie shyly. "I have never been in Paris, and—and I don't know Du—the store you speak of either. I never go anywhere in London but here, and now and then to the Grove—Westbourne Grove, I mean—when I am wanted to do any shopping."

The stranger's blue eyes opened in very genuine astonishment.

"Nowhere but two places!" she repeated blankly.

"Oh, and to church. I go to church every Sunday morning, and sometimes with the boys of an afternoon too," said Susie, correcting herself.

The wonder in the blue eyes did not lessen.

"Only that! Don't you go anywhere else, ever?" Then as the young governess shook her head, smiling a little: "But perhaps you've not been located here time enough to see about you yet. We came to London six weeks ago, and I haven't seen half I want to by now; but that's the worst of having a brother who has been

everywhere, and knows everything. He's real good to me, I will own, and takes me out somewhere most every night; but it's all an old story to him, and he don't like me to look round or ask questions. He says it isn't English. He's fearfully particular about that; and of course when you've only one brother you must fix yourself to please him. I guess now you wouldn't have surmised I wasn't English?" she added with a delightful little laugh so expressive of perfect confidence in the nature of Susie's answer that, candid as the latter was, she lacked brutality to give it. Fortunately her companion did not wait for a reply. "Well, I'm not!" she said, triumphing in the surprise; "and what's more, though scarcely any of our acquaintances here will allow it's possible, I only came to England this May. I'm American" (she called it "Amurrican," but that is a detail. I am not reproducing this young lady's pronunciation), "and till mother concluded last fall to come over and look after Calton, I hadn't a thought of visiting Europe till I was married. Mother's been always so

taken up with Lucretia, my married sister, that I've never stayed home much since I came out. I used to live half my time with an uncle in New England, and the other half with an aunt out West. Calton said it wasn't fair, and wanted father to send me to the Sacré Cœur to be finished; but I told him I must keep Paris" (and here again I am tempted to mention that she always called that city "Parris") "for my wedding-trip. I've done it now, however, so I shall have to keep Rome for that. We've not been there yet. We went to Paris first half of the winter, and then to Florence; but mother got sick there, it was so cold; so we went to Cannes instead, and back to Paris for Easter before coming here. Cannes is the loveliest place, and we had the loveliest time imaginable. Were you ever there before you came to London?"

"At—Cannes? Oh no," said Susie, whose geographical excursions with Flo had as yet been of such a limited nature that she had been compelled to make a pause for mental survey of the map of France before answering. "I never went anywhere much before I came to town. We lived in the country, and except when my father took me in his gig— But I have being in London four years now. I am not a new comer like you," she added, breaking off with the slight blush of one

fearful of chattering too much on her own affairs.

The American girl looked at her pityingly.

"Four years in one city, and never been anywhere but to church and shop, and these gardens! It don't seem believable. Don't you even go and see your friends?"

Susie's smile was a little sad.

"I have none—here—and if I had, I should have no time. Little Flo and the boys want me in the day."

"Not all day?"

"Oh yes; there is always something to do."

"Well, I do feel bad for you; but couldn't you go out evenings? You have them, haven't you?"

"No—oh, I don't think Mrs. Farquharson would like it," said Susie, blushing and hesitating; "indeed, I never even thought of it myself, and as I have no friends— But it is kind of you to feel sorry for me," she added, smiling a little, and lifting her eyes gratefully to her energetic companion. The latter was looking really shocked.

"Do tell!" she exclaimed again. "How can you make out to endure such a life? But what do you do, then, at all?"

"Of an evening? Oh, my own mending or any other needlework, and sometimes I write letters home, or try to study a little to improve myself. Oh, and when Mrs. Farquharson is out, so that the piano can't be an annoyance, I practise. I am always glad to do that, and one doesn't want to sit up late when one is tired," said Susie, smiling again.

"I'm tired," Flo broke in suddenly. "I haven't got any more sweets, and I don't want to play, and I've got an ache in my stomach, and I want to go home now."

Miss Lane rose at once in evident concern.

"An ache in your— Oh, Flo, I'm sorry, dear. I hope you have not eaten too many sweets. We'll go home at once," she said compunctiously; but the American girl had already slid off her side of the seat and pounced on the small maiden

in a half-coaxing, half-threatening manner, so merry and pretty, that the young damsel was too fascinated by it to be offended.

"Come now, I guess that's all a mistake," she said, stooping her plumed hat and laughing eyes to the level of the little fretful face. "You ain't sick a bit. Say now, are you? For if you are, you'll never be let have another candy as long's you live; and I was just fixing to bring you some—real nice ones too—next time I come here; but if they make you sick—"

"They don't make me sick," said Flo promptly. "Will you weally bring me some more to-morrow?"

"I will so," replied the young lady; then, turning to Susie: "We are staying at the Great Western Hotel for a spell, and I come here most every morning when it's fine and I've nothing to do. So we are bound to meet again. I hope so, anyway. Good-bye."

"Good-bye—thank you," said Susie.

If she had only not been so shy she would have liked to add something else—to say how she should look forward to another meeting between them, and express something of the pleasure this one had given her. She thought of quite a number of things she might have said, as holding little Flo's hand in hers she made her way along the sunshiny, gritty paths in the direction of the Queen's Road Gate; but she had been too shy, or her English reserve had been too much for her.

She had very little expectation of ever seeing the brilliant stranger again.

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1884.

PRICE TWOPENCE

LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNER," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XV.

WHILE this correspondence was going on between uncle and niece, things were not particularly sunshiny at the Hall. The weather had been changeable, and, on the whole, murky and troubled. During the eight days that followed Phil's departure to London, Edie had passed through every phase of despondency, of nervous irritability, and, consequently, of fitful temper.

Poor old Janet's daily existence was a burden to her; the squire—well, had a life of it; and as for Ellinor, no doubt she would have had a life of it too, had she not been endowed with a temperament as impervious as any English chronometer to atmospheric changes. Edie's most vehement gusts did not suffice to ruffle even the surface of her stately serenity, nor did Edie's most pungent speeches—and they undoubtedly were pungent just then—seem by ever so little to set her teeth on edge. It is easily conceivable that her equanimity was a thing born less of good-nature than of indifference. Her stay at the Hall was drawing to a close; she was not likely ever to be on very warm terms with the Fairfax family. What could their small joys and sorrows, individual or collective, their sweet or sour tempers, matter to her? How very slightly ought she, in the nature of things, to be affected by them!

So she went on her way serenely, imperturbably, ignoring equally little Edie's fits of temper and subsequent fits of remorse, preserving invariably towards her a calm, patronising, elder-sisterly attitude that made Edie feel as though she herself had suddenly been transformed into a half-

tamed Persian cat, and every hair she owned to was being persistently stroked the wrong way.

Not one letter did Edie receive from Phil.

"It's your own doing, Edie!" said the squire, as he noted his little daughter, morning after morning, make a vehement rush at the letters when they were brought in, toss them over eagerly, and then viciously shuffle them into a careless heap when she saw the one she waited for was not there.

"I know it's my own doing; of course, who could think it was anyone else's?" answered Edie, with her head very high in the air. "I didn't for a moment expect Phil would write to me; it would be very ridiculous if he were to, after what I said to him." And then she would take sudden flight, rush upstairs into her own room, and sob out her sorrows into the sofa-pillows once more.

"I have a message for you, Edie," said Colonel Wickham, coming in on the morning before Ellinor's visit at the Hall came to an end.

Edie was in the act of drawing on her gardening-gloves—incessant active outdoor occupation was just then an absolute necessity to her. She looked up brightly at the Colonel; she knew without any telling from whom the message came.

It is just possible that if Colonel Wickham had told her that the message had come from Phil in response to a question of his own, the bright, pleasant look on her face would have given place to one of a totally opposite description.

"Phil wants to know," the Colonel went on, "how he may write to you. He says he can write but one way—the way he has always been accustomed to write."

Edie was all on fire in a moment, half

with petulance, half with delight at getting a word from Phil again.

"How ridiculous," she cried, blushing furiously, "to be able only to write one way to anyone. Why, I can write a hundred ways to people one after another as fast as possible."

"To people! Yes, possibly Phil could to 'people' in your sense of the word. But he is speaking now of one person only, Edie, and to that one person he can only write one way. Now the question is, will you give him permission to write to you in that one way—the way in which he has always been accustomed to write?"

There was no getting out of the question now.

Edie got redder and redder. Pride came to her rescue. Not the sort of pride that turned Lucifer out of heaven, but possibly near akin to that which prevented him ever asking to be taken back again.

"It is utterly absurd of Phil to ask such a question after all I have said to him," she answered, buttoning and unbuttoning her gloves quickly, nervously, as though she had a gimlet between her small fingers at work on them. "He ought to have understood perfectly—I am quite sure he does understand without asking any questions on the matter."

"Does he understand how he may write to you? That's the thing, Edie," persisted the Colonel.

"Of course he understands," and now crack, crack, crack, went one, two, three buttons in succession. "He may write to me just exactly as any gentleman writes to any lady. What more can he expect than that?"

"Is that what I'm to tell him, Edie—just as any gentleman writes to any lady?" asked the Colonel, speaking very gravely, very slowly.

"Of course, if he wants an answer to such a ridiculous question. Oh, here comes the vicar!" and Edie's voice, before attuned to a somewhat high pitch, showed a visible sense of relief. "And good gracious!" she added, making her eyes very round, "here comes Mrs. Rumsey in by the opposite gate. Why, what does it mean? They'll run into each other's arms just underneath the window."

And even as she finished speaking might be heard the cheery tones of the vicar addressing his wife.

"What, you here, my dear?"

"What, you here?" echoed his wife's voice, but she did not say "my dear," and

her tones were not so cheery as her husband's by many degrees.

"I have been hunting all over the village for you," the lady went on; "I've a hundred and one things I want to speak to you about; three times I had to send for you here yesterday."

"My dear, this is my first visit to the Hall to-day," interposed the vicar mildly.

"I should think so, seeing it's not yet eleven o'clock. If you intend taking up your quarters here——"

"Really," said Edie to the Colonel, who, standing close to the window-panes, had heard the major part of this conversation, "I think we had better show ourselves. I've never seen Mrs. Rumsey so put out before."

So they went out and exchanged greetings with the vicar and his wife, talked about the weather, the fine show of chrysanthemums at the vicarage, and an approaching tea to be given to the "good wives"—this was the local title for the attendants at a certain weekly meeting, known in most parishes as mothers'-meetings—for which Edie's personal supervision was besought.

"And I tell Mrs. Rumsey," said the vicar, looking round slyly at the Colonel, "that there'll be plenty of gossip that night. It's what you might call the tea-trait at these meetings. It always comes in with the cups and saucers."

For once in her life, Mrs. Rumsey did not respond with her invariable, "Charlie loves a joke." Could it possibly have been the sudden appearance of Miss Yorke, in her riding-habit, in the hall, just inside which they were standing, that made the words die upon her lips?

The vicar made a hasty movement towards the young lady.

"Ah, Miss Yorke, so pleased to catch you at last. Now you will be able to tell me when you will go through the schools with me."

Ellinor raised her eyebrows at him—did not take his proffered hand.

"I do not take the slightest interest in schools," she said, in a voice which suggested ice an inch thick, and the thermometer below zero. Then, as she passed in front of Mrs. Rumsey, she gave a pitying, deprecating glance towards the worthy clergyman, the slightest possible shrug with her shoulders, an appealing look into Mrs. Rumsey's face, which said, as plainly as words could say it, "Have you no control over the poor man? Cannot you keep him from making himself ridiculous?"

The vicar looked, as he no doubt felt, snubbed and rebuffed. Mrs. Rumsey grew scarlet, pursed her lips, and drew up her head as though she meant, on the spot, to take up the cudgels for her husband. Edie felt, as she always did in Ellinor's vicinity, irritable, ruffled, angry, inclined to say the hardest, bitterest, cruellest things her tongue had at command at the moment, although she knew perfectly she might as well shoot arrows at an armour-plated ship as attempt to disturb Ellinor's serenity by speech of hers, let it be never so cutting or cruel.

"Ask me to go through the schools with you, dear Mr. Rumsey," she exclaimed; "I take the very, very deepest interest in them, and so does everybody who knows how hard you have worked in them."

"I want to speak to Mr. Fairfax; is he in his study?" asked Ellinor over all their heads. "I want to tell him I must bring my pleasant visit here to an end to-morrow."

"It is eleven o'clock. Papa hates to be disturbed when he shuts himself in at eleven," said Edie coldly.

But for all that, Ellinor calmly went on her way to the squire's study. What did it matter to her whether people did or did not wish to be disturbed when she had a special desire to disturb them?

"Can it be possible," cried Edie, clasping her hands and looking ecstatic, "that she will depart and peace be restored to-morrow? Come into my sitting-room, Mrs. Rumsey; I've no end of things to talk to you about!"

"You are quite sure, Edie," said the Colonel as he took his leave, "that you cannot think of a better message to send poor old Phil, than the one you have given me?"

Edie paused a moment. In that moment, pride and love had a little skirmish in her heart. In greater battles with this somewhat perverse, yet altogether loveable young person, love invariably won the victory; in the skirmishing, which went on tolerably often, pride always carried the day. It was so now.

"Thank you for asking me again," she said, looking up in Colonel Wickham's face; "but, honestly, I can think of nothing else to say. He may write to me as any gentleman writes to any lady. That is all. Good-bye!"

CHAPTER XVI.

PHIL'S mission to London was a gloomy one, and he undertook it with a heavy

heart. This Rodney Thorne and he had been, as Colonel Wickham had said, great chums at school and college; Phil's easy, kindly nature, solid good sense, and clear judgment saving Rodney from many a scrape in which his headlong, enthusiastic temperament would otherwise have plunged him.

School and college said good-bye to, their bonds of friendly intimacy had of necessity somewhat relaxed. Rodney, erratic and wayward to a degree, had announced his intention of going everywhere and seeing everything before he settled down as master of Thorne Hall. By his grandfather's will—his father had died when he was a mere infant—he did not come into his estates until he was twenty-five years of age; up to that time they remained under the sole control of his mother and a co-trustee, Rodney possessing only the power of drawing a certain fixed income from the estate.

His intention of "going everywhere and seeing everything" he carried out energetically, by paying a succession of flying visits to every quarter of the globe. Later on, as the inconveniences and limitations of long voyages somewhat wearied him, he reduced his orbit, and contented himself with scouring the plains and cities of Europe. Vienna, Rome, and Paris, in turn, saw a good deal of him. In the last-named city, when he had nearly completed his twenty-fourth year, he came upon his fate, in the shape of a pretty English girl, a Miss Lucy Selwyn, an orphan, who fulfilled the duties of English teacher and wardrobe-keeper in a large boys' school in the Avenue d'Eylau. How they met, where, and when, it would have been difficult to say, for Rodney preserved a strict silence on this point, and there was no near relative nor friend to ask the question of Lucy.

Rodney's conduct at this period of his history was characteristic. He made Lucy at once resign her appointment. He wrote to his mother desiring her to receive the young lady as a daughter; a desire his mother, a cold-hearted, proud woman, who had ambitious views for her son, showed not the slightest disposition to fulfil. Lucy, arriving in London unchaperoned—for whether from necessity or choice, Rodney had not travelled back with her from Paris—was received at the door of Mrs. Thorne's town-house with the message that that lady was not "at home," and was forced

to drive away with her baggage to the nearest hotel.

Rodney had been furious when he heard of his mother's treatment of the pretty, gentle orphan. He had rushed over in hot haste from Paris, and would have married Lucy there and then by special license had not, unfortunately, not only the whole of his present yearly income been run through, but the next year's been anticipated, right up to his twenty-fifth birthday, and money-lenders in all directions been laid under contribution.

Under these circumstances, he was therefore dependent solely upon the will of his mother for food, clothing, lodgings—for, indeed, the barest necessities of existence.

Also, Lucy, gentle and confiding though she had proved herself to the very last degree, was utterly destitute of that rash, headlong impetuosity which so markedly characterised her lover, and which lies at the bottom of one half the improvident marriages which are made and too late repented of.

"Why not wait a year?" she had said to him in the coffee-room of the big hotel to which, out of sheer ignorance of London and London ways, she had directed herself to be driven. "In a year's time you will be your own master, your mother will be forced to receive as your wife whoever you may choose to bring home. Possibly by that time she may be willing to be friends with me. I think I could make her love me."

So Rodney had agreed to wait the year, had sworn that Lucy was his good angel, that everything she proposed was wise and right, that if his mother could but see her she would love her as she deserved to be loved—as the sweetest, best, purest, truest girl in the world. And then he had done about the wisest and most prudent thing he had ever in his life been known to do, had transferred Lucy from the big railway hotel to a quiet, decorous young ladies' school somewhere in the vicinity of Maida Vale.

With this portion of Rodney's history Phil had been intimately acquainted, getting from him, in long weekly letters, enthusiastic descriptions of the charms of his goddess, and full details of his mother's harsh treatment of her. Then there had come a gap in the correspondence; Phil's letters, full of sympathetic condolence and cheerful encouragement, remained unanswered. Going up to London about this

time, and meeting Rodney by chance in the house of a common friend, it was not difficult to discover the reason of Rodney's silence. Ellinor Yorke was present, and Rodney had eyes, ears, speech for no one else; the last trumpet might have sounded, but Rodney would not have stirred unless Ellinor had showed a disposition to rise from her chair and go down on her knees.

Phil had looked on in amazement for a time, then he had found the opportunity for getting Rodney on one side, and asking him if Miss Yorke knew of his engagement to Lucy Selwyn.

Rodney had evaded the question, and gone back to the side of his charmer. Then Phil, as jealous for his friend's honour as he would have been for his own, had taken the law into his own hands, and had asked so pointedly after Miss Lucy Selwyn's health and happiness, that Ellinor could not fail to understand the position in which she stood towards Rodney.

After this Rodney had seemed to avoid Phil, and they had met once only before Phil had read that terrible paragraph in the newspaper. This meeting had again taken place in Ellinor's presence, and it had seemed to Phil that in no way had Rodney or Ellinor altered in their demeanour to each other. He in no wise troubled his brains as to the fact that what this young woman's behaviour was to this young man—alluring, fascinating, enthralling—such it was to every young man who crossed her path, and who chanced to be, as this one was, handsome, wealthy, and of good birth. He only saw that this friend of his, whom he had learnt to love as he would have loved a brother had one been given him, whom, in the very early days of their friendship, he had fought for, championed, protected, was on the high-road to dishonour, to faithlessness to the girl whom he was pledged to marry. And it seemed to him that this Ellinor Yorke, this surpassingly beautiful young woman who might, had she so chosen, have had peers of the realm at her feet, was alluring him along this downward path for the mere pleasure of testing the strength of her powers of allurements, and of gratifying her personal vanity.

Rodney, of course, was not to be exonerated at Ellinor's cost—there was no question of that in Phil's mind; and, outspoken and frank as he had ever been with his friend, he found the opportunity for saying some short, sharp words which

Rodney could not controvert, but which he met with an angry bitterness, a sarcastic enquiry as to how long Phil had taken upon himself the duties of dry-nurse, and a devout wish that for the future he would keep alike his eyes and his tongue in reserve for matters in which he possessed a personal interest.

These were the hardest speeches that had ever in their lives passed between Phil and Rodney. The recollection of them was very bitter to Phil now as he made his way through the London streets to the house of Rodney's mother to learn what she had to tell him of Rodney's last hours.

Mrs. Thorne's town house was situated in Eaton Square. A lurid wintry sun, near its setting, was pouring red light on the wet, leafless trees and sodden grass of the square as Phil knocked at the door. The house was closely shut from top to bottom. Phil wondered whether anyone would be there able to receive him.

"Do you think Mrs. Thorne could see me?" he asked of the man who opened the door to him.

The man was an old servant, and knew Phil well.

"I will enquire, sir," he answered. "She will see you if she can see anyone. An invitation has been sent you to attend the funeral."

The man soon came back with a message that Mrs. Thorne would see him, and Phil was shown upstairs into a small darkened room, where Mrs. Thorne was seated upon a sofa.

Candles were lighted upon the mantel-piece; they threw a faint, uncertain light on Mrs. Thorne's white face and deep crape draperies.

She was a large, handsome woman of about fifty-five years of age. Her dark hair, thickly powdered with grey, was mounted on high cushions on the top of her head in the style of Marie Antoinette; her eyebrows were dark, her eyes large and expressive. The lines of her face, always firm, had grown now to the strength and straightness of a sculptured block of marble.

She rose to greet Phil.

"It is good of you to come," she said, and her voice had a hard, metallic ring in it which almost set him shivering.

"How could I help coming! He was my dearest friend," Phil answered impetuously.

Then there fell a silence between them.

Mrs. Thorne was the first to speak.

"What do people say about it? What does anyone say?" she asked.

"I have heard nothing—I know nothing; I came up expressly to hear," answered Phil; "I saw the dreadful news last night in the paper, and came up this morning."

"The inquest was this morning; they brought in a verdict of 'Accidental Death.'"

"Ah, thank Heaven!" cried Phil, and then he stopped himself abruptly.

"Why thank Heaven?" asked Mrs. Thorne, fixedly regarding him. "What other verdict did you—did anyone else expect?"

Phil tried to recall his words.

"I am bewildered," he said; "it has all been so awfully sudden—I scarcely know what I am saying."

Mrs. Thorne looked at him steadily for half a minute, then, in a voice such as a man lying on his death-bed might use when he asks, "Doctor, is there a chance for me?" she said:

"Kindly tell me, Mr. Wickham, what reason had you for thinking my son died by his own hand?"

"Oh, none—none whatever," protested Phil; "why should I think so? I have not seen Rodney, nor had a single line from him, since July last. How could I know anything?"

Mrs. Thorne laid her hand upon his arm.

"Hush!" she said authoritatively. "I know that my son died by his own hand—no matter how I know it, I know it." She paused a moment—a sudden, dark change swept over her face. "Let that girl who wrought his ruin keep out of my path," she added; "the evil and misery she has brought to my home I will repay to her a thousand times should she come in my way."

It was said quietly, without dramatic action or hysteric vehemence. Mrs. Thorne remained seated on the sofa, nor did her voice rise one single half-tone; yet Phil felt in his inmost heart, as he sat there listening to her, that a Corsican vendetta might fail of its end, or an avenger of blood be turned from his course, rather than this woman be persuaded to let go the purpose of her heart, should opportunity for revenge be given her.

"Let us hope we are mistaken—both of us," he said gently; his voice had none of the iron firmness of Rodney's mother's. "I confess the dread was in my own

mind, but you see other people have come to a different conclusion."

"Mr. Wickham, will you tell me why the dread of such a thing was in your mind?"

Phil was silent.

"You will not. Very well, then I will tell you why the certainty of such a thing is in my mind. On the night before it happened, Rodney came here to me asking for a cheque for a very large amount—larger than he had ever asked of me before. I naturally questioned him as to the purpose for which this money was wanted. His reply was, that part was for his own use, part for another person's. I knew in a minute to whom he referred, and I mentioned the name of Miss Lucy Selwyn, saying, 'What, is the intrigue with that young person going on still?' Upon this he grew very angry, and said—well, never mind what he said, they were rude, uncalled-for words so far as I was concerned, and, so far as Miss Selwyn was concerned, seemed spoken less from hot-headed, passionate love, than from a sense of duty. I stopped him in the midst of his asseverations of this young person's innocence of life. 'Rodney,' I said, 'look up in my face, be honest with me, confess that you have ceased to love this girl, and are now only anxious to be quit of her.' His eyes drooped. 'It's true,' he said hoarsely; 'I would give worlds if she would let me go, but she will not.' 'Give me her address,' I said; 'I will go to her, talk to her, pay her expenses anywhere, and I will undertake you shall be free from her.' But this he would not do. 'It would be useless—utterly useless,' he said; 'I have implored her on my knees to release me, and she will not; she will drive me to desperation one way or another; I dare say it will end in my putting a bullet through my brain.' Those were my son's last words to me, Mr. Wickham; I have told not one living soul of them save yourself. He left me that night without saying good-bye—without answering my good-bye, even—without taking up the cheque which I had made out, and placed before him on the table. Now judge whether there is reason in what I have asserted—that he died by his own hand. Judge whether I have the right to speak bitterly of the girl who drove my poor boy to a desperate ending."

But Phil's heart at that moment was stirred, less by commiseration for Rodney's terrible fate than by a chivalrous desire to take up arms in behalf of Lucy Selwyn.

The impulse was strong on him to speak out bluntly and say:

"Mrs. Thorne, much as I loved Rodney, I am constrained to say he behaved as a scoundrel to this girl, who loved him. Another, not she, led him on to his ruin."

He did not, however, yield to it. How could he burthen this bereaved mother's heart with a new tale of treachery and weakness on her dead son's part? Why should he drag Ellinor Yorke's name before her to be a mark for her vengeance at some future day?

So he held his peace—held it so long that Mrs. Thorne looked up at him wondering and waiting for his answer. Then, as though she felt the silence somewhat burdensome, she rose from her sofa and said:

"Come, would you like to see him before you go?"

Phil looked at her in amazement:

"See him!" he repeated, picturing to himself how little like to Rodney's dark, handsome face—the face he had known and loved—must be the poor, dead, lacerated face now.

"I will not lift the face-cloth," said the mother in the same hard, cold tones as before; "I did it once, I shall not do it again. Come!"

She led the way up the darkened staircase, and opened the door of a large room on the upper floor. There was no rush of sweet flower-scents as they entered the sombre chamber, there had been no attempt to make this room beautiful with ferns and grasses, no gracious effort to smooth over the print of death's cruel, rough feet, no make-believe of keeping the Great Tyrant at bay by so much as half an hour, when the day was all his own. No; here everything was black, mournful, hateful, as it seemed to Mrs. Thorne things should be in such a death-chamber. Long black curtains hung from the windows, crape hangings hid the bright walls and pictures, even the floor of the room was covered with crape; and there, in the midst of it all, with its black velvet covering, stood the dismal coffin containing all that remained of Rodney Thorne.

Large wax-lights in solid stands stood on either side of the coffin's head. They were the only lights in the room,

Phil assisted the mother to lift the pall and raise the coffin-lid. He trembled for her, lest now her self-control might fail her, and the long-sealed well-springs of her grief might be unloosed.

No such thing. She looked steadily at the long, straight, white-swathed form without so much as a quiver of an eyelid. Then she bent low and pressed her lips lingeringly, lovingly, on one white marble hand.

She beckoned to Phil, and placed the hand in his.

"You clasped hands in life," she said; "clasp them in death."

Phil did so, and his tears fell thick and fast as he thought of how once in early schooldays that same slender, cold hand of Rodney's had struck a big, robust school-boy on the mouth who had dared to insult Phil.

And the last time they had parted it had been with angry words and with no clasping of the hand!

Phil's good-bye to Mrs. Thorne was all but incoherent.

"I may count on you for the funeral; you were one of his dearest friends," she said, speaking in much the same voice as that in which one might bid another to a wedding or birthday festival.

Phil bowed his head and pressed her hand. Then he thankfully made his escape into the fresh wintry air.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.

A MISTY kind of radiance hangs about the ancient county Earldom of Huntingdon. We know of one Robin Hood as a claimant for the dignity, and we may remember a King of Scotland who was also styled Earl of Huntingdon, and who held the castles of Fotheringay and Huntingdon as liege man of our lord the King of England. And to begin at the beginning, the Saxon history of the county presents some unaccustomed features. The county really belongs to East Anglia, but Siward held it—the old Siward of Macbeth, and of other legendary histories—with the mighty earldom of Northumbria. Then Tostig had it—the traitorous brother of Harold—and after the turmoil of the Conquest, we find old Siward's son, the noble Waltheof, holding the earldom, either as his father's heir, or by right of his wife, the cruel Judith, the Conqueror's niece. After Waltheof's execution, his daughter Maude brought it as her dower to some long-headed but lame and unattractive Norman baron, called Simon de St. Liz by the old chroniclers. On Simon's death, Maude married David of Scotland,

and we find a Scotch king building or repairing a strong castle at Huntingdon, in the very heart of England. But of this castle, as of any other that succeeded it, hardly a stone now remains to show.

Of it there now remains no memory,
Nor any little monument to see,
By which the traveller that fares that way,
"This once was it," may warned be to say.

And yet, when we consider how much of the land was, and still remains, fen-land; how much space was occupied by the wide, shallow meres, abounding in fish and fowl—now all drained and levelled, and producing grass and corn—while in old time, as we read, "it was much more woody than it is now, and the dere resorted to the fennes," harbouring among the alders, hassocks, and rushes—it is difficult to conceive how the county could have been the seat of a numerous warlike population. But probably the county boundaries were more extensive than now, and we shall find here and there traces showing how people were once much more thick upon the clearings—how market-towns have turned to villages, and villages have been almost lost to existence.

No one can turn his face towards Huntingdon without thinking of a certain famous brewer of that town—a brewer by repute, if not in actual fact, though the latter is probable enough. Anyhow, the site of the mansion of the Cromwells is still pointed out, with the brook of Hinchin flowing through its curtilage—wonderfully convenient for brewing or malting, to which, if he could see his way to turn an honest penny thereby, Farmer Oliver would have raised no objection on the score of gentility. Anyhow, it was not small beer that he brewed, we may be sure, this sturdy old Noll of the Cavalier legend.

And yet, as far as lineage and gentlemanhood went, the Cromwells might hold their own with any of the old families of the county. In origin they were of good Welsh blood, descended from one Morgan Ap William, who had a small estate in Glamorganshire, and was Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Henry the Seventh. With the Tudors a host of Welsh gentlemen had come to Court, and held small employments there; and many of them, no doubt, in a second generation, like Ap Williams's son, Richard, assumed English surnames, and became merged in the English population. Had Richard and his father remained in Wales the former would have been called Richard Ap Morgan—the

Welsh having, strictly speaking, no family names—but being in England, he reassumed his mother's name, who was a Cromwell, the daughter of the blacksmith of Putney—who might have had some dealings in iron with the Glamorganshire man—the blacksmith, whose son became Earl of Essex and vicar-general, the hammer of the monks, Wolsey's destructive pupil. A kind of deputy-hammer was Richard Cromwell—a hard-riding, stout, fighting man, whose prowess so delighted Henry the Eighth that he proclaimed him not only his Dick but his diamond—but with his keen business side, too, and everywhere busy among the monasteries arranging sales and surrenders. And Richard shared handsomely in the plunder—got the great abbey of Ramsey and the fat priory of Hinchinbrook, both in the county of Huntingdon, and kept them, too, in spite of his uncle's fall, and thus became one of the great men of the county.

To these possessions succeeded Sir Henry Cromwell, a generous and lavish gentleman of the old-fashioned Elizabethan type, and as such known as the Golden Knight, who pulled down the old nest of the monks at Hinchinbrook, and built a fine mansion there—a florid, handsome Tudor building, which still in the main exists, although much altered by later owners. A younger son of the Golden Knight was provided for by means of other monkish or semi-monkish spoil at Huntingdon. The old hospital of St. John made a residence for him; the stream which had turned the priors' mill, and in which Hospitaller knights, perhaps, had fished, now ran past Master Robert's brewing-vats, and afforded a little innocent pastime, no doubt, for young Oliver. For here was growing up a young scion of the Hammer pattern, destined to wield his Thor's weapon on the heads of kings. Oliver was born in the last throes of that sixteenth century which had wrought such sweeping changes. And the mother of Oliver was herself a link with the old order of things, for her great uncle had been prior of Ely long ago, and at the suppression of the priory had taken office again in a still more dignified position as dean of the cathedral, which had also been the church of the convent. And this uncle had been zealous in providing for his kinsmen. They were Stuarts, too, or Stewarts, prior and kinsmen, having descent, it is said, from the old royal line of Scotland.

Oliver Cromwell's education was that of

any ordinary young country gentleman. He went first to the grammar-school of Huntingdon, under one Dr. Beard, author of *The Theatre of God's Judgments*—not a lively piece, we may imagine. Then Oliver was entered at Sidney Sussex, Cambridge, on the very day, it is noted, on which Shakespeare died. But his father's death brought him home again without completing his course, and from that time he stayed at home at Huntingdon, with the possible exception of sundry months spent in London with some lawyer, to learn enough law for a justice of the peace. He was little over one-and-twenty when he brought home his wife from Cripplegate Church, and henceforth we see him a solid, sober young fellow, entertaining ministers of the gospel and expounding the Word himself on occasion, but with a terrible, black hypochondria upon him at times—the burden of many great souls; he often thought himself on the point of death and of judgment, and had fancies, too, about the town-cross. Then, as children came upon his hands, he sought something more productive in the way of farming and grazing, and so sold what he had at Huntingdon, and went to St. Ives, where we shall meet him presently. Then uncle Stewart died, and left his nephew, Oliver, a good estate, so that he went to live at the glebe-house, Ely, still among the clerical nests that acquisitive ancestors had feathered for him, and henceforth our county has no further share of him than belongs to the general history of the realm.

Meantime our hero's uncle and godfather, Sir Oliver, had succeeded the Golden Knight, inheriting a good deal of his father's warm and lavish nature, and his loyal devotion to the crown. But the golden age was coming to an end, and the estate of the Cromwells had become embarrassed, so that Sir Oliver withdrew to his more modest dwelling-house, the old abbey of Ramsey, and sold Hinchinbrook to Sir Sidney Montagu, of Barnwell, Northampton, one of His Majesty's Masters of Requests. And Sir Sidney becomes noticeable in literary annals for his marriage to one Paulina Pepys, the daughter of a small, Cambridge-shire squire, and a relative, perhaps the aunt, of everybody's friend, Samuel of the Diary.

Our chatty, gossiping Pepys was born at Brampton, a village a mile or so from Huntingdon, and got part of his schooling at Huntingdon, no doubt at the very school

where Oliver had been before him. The family had some little property at Brampton, although Samuel's father seems to have been a citizen of London, and a tailor. To his connection with the Montagus Pepys owed his advancement in life and the opportunity of putting all the world of London in his diary. The Master of Requests had been, naturally enough, on the King's side, and had been expelled from the Long Parliament, where he sat for Huntingdonshire, on that ground; but the son, Edward, fought with credit under Cromwell, and held office as Lord of the Treasury and a Commissioner of the Admiralty under the Protector. But he was one of the first adherents to the project of the Restoration, acting the same part with the sea as did Monk with the land forces, and the first pages of Pepys's diary describes my lord's voyage to bring the King home from Breda. To reward his services Montagu was created Earl of Sandwich, a title still held by the lords of Hinchinbrook.

My Lord Sandwich was one of the unprofessional sea-captains of the period, who, without knowledge of seamanship, could fight as courageously from the deck of a ship as on land, and could lead his ships into action as well as marshal a squadron in the field. He died at last in combat with the Dutch at the sea-fight of Solebay, off Southwold. Duke James, who commanded the fleet, overcame by the sight of the carnage about him, retired from the fight, and left his captains to shift for themselves, and the Earl, surrounded by enemies, and grappled by their fire-ships, died nobly enough in the midst of smoke and flames. And so sleeps in Westminster Abbey, and without any monument to mark the resting-place of the first of a line of naval heroes to whom "Victory or Westminster Abbey" was the only acceptable alternative.

When Mr. Samuel Pepys, of the Navy Office, came to visit his father, who had given up business and retired to his little property at Brampton, he was a close neighbour to the Hinchinbrook family, his grand connections, to whom he showed himself a faithful and grateful friend, treating for the marriage of the girls, helping the boys out of their scrapes, and lending money to the Earl when he came home without a penny in his pocket from some great embassy. For Pepys, notwithstanding his extravagances in velvet-coats and periwigs, had ever a frugal mind, and was carefully accumulating

those little profits and gratifications which attached to his office. During the alarm that prevailed at the time of the Dutch invasion, when our ships were rotting in harbour for want of means to fit them out, while the King was wasting the national revenue on his pleasures—at this crisis, when the best Englishmen began to despair of their country—Pepys could think of no better way to preserve his hoarded gold than to send it, with his wife in charge, to his father in Brampton, there to be buried carefully in the garden. When the panic was over, Pepys himself went to Brampton to recover his gold, and describes the disinterment. "My father and I, with a dark lantern, it being now night, went into the garden with my wife, and there went about my great work to dig up my gold. But, Lord! what a tosse I was for some time in, that they could not justly tell where it was." At last the place was found, but the gold all loose in the mould, the bags that held it having rotted, and so Pepys unwittingly flings dirt and guineas about by shovelfuls, a thing very dreadful to poor Pepys, who dreads the approaching daylight and the eyes that may peep over his garden wall. At last, however, with much scraping and sifting, Pepys comes within twenty or thirty of his tale, and is glad it is no worse, and the lost guineas may be lying there now. Curiously enough, in 1842, an iron pot full of silver coins was discovered at Brampton, near a garden wall belonging to the old Pepys house in the village—the coins being half-crowns of Elizabeth, James, and Charles; but all anterior to the Commonwealth. But this can hardly have been Samuel's money, which he describes as all gold, and was most probably a hoard hidden by some earlier Pepys in the troubles of the civil wars.

It had been Samuel Pepys's early dream to retire to Brampton when he had accumulated a modest fortune, and to spend the rest of his days in the country—a dream never realised; and, indeed, the wish to realise it ceased with advancing years. Naturally enough, he might once have looked forward to municipal honours in his native district. And thus when he is at Whitehall one day, and sees a fisher-boat at the stairs there, with "a sturgeon newly caught in the river," he remarks apropos of the fish, "A little one, but big enough to prevent my mistake of that for a colt, if ever I become Mayor of Huntingdon."

And this little joke of our friend Pepys involves an old story which, foolish as it may seem, still has its significance. On the opposite side of the river, connected by Ouse Bridge, lies the sister but rival settlement of Godmanchester. Now Huntingdon belongs to the wold country, the "Hunting down" of the Saxon earl, but Godmanchester is in the black bog of the fens, and if not Guthrum ceaster as some say, after Alfred's renowned opponent, is anyhow probably in origin a Danish settlement, perhaps originally founded within the rampart of the once Roman station. But for long ages the rivalry of the two townships has been a pacific one, confined mostly to winged words and bitter epithets. And thus, at the uncertain date of once upon a time, it happened that during a winter flood, characteristic of these parts, when all kinds of flotsam is borne upon the turbid waters, the men of Huntingdon and the men of Godmanchester—with a fair proportion of women and children, no doubt—had turned out to watch the progress of the rising waters. Something black came floating down, rushing here with the stream and twirling there in the eddy. What could it be? The men of Godmanchester suggested a black pig—then, like the swan of the same line, a *rara avis* it seems in those parts; but the Mayor of Huntingdon swore "that the beast was a sturgeon." In the event the derelict proved to be "an *asse's colt*," and from that time forth it became a bitter joke to call a Godmanchester fellow a black pig, while those on the opposite bank were playfully named "Huntingdon sturgeons."

It was at Godmanchester, too, that the people of the district met King James the First on his progress, with seventy new ploughs and as many teams of horses, a sight that seems somewhat to have alarmed the nervous King, who could not make out what the strange procession meant. But the ploughmen explained that in this manner they had been accustomed to meet the Kings of England, and that they enjoyed their liberties on this customary service. What the meaning of it was neither ploughmen nor the King could say, and so they parted with mutual satisfaction after this strange meeting.

Other strange meetings might Godmanchester have known in ancient days, for just here is the crossway of three Roman or British roads. Ermin Street and the ancient trackway which preceded

the paved street—a trackway still used by drovers with their cattle, on their way to the great fairs, and known at parts as the Bullock Road, and sometimes as a certain lane—not Paradise Lane, but something quite different—then there is a third road called by "the learned" the *Via Devana*, which stretches out in a long straight course to Cambridge. There seems to have been no great road-making between the days of the Romans and the great engineering period of modern times, when the Great Northern Railway was carried pretty well from end to end through the county, corresponding closely enough to old Ermin Street as the North Western line does to Watling Street. But while the old highways encourage a growth of villages and hamlets along their course, the railways have no such influence, and thus from Huntingdon to Peterborough the line runs through the grey and green of the fennish country without the sight of a village or, nearly, of a homestead. But along the two Ermin Streets—the old which is British, and the new which is as recent as the Romans—there are many little settlements, such as Stilton, where it is hardly necessary to say that Stilton cheeses are not made, the fame of them being due to one Captain Thornhill, a noted jockey of his period, who kept The Ball Inn there, a noted sportsman's house, where he always had a special cheese from Leicestershire in cut for his patrons. The pastures of Stilton, it may be, have no especial richness, yet the place no longer answers to the description given by our friend Barnaby the bibulous in the seventeenth century.

Thence to Stilton, slowly paced,
With no bloom nor blossom graced,
With no plums nor apples stored,
But bald like an old man's forehead.

Close to Stilton lies Norman's Cross, a name which commemorates, not any Norman of the Conqueror's time, but some Northman of an earlier age, for it was known to the Saxons as *Northmannes Cross* long before the Conquest. Here for some years, during the great French war, a large number of French prisoners were kept, in barracks built for the purpose, whose weary captivity has left some traces in many an old-fashioned country-house in the shape of boxes and trinkets, neatly and curiously carved. The place is now only known as a meet for hounds, but the memory of the prisoners is preserved in the graves of those who died in the stranger's land.

More to the south are the Giddings or Giddings, three county parishes, distinguished as Great Gidding, Little Gidding, and Steeple Gidding. Little Gidding is notable for a curious instance of religious development; an attempt to found a Protestant community of celibates. The founder was one Nicholas Ferrars, born in the heart of the City of London, near Mark Lane; a Cambridge student, then an adventurous traveller, and afterwards a member of Parliament, who, convinced of a serious call, resolved to retire from the world. In Little Gidding he found a depopulated parish, and it may be noticed that in these regions on the borders of the fens there is evidence almost everywhere of a once much larger population. A large manor-house going to ruins, also, he found, and a church, converted into a barn, and to this desolate place he retired, with family, disciples, and servants, in all forty in number. Soon the industry of the community transformed the place into a pleasant retreat, with charming gardens. The intervals of labour and necessary refreshment were occupied by the religious offices of the Church of England, varied by the reading aloud of Mr. Nicholas Ferrars's own works—MSS. on religious subjects. Nicholas himself was accustomed to sleep, wrapped up in a frieze gown, on the bare boards of his dormitory, but it does not appear that he enjoined such austerity upon the rest of the community. Charles the First visited the convent during one of his journeys, and seems to have approved highly of all he saw. Again, one night he presented himself at the gates—proscribed, a fugitive, on his fatal journey to the Scots at Newark. Nicholas had then been for several years dead, but the then ruler of the house entertained the fallen King with kindness, and sped him secretly on his way next morning. The settlement, however, was regarded with suspicion by the new authorities, as a probable centre of Royalist plots, the inmates were dispersed, and Parliamentary soldiers occupied, and perhaps plundered, the place. Anyhow, they are clearly convicted of having burnt all Mr. Ferrars's precious works; which was something to be thankful for in the midst of trouble.

Still farther south, near the border of the county, we come to Kimbolton Castle, with memories of the Magnavilles, Bohuns, and Staffords, their magnificence and misfortunes. Then came the divorced queen of

Henry the Eighth to die within its walls. After that again the castle came to the Montagus, who pulled down the old place, and built the present florid structure. In the civil wars Kimbolton was strong for the Parliament, and Lord Kimbolton, who soon after succeeded his father as Earl of Manchester, was one of the Parliamentary leaders at Edgehill.

But the whole of the eastern counties were well-nigh unanimous in opposition to the royal party, and combined in an association of which Oliver Cromwell was the leading spirit, and which kept the whole of the associated counties free from any Royalist invasion. A solitary exception is to be found in the so-called battle of St. Neots, the issue of an ill-considered rising for the King which had its beginning at Kingston-on-Thames. Henry Rich, Earl of Holland, was the leader of the conspirators, who were driven out of Kingston in full rout by the Parliamentary regulars, and who rode desperately northwards, about a hundred in number, but who gathered strength as they fled, being joined by many discontented Cavaliers, till they reached St. Neots some four hundred strong.

A strange commotion this to come upon a quiet little market-town, which had hardly known anything to happen since the days of little St. Neots himself—the saint of the miraculous three fishes which, swimming in a secluded pool, surrendered one of their number daily to the saintly frying-pan, but were always found complete in tale notwithstanding. A kindly little saint, if we credit the story of his saving a hind from the huntsmen and dogs, and not deficient in resource, as witness his feat of ploughing his glebe with stags from the forest—thieves having stolen the parish oxen. Dead, he appears by the side of Alfred, and fights against the Danes. Altogether a worthy patriotic saint, dear to the Saxon heart, so that his remains were worth stealing from the Cornish parish where he died, and thus here was built a goodly priory to his honour, of which scarce a vestige remains.

The hind pursued by huntsmen and hounds was hardly in more desperate case than the handful of Cavaliers who, making a stand here, determined to dispute the whole force of the Commonwealth—three rash young noblemen, the Duke of Buckingham, a mere stripling; the Earl of Peterborough; and Lord Holland, the chief of them—with a couple of war-worn Colonels

to marshal the ranks. The one thing everybody longed for was a good night's rest after the weary ride. All seemed quiet and safe, the Parliament men baffled and left far in the rear, so that everybody slumbered and slept—the young sprigs of nobility and the old war-worn Colonels, all steeped in sleep, and the very vedettes nodding over the necks of their tired steeds.

Meanwhile, a handful of Parliament troopers had followed close on the heels of the fugitive Cavaliers, had tracked them to their place of refuge. There was a strong army-post at Hertford, reserves for the siege of Chelmsford, then in progress. These were warned for duty, and galloped off, six troops of them, fresh and in admirable order, both man and horse. Through the short midsummer night, swift and silent, with the ring and clatter of accoutrements waking the sleeping villagers, splashing through the fords, and thundering over bridges, rode these messengers of fate. They passed through Hitchin at night, and before dawn their advanced guard had reached Eatonford. A handful of Royalist horsemen guarded the bridge; these were driven in, and the strong column of horsemen thundered into quiet St. Neots.

The stout old war-worn Colonels did not lose their heads in this emergency; their men responded readily enough to the trumpet-call, and were mustered hastily in the market-place. Man against man the Cavaliers fought gallantly for a while, but were borne down by the weight and force of disciplined numbers. The stout Colonels fell, the one slain outright, the other mortally wounded, and the Cavaliers turned and fled. Buckingham and Peterborough were amongst the first flight, but Holland, the unfortunate leader of the fiasco, had not been able to get his points and laces tied in time to join the affair, and was captured in his sleeping-chamber. These sabre-lashes and pistol-shots were the last sputter of the great civil war—of the first chapter of it, that is—which ended with the execution of the king. The unlucky Earl of Holland lost his head for his share of the business, the loss a little salving his honour, which had been much impeached by his brother-Cavaliers, who had accused him of having purposely caused the failure of the enterprise.

St. Ives and St. Neots seem to be inseparably connected in people's minds, although a good breadth of Huntingdon

county lies between. The man with seven wives, who was met by one going to St. Ives, is not an historical character, unless there be some shadowy reference to the saint who gave his name to the town, one Ivo, a Persian, it is said, who might have been lavish in wives in his youth. The Persian saint would hardly have been such a marvel in the seventh century as now. Anyhow, the people seem to have taken him for granted very kindly, and dying at St. Ives, which was at that time called Slepe, the Persian's bones did wonders in the customary way, and might have made the fortune of the place, but that jealous rivals, establishing an abbey at Ramsey, carried off the relics to the more powerful foundation.

As for St. Ives in its present condition, it was visited by Carlyle when busy about his Cromwell, and he notes it as a small town "in flat, grassy country, of dingy aspect as a town, and very quiescent, except on market-days. Great cattle-market going on still, as in Cromwell's time. The church looking down into the very river, fringed with gross reedy herbage and bushes, black as Acheron, streaked with foul metallic glitterings and plays of colour." Then there is Cromwell's barn still to be seen, and Slepe Hall, then a boarding-school, where Cromwell lived, according to repute. As to local tradition about him, "fifty years ago a vague old parish-clerk had heard from very vague old persons that Cromwell had been seen attending divine service in the church with a piece of red flannel round his neck, being subject to inflammation." People talk, too, of rusty old broadswords to be found in old-fashioned farmhouses, with O. C. marked on their iron hilts; and there is little doubt that arms were distributed among the faithful before the actual outbreak of the civil war. The lands that Cromwell occupied—"a staid, most pacific, solid farmer of three-and-forty"—are still to be distinguished "gross, boggy lands fringed with willow-trees at the east end of St. Ives." And we may have a glimpse of the man later on still in the home-district; now a Colonel of horse, as he stands, hat in hand, before his stout old Royalist uncle, Sir Oliver, while his men are searching the house, Ramsey Abbey, for arms and munitions. And then from this parochial kind of business in his own home-counties, he issues—the great general of the war—with now some conscious thought of the destiny in store for him.

Ramsey Abbey itself was a noted monastery in its day, with its mitred abbot and rich endowments—a learned abbey, too, with its Hebrew library and schools. The abbot had a dignified London residence in Cripplegate, and at home was lord of all the country round, with hunting over forest and fen, and fishing in the big meres. Part of the abbey church still remains in the form of the parish church, and the town, with its one long street, curiously called the Great Whyte, and the High Street, crossing its top in the form of letter T, is not without interest. But of Ramsey and its ancient abbey there are no very clear accounts to be had, and, indeed, the whole county is sadly in want of a good comprehensive history which might be made to preserve what is still extant of old local lore and tradition, and laboriously piece together what facts are scattered like little grains of wheat among the vast incoherent mass of national and private records.

WITH THE FAIRIES IN THE COUNTY LONDONDERRY.

Is there a spot in this workaday world where Titania and Oberon, and their airy train, still hold revels beneath the moon? Are Peas-blossom and Mustard-seed to be met with by mortals in nooks where sweet musk-roses and eglantine bloom? These graceful elves are, we fear, no longer in any of their ancient haunts, but a near relation of theirs, Puck the clumsy, Puck the mischievous, has always loved Irish cabins and cold whinney knowes among Irish mountains. He does not disdain to warm his ungainly limbs beside turf-fires, or to satisfy his hunger with coarse fare; and by these humble hearths, and upon these bleak hills, we have lately discovered traces of him.

The reader will be surprised to learn that he lingers in the County Londonderry—one of the most civilised regions in the north of Ireland—and may be encountered in the mountainous districts that lie between Claudy and Dungiven. The present writer has lately collected the following fairy-tales in the above-mentioned districts. The narrators were small farmers and labourers, and in every case they seemed to believe the stories they told. Some of the stories relate to a period removed from the present day by a lifetime; others to events alleged to have taken place only a few years ago. Let us

premise that the Irishman's fairy is terribly afraid of iron, for what reason we have been unable to discover.

The first anecdote we shall give—Mary's door-key, tells of an adventure which occurred to the narrator's grand-aunt.

Mary and Niel Doolan were a most exemplary couple; they had been married for more than three years without having had a single disagreement, much less a regular quarrel. Mary was very pretty, and very sweet-tempered; and clever enough for Niel. It was no sorrow to him that she could neither read nor write, for he was uneducated himself; but if she had not made good butter, and laid out her halfpence economically, he would then have had something to say. They had no children, and they were very thrifty, so they lived comfortably, and were saving money. Niel had a horse of his own which he hired out to farmers in the neighbourhood, and Mary spun yarn. It was a pretty sight to see her seated at her wheel on the threshold of her house on summer evenings, her fair hair appearing from beneath a scarlet handkerchief, and her shapely bare foot on the treadle.

As she lived by the roadside, on the highway to Limavaddy, numbers of people were familiar with her charms; she had a wide circle of acquaintances, and a cheery greeting for all—indeed, she greeted strangers of whose very names she was ignorant, just as pleasantly as if they had been old neighbours. On a certain May Eve, she sat crooning an old ballad over her spinning, when a group of low-set people drew near, and stood watching her, but a little out of her sight. The traffic on the road had ceased, and if anyone had observed the group he would have thought that a party of village-children were listening to Mary's song. But the low-set people had old, quaint faces; they were very unlike children. They chattered and laughed in low tones, and pointed at Mary. After standing there for some time, they went down the valley of the Burnies, and disappeared among the hazels and birches of the thicket near Burnie Bridge.

The Burnies was the only pretty or romantic spot between Mary's cottage and Limavaddy. There were fertile fields and marshy tracts, and hills and dales in abundance, but the country was bare of trees and uninteresting, with the exception of that one lovely dell, where hazels and willows bent from a steep

bank over a clear, rippling stream, and a dreamy, gurgling sound was heard above the pebbles. Ladies and gentlemen from Dungiven and Limavaddy often made picnic-parties to the Burnies; and country girls went there in autumn to pick the large blackberries which hung in rich clusters over the stream, or nuts for Hallow E'en; but none of them had ever caught sight of the low-set people, who disappeared on that particular May Eve among the wild-roses and woodbine, at sundown.

A blackbird whistled loudly above the moss-grown rock, and thrushes and robins sang their evening song. The birds and rabbits knew that it was May Eve, and that they might see the fairy-train. Mothers put salt upon their children's heads on that evening, if obliged to send them a message to the shops, or to neighbours' houses; and in any house where an infant lay in its cradle, the mother was sure to put the tongs across it, if forced to leave the fire-side for a moment. Mary had no fear of danger for herself, though it was May Eve; she was safe and happy by Niel's side.

On the following morning she set out with yarn, to sell in Limavaddy-market, and Niel bade her take the house-key in her hand.

"You'll maybe be home afore me, Mary," said he, "for I ha' business wi' John Marshall, at the old chapel wall, that may keep me late; but if I can at all, I'll overtake you on your way home, and gie you a lift on the horse."

"Do come home wi' me, for any sake, Niel, my jewel," said his pretty wife coaxingly, "for I'm still lonesome, wantin' you."

She sold her yarn, and set out towards home, with the door-key in her hand, thinking that Niel was a lazy fellow not to have been ready to accompany her. But she was not more than a mile from Limavaddy when she heard the trot of a horse, and her husband overtook her. He helped her up behind him, and they rode on very comfortably, her arm round his waist and her feet hanging down against the horse's flank. They reached the bottom of the next hill to the Burnies, and Mary said:

"Let me down a wee while, Niel dear, an' I'll walk up the Brae; my feet is a wee cold."

He assisted her to dismount, and rode on slowly, thinking every moment that she would overtake him; but it grew dusk, and still there was no sign of her. He turned back, and went to the foot of the hill where

she had got off, but could not find a trace of her.

"Mary—Mary, where are you, my honey?" he called. There was an echo at the place, and his own words came back to him, but Mary's silvery tones were unheard. Now and then a whin-bush—i.e., furze or gorse—rather taller than others in the hedge, attracted him, and he rode up to it, fancying it might be his wife. Then, feeling extremely puzzled, he went home. It was just possible that Mary might have passed him in the uncertain light, and might now be preparing his supper. But the door was locked, and all within dark as pitch; so the poor fellow had nothing for it but to ride back to the spot where he had seen her last.

After another fruitless search he went dejectedly home and crept into the house by the bedroom-window. He got a match-box, laid the turf together, and kindled a fire, and then he sat down in front of the blaze with his chin in his hands.

What should he do without his bonnie Mary? Why had he left her alone in the dangerous neighbourhood of the Fairy Glen? All the tales his mother and grandmother had told him of women and children being carried away by the "good people" recurred with frightful clearness to his memory. It was true that Mary was fair enough to win fairy hearts. While he remained sunk in dejection, he heard a noise and looked round. His wife was coming through the "room" door, with the house-key bent and twisted into a curious shape in her hand. The hand was bleeding, and two of the fingers were broken.

"It's weel I had the key wi' me, Niel," said she, sinking down in her own place by the fire, and gasping as if exhausted and terrified, "for they tried hard to tak' me awa' wi' them, an' they couldna get doing it because I had the key."

"Who, my darling—who?"

"Whisht, Niel—whisht! it was them we willna name. They came round me at the foot o' the Burnie's Brae, an' they tried to get pulling the key from me, but I held tight. I thought there was twenty wee hands in this key at oncet, Niel, an' still I held tight for your sake. I didna wish them to tak' me awa' from you. There was a big wheen o' them, baith women an' men, all dressed in red. It's weel you gave me the key wi' me this day."

This adventure happened many years ago. Niel and Mary have long been dead

and gone, and none of the present generation have seen the fairies of the Burnies.

The following story is of recent date: Tom McEthinney was going home from work one winter evening, when, as he passed a thicket in a lonely place the moon shone out, and he saw a funeral procession—the coffin carried by four men, while a crowd of people followed. His surprise was very great. Who would have a funeral at that hour, and whither was the corpse being borne, for there was no churchyard or cemetery near? Besides, he had not heard of a death among his neighbours—and stop—were those short men his neighbours?

He happened to have his door-key in his hand, and on the impulse of the moment he flung it upon the coffin. Very astonishing was the result of the action; the coffin fell to the ground, and the bearers and funeral cortege disappeared. Tom plucked up courage to touch the lid, and finding that it was not nailed down he raised it. Was that a corpse within? The face was pale certainly, and the eyes were closed, but there was no look of death. He looked again. Surely he knew that face. The supposed corpse was his neighbour's son, young Brian Cassidy, the handsomest youth in Glenedra. While he gazed at him, Brian opened his eyes and spoke.

"Is that you, Tom? I ha' been sleepin'," and as he stretched himself the coffin crumbled away, and left not a board behind.

"Can you stand, Brian dear?"

"Aye, bravely! What's wrong wif me, Tom?"

When they reached the village of Glenedra they heard loud cries proceeding from Cassidy's house, and they walked in upon a mournful scene. On the bed lay Brian, to all appearance laid out in his shroud. The women had washed and dressed him, and were now giving vent to their grief. As Tom looked from the living Brian to the dead Brian, he felt more puzzled than ever, and he hardly found words to explain his adventure to the parents.

They, on their part, had as confused a story to tell. Brian had suddenly fainted dead away, and had never come to, and all was being prepared for his wake and funeral. Grief now gave place to joy. Brian, with hearty appetite, sat down to eat the delicacies that had been provided for the visitors to his wake.

"An' now," said he, when strength and courage had returned to him, "what'll we do wif thon rascal?" glancing at the supposed corpse on the bed.

Terror kept his parents and neighbours speechless.

"Bring him here, an' lay him on the fire," proceeded Brian. "Gie me a hand wif him, Tom dear."

The corpse grew lighter and lighter in their arms, and by the time they reached the fireside, it was found that they held nothing but a blackthorn-stick!

Paddy Mulreany was a very civil, obliging man, on excellent terms with all his neighbours. He lived in the Benedy, a "very gentle place"—i.e., a place haunted by the fairies; but he himself had had no experience of them—as far as he was concerned there might be no "good people" within many miles of his house. Yet he made his wife sweep her hearth and leave a bright fire burning when she went to bed, as his mother and grandmother had always done. Sometimes his bannocks of oat-bread were nibbled at the edges, but his wife said that mice must have got into the barrel where they were kept. Paddy's house was at the foot of the mountain. His goat and donkey grazed on patches of the short, sweet grass that grew between clumps of heather on the mountain behind the house.

One evening, when he went to drive the animals home, he saw a tiny woman eating bilberries beside a rock. She was bending over the little bush, and her face was hidden; but he felt a curiosity about her for she was not like anyone he had ever seen before, so he bade her "good-evening" in his civil way.

She turned round with a smile, and talked to him very pleasantly.

"We ha' had a nice, wee chat, Paddy Mulreany," said she, when he was about to take leave of her.

"How do you know my name?" he asked in surprise.

"How wad I not know your name, an' me livin' here aback o' your house for ninety good year an' more. I knowed your mother an' your grandmother too, an' your old father, an' civil, decent neighbours they were, the whole o' them. But they werena a hair better nor you, Paddy, for you're a civil man."

"Deed, ma'am, I never harmed anybody, to my knowledge."

"Ay, Paddy, that's the character you'll

get from us, anyway. Ay, an' your woman, too. Will you an' her come an' see me next Sunday?"

"With all the pleasure in life," replied he, very much puzzled; "but where do you live?"

"Here! if you knock on this rock just here," showing him a particular spot, "it will open, an' you'll get into my house; an', listen, Paddy, always leave some broken bread in your barrel, for we cannot break your big bannocks."

Paddy's wife was frightened when she heard of the invitation, and she would not suffer her husband to go near the rock on Sunday, so the visit was not paid, but she obeyed the little woman about the bread, and found that little pieces of oaten-cake and little drops of milk were taken regularly, and everything continued to prosper with them.

The "good people" expect liberal treatment from their neighbours; they like to have a share of whatever is going in farmhouse or cottage.

A girl, called Kitty Majilton, was hired by a rich farmer, one Joseph Quigley, at Derrychrier. Kitty seemed to be a useless, awkward girl, and her master and mistress were much provoked with her. One thing especially annoyed them—she spilt the milk every evening in bringing it across the yard from the cowhouse. This made Joseph almost decide upon turning her off. But as he was walking past some "scrogs and scraws"—i.e., wild, natural wood, on his farm—he heard a child crying and asking for milk, and a voice replying, "Whiaht, wean—whiaht! Sure you'll get your drink when Joseph Quigley's cows is milked."

Joseph laid these words to heart, and walked home thoughtfully to tell what he had heard. "I'll tell you what you'll do," said he to Kitty. "You'll milk a little pigginful this evening, an' tak' it to them scrogs an' scraws, an' call out 'Kep,' an' throw the piggin in among them."

Kitty did so, and next morning a great noise of singing and shouting was heard, and invisible hands unloosed the cows in the byre, and drove them out to grass.

It would seem that the fairies are very unreasonable and capricious in their spite, and their punishments utterly disproportioned to whatever offence they may have been offered. It was so in the case of poor Paddy Brogan, of Oaks Lodge. Paddy's boots needed mending, so, as he possessed

only one pair, he set out to the shoemaker's with them upon his feet. He sat bare-footed beside the shoemaker's bench till eleven o'clock at night, watching the patching being done, then, very tired and sleepy, he made his way home. His road lay past the gate of Oaks Lodge, and for a quarter of a mile through a picturesque wood, consisting of hazels, birches, and hollies. He knew that the wood belonged to the fairies, but he did not dream of danger, having "never disoblged the 'good people' to his knowledge." There was a bright moon, and the feathery bare branches of the wood, the silvery stems of the birches, and black arms of the thorns looked weird and beautiful. Paddy was plodding homeward, anxious to get to bed, when he heard voices on the other side of the hedge. "There's old Paddy Brogan, going home to bed," said one.

"Let's chase him," said another. "Let's take the boots off him," said a third.

Paddy fancied that the speakers were his neighbour's children, who were trying to play a trick upon him, so he threw his hat at them over the hedge. There was a yell of rage; he was surrounded by a crowd before he knew where he was; he was thrown down on the road, his boots were pulled off, and when he struggled to his feet he was pelted with them. His boots seemed to be multiplied into fifty pairs at least, for they were always flying after him, and as soon as they fell to the ground were picked up and thrown at him again. He was pursued to his own door, crept into the house half dead, and kept his bed for nine weeks.

Kitty Donnelly had always known that the old thorn-tree in her field was a "gentle bush," consequently she was not surprised when her little son, Francis, came running into the house one day to say that there was a tiny, wee man, dressed in green trousers and red jacket, sitting in the tree. All Francis's brothers and sisters ran to see the marvel, and his mother followed; but they could see nothing but leaves, and flowers, and lichen-grown boughs. Next day a baby was born in the cottage. It was dressed, and lying on the nurse's knee when the father came home from his work.

"What way's Kitty?" he enquired.

"Rightly; she's sleepin' there in the bed," was the reply.

He went over to the bed; it was empty! It was impossible that she could have got

up and walked out of the house, and nobody had been seen to enter. The gravest fears took possession of the husband. He thought of the thorn-tree in his field, and of how he had broken a branch off it to drive the cows home.

Sinking their voices to a whisper, he and the nurse spoke of the "good people." They knew it was useless to seek the lost woman.

Nine melancholy weeks passed, and Donnelly was beginning to grow accustomed to his sad condition as a widower, when one evening his wife walked into the house and sat down in her old place.

"Where were you, jewel, all this time?" asked the husband.

"I ha' been very near you, dear," she replied; "but I darena say more," and she trembled.

"An' were you well-treated, darlin'?"

"I got the best o' gude treatment; but dinna ax me more. I darena say one word."

She was greatly changed: her cheerfulness was gone, and she sat silent, hardly noticing the children. She did not improve as time went on. She had been a smart, clever woman, bright and active—she was now almost a simpleton, and poor Donnelly had to be both father and mother to the family.

They soon afterwards went to America, and nothing further was ever heard of them at Tamneyarnet. The next man who took the farm stubbed up the thorn, and as he was ploughing the land, his horse dropped down dead.

"Is it, then, so very dangerous to meddle with a 'gentle bush'?" we asked the old man, who told us the above story.

"Dangerous!" he cried, "faix an' troth it is! Ax my woman, there, what happened to me from meddling wi' ane o' them bushes."

His wife, who was bedridden, raised her grey head, and looked out of her curious bed in the wall, full of eager interest.

"Ay," she croaked, "he'll tell you what occurred, an' he's a man wouldna tell a lie no more nor the clergy in the pulpit."

We hastened to express our faith in the old man's veracity, and our anxiety to hear his adventure. He turned his chair so as to face the open door, which commanded a view of the little river Owenbeg, running between shelving, muddy banks, whereon shabby willows and alders grew at intervals. Just opposite the cabin, on the

very edge of the stream, was a stunted thorn.

"Do you see thon bush, ma'am? When we came to live here I conceited it wad be easy cut down for the fire, an' I took my hatchet, an' went for to do it. Weel, I had gave no more nor the first wee hack, when my foot caught in a hole that I never seen before, an' I fell into the water on my face. The water was low, for there had been a long drowth, an' I thought I'd get out in a minute; but they rowled an' rowled me over an' over in the bed o' the river, till I was near hand drowned; an' when I came home to my woman my shirt was full o' sand."

"You never tried to cut that bush again?"

"In troth I did not! 'Deed thon woman wouldna ha' let me attempt it. I was glad to get off wi' the life; but I didna know the bush belonged to them, or I'd ha' been lazy to take the hatchet to it."

"Do you know of any more adventures? See, here is an ounce of tobacco in exchange for your experiences."

The old fellow eyed the tobacco wistfully, rubbing his head as if to quicken his memory.

"There was a farmer—a Davy Latimer—up at Lignapaisthe," he began, "that fleeced his cottier to stub up a thorn-bush on his land. The man wasna willing to do it, but the master said he'd gie him all the seed-potatoes he required, so at long an' at last he went an' destroyed the tree. His cow was on the mountain wi' Davy Latimer's cattle, an' she couldna be found that night when his beasts was brung home. I mind the lamentation there was, an' all the neighbours tellin' the poor man he shouldna ha' put a hand to thon tree. Next morning his cow was found dead—drowned in a bog-hole."

The fairies appear to interest themselves deeply in the birth of mortal babes, and sometimes are in a position to give a father the earliest intelligence of the arrival of a little stranger in his family. Micky Madick was on his way home from Feeny Fair one evening, when he was overtaken by a group of horsemen whom he had never seen before. He was surprised to see such a number of riders together, and still more surprised when they greeted him one after another:

"Goed-evening, Micky Madick! Good-evening, Micky Madick!"

"Good-evening kindly," said Micky, and

he tried to get up with them as they rode on in front, but with all his exertion he could not reach them.

At length they approached the river Owenbeg at Tamneyarton bridge, and leaving the high-road went down the bank into the river. As Micky bent over the bridge, straining his eyes to catch a glimpse of the horsemen, he saw nothing but the tumbling water and the muddy bank; but he heard the words: "Hurry home, Micky Madick, for your wife has got a fine son." Micky hastened home as he was told, and found the news correct.

The elves seem to have taken an unselfish interest in Micky's domestic felicity. In the case of William Taggart they were not so kind. William set forth one night in haste to bring the "sage femme" to his sick wife, and on his way home, accompanied by the woman, saw a light in a little copse which they were obliged to pass through to reach the house. Behold, there was a cottage in the wood where by day only a hedge was to be seen, and a circle of women sat before the door rocking a cradle and singing to a babe. A few steps brought William to his own door, and he found that his wife had given birth to a stillborn son in his absence. It was no use to go back into the copse to search for that mysterious cottage—all was dark; no sound of singing, no glimpse of nurses or infant to be perceived. To his dying day William believed that his son had been stolen at the moment of his birth, and was living with the fairies.

SOME AMATEUR ACTORS.

It is a curious fact that our French neighbours, "born actors" as they are said to be, and for whom everything relating to the drama and its interpreters possesses a never-failing attraction, display comparatively little inclination or aptitude for private theatricals. Now and then, but at rare intervals, some enterprising leader of fashion may organise the getting up in her drawing-room of one of Alfred de Musset's or Octave Feuillet's Proverbes, or perhaps offer to her intimates an original trifle by some patriotic votary of the muse; but even then the female characters are almost invariably sustained by professional actresses engaged for the occasion, and supported, more or less efficiently, by two or three amateurs persuaded by the hostess to brave

the ordeal. These exhibitions, however, are exceptional, the Parisians, as a rule—whether deterred by the necessity of learning their parts, or by an instinctive mistrust of their histrionic ability matters little—endorsing in this respect the opinion of the Oriental spectator of a cricket-match, who expressed his astonishment that anyone should take the trouble of doing himself what he could get others to do for him.

It was not so in the days when Marie Antoinette, in all the splendour of her radiant beauty, delighted to personate the heroines of Sedaine and Beaumarchais on the miniature stage of the Petit Trianon. There, from 1776 to 1787, figured successively the royal princesses, the gay and gallant Count d'Artois (afterwards Charles the Tenth, of priest-ridden memory), Madame Diane de Polignac, M. de Crussol, and the Count de Vaudreuil, the same at whose château of Genevilliers took place the first representation of *The Marriage of Figaro*. M. Campan, the father-in-law of the authoress of the *Memoirs*, filled the double office of prompter and stage-inspector. The audience chiefly consisted of those members of the royal family not engaged in the performance and their personal attendants, while the post of critic was exclusively monopolised by the complaisant Grimm. If we may believe contemporary accounts, the company, although far from meriting the flattering encomiums of Diderot's correspondent, was fairly good, the Queen and M. de Vaudreuil being generally acknowledged to bear away the palm. The amiable Madame Elizabeth, however, proved, on the contrary, so incompetent an actress that she soon retired from the arena, and was advantageously replaced by the Duchess de Guisa.

Shortly after the restoration of the Bourbons, two amateur companies, respectively managed by Madame d'Abrantes and Madame Sophie Gay, performed alternately in the private theatre of M. de Castellane in the Faubourg St. Honoré. The latter lady, who had attained a certain celebrity as a novelist and as the librettiste of Paër's *Maitre de Chapelle*, contributed to the repertory several clever comedies, for the interpretation of which she was especially fortunate in securing the best available talent of the day, including such able coadjutors as Count d'Adhémar, M. de Cuchet, and the pretty Mlle. Lambert. Madame Gay's witty daughter Delphine, the first wife of Emile de

Girardin, alludes to one of these pieces in her delightful *Courriers de Paris*, an extract from which may be appropriately appended here :

"We had lost sight of one of our friends for the last three weeks ; no one, not even his own family, knew what had become of him. He was neither to be found in society, nor at the opera, nor in the Bois, nor even at home ; in short, people began to suspect that he was the victim of some unrequited attachment. At last, one day, we chanced to meet him, walking very fast, and looking as if he had all the cares of the world upon his shoulders. 'Where have you been ?' we asked. 'No one ever sees you now.' 'I can't stop to talk,' he replied ; 'they are waiting for me at M. de Castellane's rehearsal ;' and off he started again. 'What part can they have given him ?' we thought. 'Henri Quatre, perhaps !' (they were then rehearsing Madame Gay's comedy) ; but, being profoundly ignorant of his dramatic capabilities, we were unable to come to any conclusion.

"When the night of performance arrived, we resolved to be on the look-out for him. The first act ended amid great applause, but no signs of our friend as yet. Some allusion had been made to a brother of the heroine, who was to appear in the second act, so we waited ; but, when he came on, we beheld a perfect stranger. During the entracte, in which the battle of Ivry was supposed to take place, we heard the roar of the cannon, and said to ourselves, 'The soldiers of the League will be here presently, and no doubt he is one of them.' Not at all. In they marched, but we looked in vain ; he was not there. When the curtain fell we began to be uneasy about him. He must have been taken ill, we concluded, and obliged to throw up his part. At that very moment, who should accost us but our friend himself, in a high state of excitement. 'What a success !' he exclaimed. 'It has quite overpowered me.' 'You !' we said ; 'what have you to do with it ?' 'Everything,' he retorted. 'Without me there would have been no piece at all.' 'Why, you were not Henri Quatre ; what were you, then ?' 'The cannon,' he replied, 'and uncommonly hard work it was.'"

With us, private theatricals have of late years become a recognised and highly-popular feature in the programme, not only of country house gatherings, but also of metropolitan "matinées," or, rather,

"afternoons." In my younger days, such exhibitions of talent or incompetency—as the case might be—were comparatively rare, and, consequently, excited a far greater sensation than they would be likely to produce at the present time. I can remember, as far back as 1825, a performance of *The School for Scandal*, for the benefit of a charity, at the Cheltenham Theatre, patronised by the Berkeley Hunt, the master of which time-honoured institution was then Colonel Berkeley, afterwards successively Baron Segrave and Earl Fitzhardinge, and one of the best light comedians of that period. He naturally played Charles Surface, and his brother Grantley, Joseph, the other parts, with the exception of Lady Teazle, for which the charming Maria Foote had been expressly engaged, being exclusively filled by amateurs. I was then hardly of an age to appreciate the merits of the actors, but can perfectly recollect that for weeks before and after the eventful night nothing else was talked of at Cheltenham.

In Mrs. Kemble's delightful *Records*, an amusing account is given of the production at Bridgewater House, in 1831, of Lord Ellesmere's version of *Hernani*, played by herself, Mrs. Bradshaw (Maria Tree), Lord Francis Egerton, and Messrs. Craven and Henry Greville. Describing one of the rehearsals of the drama, she says, "Everything went very smoothly till an unlucky young 'mountaineer' rushed on the stage, and terrified me and *Hernani* half to death by inarticulating some horrible intelligence of the utmost importance to us, which his fright rendered quite incomprehensible. He stood with his arms wildly spread abroad, stuttering, spluttering, madly ejaculating and gesticulating, but not one articulate syllable could he get out. I thought I should have exploded with laughter, but, as the woman said who saw the murder, 'I knew I mustn't (faint), and I didn't.'"

Of a later performance of the same piece at the St. James's Theatre in 1847, Macready says in his *Reminiscences*, "Greville and Craven were very good for amateurs, but tragedy by amateurs !" Further on he remarks, "As an amateur performance it was exceedingly good, but this commendation is held of no account by the actors, and they desire to be judged on positive grounds. They seem to be under a perfect delusion as to their degrees of skill and power in this art, of which they do not know what may be called the very rudiments." Digitized by Google

One of the most deservedly successful essays of the kind within my recollection, was an almost impromptu entertainment organised by Lady Cowley at the British Embassy in Paris, in 1845; the pieces chosen for the occasion were portions of *The School for Scandal*, and *Charles the Second*; or, the *Merry Monarch*, preceded by a smartly written prologue from the practised pen of Lady Dufferin. As a matter of course, Charles Sheridan, "a sort of younger brother of the Apollo Belvedere," as Fanny Kemble calls him, played Charles Surface, and Mr. Lawrence Peel (brother of Sir Robert) Joseph; both were excellent, as was also Mr. Brooke Greville. "The star of the evening, however, and really one to shine on any stage," says Macready, who was among the audience, "was Miss Mac-Tavish (who subsequently married the Hon. Henry Howard) as Mary Copp. Her acting was naive, sprightly, arch, simple, and beautiful"—a very pretty compliment from so severe a critic of non-professional histrionics as the great tragedian.

In February, 1849, I was present at a performance of *Richelieu*, and *The Captain of the Watch*, at the Strand Theatre, the male personages in both pieces being sustained by the leading amateurs of the day. Mr. Davidson, a really good comedian, whose conception of the character was modelled after that of Macready, was the Cardinal, and Colonel Charles Seymour, one of the handsomest officers in the army, Louis the Thirteenth. In the comedy, the part originally played by Lafont was appropriately assigned to Captain (now Sir Henry) de Bathe, and the cast including the charming Mrs. Nisbett and her pretty sister, Miss Jane Mordaunt, a more satisfactory ensemble of all-round acting could not possibly have been desired.

It is hardly necessary to advert to the illustrious band of literary and artistic volunteers, who, some five-and-thirty years ago, carried out their noble design of relieving the needs of their less fortunate brethren by the display of genuine histrionic talent, and who, in *Every Man in his Humour*, and the late Lord Lytton's *Not so Bad as We Seem*, won golden opinions from admiring thousands. Few, if any, of these now survive, but the object of their untiring efforts, and the earnestness of purpose by which it was triumphantly attained, are not likely to be soon forgotten.

Amateurs of this stamp are not to be classed with the ordinary run of stage-struck tyros, whose only ambition is to

while away an idle hour, and display their pretentious incapacity before a drawing-room audience, happily unconscious of the not altogether benevolent criticisms to which they are exposed. In nine cases out of ten the parties principally concerned in these exhibitions have not the remotest idea of what is technically called the "business" of the stage; their attitudes and gestures are stilted and unnatural, and their attempts to appear at ease deplorable failures. They either gabble nervously through the dialogue or are completely inaudible; moreover, their memory generally fails them at the very moment when they most need it, and the unlucky individual who has good-naturedly undertaken the office of prompter finds his task anything but a sinecure. If by chance a well-meant piece of advice from a more experienced colleague is hinted to them, it is quietly pooh-poohed, and never acted on. Neophytes are apt to imagine themselves omniscient, and although they profess their readiness to profit by any suggestion, invariably discover some more or less plausible reason for declining to accept it.

As long as people are content to limit their dramatic aspirations to farces or one-act pieces, requiring, at most, three or four personages, the infliction may be endured, for it is comparatively soon over. A telegram dispatched to Mr. Lacy's successor in the Strand (Mr. French) will ensure the speedy arrival of materials amply sufficient for their purpose, neither entailing the difficulties of complicated scenery nor demanding much mental exertion in the shape of study. It rarely happens, however, that lady amateurs are satisfied unless their airs and graces are becomingly set off by at least half-a-dozen changes of costume, the inevitable consequence being that a five-act comedy is unanimously decided on, ostensibly as furnishing a better opportunity for the development of their artistic talent, but in reality for the glorification of Worth or Madame Elise. Then comes the casting of parts, and the stage-manager, whoever he may be, has a hard time of it—"all are Hamlets, and none are Laertes." No one will play second fiddle or yield an inch in the important item of precedence, and it is only when the fair ones are thoroughly convinced that matters must be amicably arranged, or the projected performance abandoned, that the characters are at last allotted, and the rehearsals begin. On these, and on the

final effects of their united labours, we may charitably drop the curtain, merely premising that whatever may be the comedy selected for the evening's entertainment, the result is tolerably certain to remind the spectator of Much Ado About Nothing.

LEFT OUTSIDE.

A STORY OF KENSINGTON GARDENS.

CHAPTER II.

THERE is no denying that the life of a nursery-governess in a fashionable London household is generally of a somewhat monotonous and unexciting character, so that I am not going to try to make it appear that that of Susan Lane was in any way remarkably so. Some of her friends, indeed, thought it a very fortunate one, and perhaps they were right. The eldest daughter of a country surgeon, whose death had left his wife and family very badly off, she was considered exceptionally lucky in being taken at seventeen as companion by an elderly invalid lady, an old patient of her father's, and living within a mile or two of her home; and Susie herself, though shedding many tears at parting for the first time in her life from mother and "the children," had rejoiced at being still within reach of them, and able to add to their comfort by the contribution of more than half of her small salary.

But the old lady, not taking to Dr. Lane's successor, removed to London very shortly afterwards so as to be near some fashionable physician, whose fame had reached her; and under his assiduous care she grew so rapidly worse that Susie's twenty pounds soon became the hardest earned wages that ever girl received. She was patient and willing, most gentle of voice and touch, and with a temper so impossible of ruffling, that even jealous ladies'-maids and imperious cooks gave up the attempt in despair, and merely walked roughshod over her without attempting to embitter the performance by any undue aggravations. Her employer, too, was really fond of her; but as her liking showed itself by letting no one else read aloud to her by day, sit up with her at night, or give her her food and medicine at all times, Susie's post proved no sinecure; and the almost constant confinement to two hot rooms from which every breath of outer air was jealously excluded, the disturbed nights and unvaried society of

a feeble, querulous invalid, so told on her young health and strength, that only a very little while before the old lady's death she broke down herself, and had to be sent home to recruit.

It was a pity; for her employer only lived a few weeks longer, and, perhaps—who knows!—if Susie had been with her to the end, might have remembered an oft-repeated promise to leave the girl something at her death. As it was, Susie got her salary paid to the day, and nothing more; not even a message in acknowledgment of her eighteen months of willing care and nursing, while at home she found several changes in prospect. An uncle in Canada had sent for her brother, offering to adopt him out there, and her mother was about to be married again to the vicar of the parish in which she had made her home since her widowhood. He, too, had been married before, had one son, and was by no means a rich man; so, perhaps, he was justified in thinking that he did as much as could be expected of him when, for the sake of the pretty, plaintive-eyed little widow, he took upon him the burden of her two younger children, and bestirred himself all he could to find a fresh situation for the elder girl, who had already proved herself capable of earning a living for herself.

Susie fully agreed with him. Why should she not work? It was all quite just and fair, and she felt thankful to her future stepfather when, after staying at home barely two months to recruit her shattered health, he told her one day that he had found her a situation as nursery-governess to the children of a Mrs. Farquharson, in London. The lady had written that she did not require any very severe accomplishments, her children being very young, but rather someone who would be patient, gentle, and energetic; moreover, "a lady" (underlined), so as to require no vulgar supervision as to her own conduct; and fond of exercise, as the little girl, being very delicate, required to be kept in the open air a great deal, and amused, instead of having her mind forced by many lessons.

Mrs. Lane declared with tears of gratitude that the place seemed made for dear Susie, and to the girl herself it sounded very pleasant. Easy lessons, plenty of fresh air and exercise, and the merry prattle of children, were just what would do her good after the close, stived-up rooms and wearisome invalid of her last situation; and she looked forward to

this with cheerful gratitude for having obtained it.

She had held it now for more than two years, and if it had not turned out quite the paradise she expected, she was sufficiently exempt from any active ill-treatment or misery in it to have never once thought of leaving it.

Mr. Farquharson was a stockbroker living in Clanricarde Gardens, and his wife was a very gay and fashionable person, not quite so well off in reality as she liked to appear to the world she lived in, and, therefore, more inclined to save in those necessary household matters which did not show than in the merely ornamental ones which did. If you had a nursery-governess and no baby actually in arms, you could manage with one nurse; it would only be arranging the children's walks and meals a little differently; and while Egbert and Tommy were only eight and nine, they could do with half-a-day's schooling at the fashionable day-school for boys which they attended hard-by, and work up with Miss Lane in the afternoon.

Mrs. Farquharson was a capital manager, and arranged every item of her household rule so well that, as Susie had said, there was plenty for her to do from the moment when she got up in the morning till she lay down at night.

But, after all, what can be better for a girl than plenty of occupation?

Mrs. Farquharson had early enquired of her young governess if she had any friends in London, and being answered in the negative, had said very charmingly:

"Well, my dear Miss Lane, I can't be unselfish enough to regret it, as I hope that will induce you to attach yourself more to ourselves." She added shortly afterwards: "It is such a comfort to me to know that I can always depend on you, as a young lady, to keep yourself to yourself, and not compromise your own dignity or mine by any improper intimacies. There is nothing I could less endure than to leave my children to some vulgar young woman who might either neglect them or bring them in contact with her own undesirable associates. Now, you, I feel sure, have been too well brought up to even wish to know anyone not already known to and approved of by your mother and her excellent husband."

And Susie had smiled faintly and assented vaguely, not seeing in her simplicity that this brief sentence did in sober fact relegate her to the undivided

society of five children under ten, and the nurse who shared the care of them with her.

Mrs. Farquharson Susie only saw, and perhaps exchanged half-a-dozen words with, at breakfast and lunch. Indeed, it was not by that lady's will that they met at the former meal, it being no part of her plan to make a companion of her nursery-governess; but her husband had insisted of late on having the three elder children down to breakfast with him, on the plea that, as he never saw them (Sundays excepted) at any other time, he would not even know them if he met them in the street; and it was therefore necessary to have Miss Lane down also to see that they behaved themselves.

They were not loveable children. It may be a hard thing to say, but I doubt if many of the fashionable children of the period are. It is not their fault, but that of their education. Their mothers have nothing to do with them beyond bringing them into the world. Their fathers they scarcely see or know. The servants to whom they are left, and who are constantly being changed after the manner of London households, care nothing for them. What wonder if the poor little wretches themselves grow up selfish, hard, and cold-hearted under an arrangement so eminently uncalculated to make them anything else? The little Farquharsons were only average specimens of this type. They were not loving themselves, and they didn't want to be loved; and poor Susie, who was dearly fond of those rough and riotous young Turks, her own brothers and sisters, found her attempts at kisses and caresses so unpalatable to her pupils, and her appeals to their feelings so absolutely unintelligible by the light of their practical and self-interested young minds, that she had long ceased to offer them: feeling that it was better to resign herself to the "ways" of the household, than to expose herself to the mortification of being snubbed as gushing or "silly" by such very young persons.

Fortunately, her nature was not a rebellious one, and even her letters home—those letters which still enclosed nearly half of her small salary, a course rendered necessary by her stepfather's parsimony—contained no complaints in addition. Her mother's, to her, were far more effusive. She had added twin babies to the family at the vicarage, a liberty which her husband had justly resented by packing off the two younger Lane children to

the most economical and distant school his ingenuity could discover; and the poor woman, who had a mother's love for her offspring, found her new bed not altogether one of roses. She was too fond of her husband to complain of him, though she did so, freely enough, of other matters; and Susie's letters, in return, were chiefly filled with tenderest sympathy, questions as to the children, and other home matters. Of her own life she said little; it would grieve mother to fancy she was not happy, and, besides, she could not bear the idea of her stepfather being made the confidant of her private feelings. So even the luxury of home-letters was a very restricted one to her; and as to any other friendly communion, it may be sufficient to say that during the two years and a half in which she had lived in the Farquharson household, she had never yet enjoyed so long a conversation with anyone outside it as that into which the American girl had beguiled her.

There are so many girls whose one aim in life is to attract notice, that the very fact of their success is a shield to their quieter sisters; and, so far, Susie's plainness of dress and feature, her natural timidity, and the ceaseless "exigencies" of Flo and her brothers, had been effectual in shielding her from attention, either of a pleasant or unpleasant nature.

Yet this pretty American girl, with the gorgeous clothes, had noticed her, and persisted in doing so despite all the involuntary rebuffs with which shyness and reserve armed the young governess. She would talk, would ask questions, pity, and be confidential, till the mere remembrance of it all—of the sparkling, sympathetic eyes, the bits of family history so freely accorded; above all, the delicious pressure of that little, grey-gloved hand—made Susan Lane's pulses beat more quickly, and her cheeks burn with sympathetic excitement. She felt as if she had been reading the first volume of some exciting story, and longed to go on with it. Such a charming story, too, and such a charming heroine! She kept thinking about it in little interrupted bits all day; during the children's dinner, when Mrs. Farquharson addressed her three times, once to ask a question about the weather, and twice to beg that she would pay more attention to some defect in the children's manners; during the afternoon walk with the boys; while Flo partook of her post-prandial nap, and during the lessons which followed; during the turmoil

of schoolroom-tea, and the greater turmoil of the subsequent games; but most of all, and most happily, when the small fry were at last in their respective cots, and she was left at liberty to sit by the open window, with its dingy prospect of dead walls and back-yards, and dream of the delightful life led by the other girl, wondering where she would go that evening, and whether she would vex Calton by asking questions and "looking around." In her heart Susie said to herself that she could not imagine the fair American doing anything else; though she felt sure at the same time that the vexation was not of a very severe order. She was quite certain that Calton was very nice. The tone of his sister's "he's real good to me always!" had let her into a whole history of brotherly perfections and tenderness; and she even found herself trying to picture him, a tall, fair, broad-shouldered man, like his sister and yet unlike, with her blue eyes, only graver and more sober, her frankness with greater dignity; one who would be at once kind and firm and tender, full of

High thought and amiable words
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.

Susie's picture was so pleasant when finished that she sat contentedly looking at it in her mind's-eye until the entrance of a servant to light the gas aroused her from her meditations; but even then she got out Egbert's thumbed and inky atlas, and amused herself by tracing out, with the tip of her soft finger, the route over which the travellers had journeyed, and trying to imagine all the different wonders of the cities where they had stayed.

She had not spent such an idle or delightful evening for years.

There was no pretty American girl in the gardens next day, however; nor on the following one, though both Flo and Susie looked out anxiously for her.

"I don't like that lady; she told lies, she did," the small child remarked, wrathful at the non-appearance of her promised sweets; and though Susie said, "Fie, Flo! Hush! you shouldn't say that. The lady was only joking," her own disappointment was almost as great as the little girl's.

"Yet I never expected to see her again," she told herself stoutly. "How very, very silly I am!"

On the third day, however, as she was sitting quietly at the foot of Speke's monument, knitting and thinking, while Flo gambolled after a little dog at some

distance, a voice behind her—the very one in her mind—exclaimed :

“Well, this is strange! I was just calculating I might meet you again to-day; and here you are! How do you do? You haven't forgotten me, have you?” This last because poor, silly Susan, who had been dreaming of nothing else for three days and three nights, was too much taken aback by shyness and surprise at this sudden greeting to do anything but open her soft grey eyes to their utmost width; and colour all over like a rose bursting suddenly into blossom. “And for all the world as if I were a male being,” the other girl said afterwards in describing it. “But it's the loveliest thing to see, and I'd give anything to know how to do it myself.”

“Had you forgotten me?” she repeated, smiling so prettily that Susie—too charmed for either shyness or reticence—answered with almost childlike fervour :

“Forgotten! Oh no, I could not; you were so kind.”

The pretty smile deepened and softened.

“Well, it's real nice of you to say so, anyway,” she said, seating herself in a graceful little attitude beside Susie—her costume of fawn-coloured cambric and blue surah silk was more wonderful than ever, and she took great care not to crumple it, and just to show the right amount of her tiny bronze boot—“for I couldn't somehow forget you either. I felt like I must see you again; and I guess I know now why it was. I only knew before there was something sort of home-like in your eyes—I couldn't imagine what—that made me feel like crying when I looked at you.”

“Do I remind you of anyone?” asked Susie.

She, too, “felt like crying” at the moment, but it was that anyone should speak to her so, and lay such dainty, caressing fingers on the sleeve of her shabby black jacket.

“Yes; and of the dearest friend I ever had—Elizabeth Emery. Oh, you wouldn't wonder at my feeling bad if you'd ever known her. She was just the loveliest soul in the world—lovely every way; and you're as like her as you can be. I'd give anything for Calton to see you, and yet—I don't know. I guess it would make him feel worse than me.”

“Is she dead?” asked Susan softly, for the tremble in the American girl's voice seemed to bring them nearer than even her previous kindness.

“Yes; she died of small-pox, nursing a poor Irish help of her mother's, two years ago. It was then Calton came to Europe. He couldn't stay home afterwards. Indeed, we were most afraid he'd turn Catholic; and become a monk, or something; but General Valpy—he's a friend of ours in the Senate—got him a post in the embassy here, and he came over to London instead.”

Some people might have stalled at the bathos here, but Susie was a young person sadly deficient in humour. She asked very earnestly, “Did your brother care for her, then?” and blushed crimson immediately afterwards at her own ill-bred curiosity. The other girl nodded.

“They were going to be married. He'd been engaged to her four years, but she wouldn't leave her mother before. She sacrificed herself every way. Oh, I did love Elizabeth Emery!”

Susie was silent. So this ideal hero, the “Arthur” of her imagination, had loved his—not Guinevere; rather the “lily maid,” and had lost her, too, though not as Launcelot lost Elaine. It added something to her picture of him, and to the pretty story she had been reading. She almost started when her companion exclaimed with a gay laugh :

“Do tell, if we're not talking just like old friends, and all the while I've not even told you my name—have I?”

“Mine is Susan Lane,” said Susie gently. “And mine is Virginia Gale Medlicott. Do you know, I most wish yours had been Elizabeth; but it doesn't matter, for you're just as like her, anyhow, and I guess you're real good too. I thought so when I saw you so patient with that hateful child. Why, here she is!”

“Have you brought the sweets?” said Flo sternly. “Miss Lane said you was joking. I think joking is telling lies. Have you got them now?”

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LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

LITTLE by little Phil's calmness came back to him. Outside, on Mrs. Thorne's doorstep, he paused a moment to collect his thoughts. As he travelled up to London, he had resolved upon a certain programme; part of it he had fulfilled, part of it yet remained to do. It was getting late in the day now; street-lamps were being lighted; the red sun had gone; night clouds were beginning to spread themselves athwart the misty sky. It was certainly an altogether unconscionable hour for a gentleman to select for a first call upon a young lady to whom he was a stranger, except in name. But Phil having made up his mind that the call must be paid, thought the sooner it was done the better. He looked about him, and called a hansom, directing the man to drive him to the young ladies' educational establishment at Maida Vale, wherein Miss Lucy Selwyn was located as a boarder.

In doing this, Phil was actuated by two motives: first, by a desire to be of service to a young girl whom he knew to be left friendless and destitute in a great city; secondly, by a sense of loyalty to his dead friend. If Rodney had lived on another month or six weeks, so he said to himself, he must have come to his senses, and realised what duty and honour required of him towards a girl, whom he had removed from the charge of the only friends she had in the world and from the only means which lay open to her of procuring a living for herself.

Once, in the early days of Rodney's short-lived passion for Lucy Selwyn, driven almost to his wife's ends by his own short

purse and his mother's firm-fronted opposition to his dearest wishes, Rodney had resolved upon accepting a post offered to him in Egypt as special correspondent to a newspaper.

"If anything should happen to me—though I don't suppose it will," he had said to Phil as they talked the matter over together—"you will look after my darling, won't you?" Then had followed many and special directions as to what was to be done in the event of this unlikely thing happening. How that the mother was to be implored once more to receive the friendless girl as her own daughter, on account of her preciousness to the dead son; how that to Lucy's keeping was committed a certain document—Rodney's will—bequeathing to her every sixpence in the world he had a right to bequeath, and all the jewellery and art furniture of his extravagantly-decorated rooms in Jermyn Street. And Rodney had finished with handing Phil the young lady's address, reiterating over and over again, as he himself wrote it down in Phil's note-book, how unspeakably precious this girl was to him, and how, for her sake, he had begun to set a value upon his life, and trembled at the idea of mischance or disaster.

The special correspondentship had fallen through, as so many of Rodney's projects were apt to fall through, but Phil's memory, busy now with the past, recalled with a mournful vividness these earnest entreaties of his friend and his own earnest promises in reply, and swore to himself that, in spite of all that had since happened, he would do his best to fulfil them. Then, in that past time—not so very long ago, after all—Rodney's better self had spoken, and to Rodney's better self his loyalty and friendship were due. In all that had since happened, Rodney's worse self had got the

upper hand. That self he would try to think of no more; would endeavour to persuade himself was a sort of nightmare creation of his own—a thing that had had no existence, after all, out of his own brain.

All this he said to himself as he rattled along through the London streets towards Maida Vale, and the shrine of Minerva where Miss Selwyn was located. The house—dubbed “college” on the brass plate on the gate—was one of a row of high, narrow habitations of yellow brick, such as that locality is beginning to abound with. One or two of the houses—notably a doctor’s, with a red conspicuous lamp, and a Court milliner’s opposite—had kindled into a glowing Pompeian-red, with brass knockers and handles, which served to render the faded greyness of the house at which Phil rang even more marked and depressing than it otherwise would have been.

A neat little maid opened the door, and left him standing in the hall while she went to enquire if Miss Selwyn could see him. There was probably no other place in which he could be asked to wait. In the school-room at his right hand, the major part of the pupils were collected together, conning their lessons for the next day; from the drawing-room over his head there came the sounds of a singing-lesson, hysterical shrieks and nervous flutterings of voice on the part of the pupil, and not a little stamping and vociferating on the part of the master. From another room the sounds of vigorous thumping on a half-worn-out Broadwood, with a muffled bass and a squeaky treble.

The neat little maid did not return. A small figure, clad in deepest black, came slowly, nervously—so it seemed to Phil—in her stead.

He rightly guessed this to be Miss Lucy Selwyn.

The hall-lamp was turned very low; he could only see the outline of a small white face, drooping, downcast, of a small white hand stretched out in tremulous greeting.

“You know me by name, I know, Miss Selwyn,” said Phil, as he took the small hand in his big one. “I thought you might like to see me.”

“I am thankful to see you,” said a voice as small and as tremulous as the hand he held. “I don’t know where to ask you, unless you would not mind coming into the linen-room for a few minutes. I had to give up my sitting-room a short time ago—”

Then she stopped herself abruptly, as though the giving up of the sitting-room recalled a time in her experience of which she would rather not speak.

It brought back to Phil, also, that painful image of Rodney’s other and worse self, which he was trying so hard to dismiss from his memory.

He followed Miss Selwyn into the linen-room—a small room situated at the end of the passage. It was fitted with cupboards from floor to ceiling; it owned to a curtainless window, a carpetless floor, a single jet of gas (without a globe) over the fireplace, and one long wooden schoolroom form.

On this Miss Lucy Selwyn seated herself, and Phil followed her example, thanking Providence that he was not called upon to sit facing her. It would have been even harder than he already found it to keep his own calmness while he looked full into that wan, tear-stained, heart-broken little face.

For it was a heart-broken face—there is no other word for it. The one jet of gas lighted it up pitilessly, ruthlessly, showing the dark swollen rims round each eye, the heavy lids, the drawn mouth, the pale face blurred and patched as nothing but sleepless nights and long hours of weeping will blur and patch a young face.

No attempt had been made to relieve the grimness and plainness of the girl’s heavy black frock. It was utterly destitute of those minute decorations which feminine fingers know so well how to add, and which turn so frequently the garb of sorrow into the most becoming dress a woman can wear. Not a sparkle of jet, not the tiniest white line round her throat, relieved the dreariness of her attire. One only ornament she wore—a massive gold ring set with one superb sapphire, which Phil readily identified as the betrothal-ring with which Rodney had presented her.

Miss Selwyn was the first to speak.

“I am so grateful to you for coming,” she said, speaking nervously and hurriedly; “now you will tell me everything—I mean, of course, when—when the—the funeral will be, and whether I may go to it.”

Phil was greatly troubled.

“Would you feel equal to such a thing?” he began evasively, feeling how hard it would be—nay, how impossible to tell this shy, grief-stricken girl the estimation in which Rodney’s mother held her.

“Yes, I could do that—I know I could do that—it seems to me a duty; there is a place at his grave which only I could fill, and I ought to be there to fill it. And

I know"—this added plaintively and half to herself—"when they lowered that dreadful coffin into the grave that I should not realise that my darling was lying in it!" But here her calmness gave way, she covered her face with both of her small white hands, and the tears came trickling through them thick and fast.

Phil laid his hand gently on her shoulder.

"Do try to calm yourself, Miss Selwyn. Shall I go away now, and come some other time when you will be better able to speak to me, and tell me all you would like done?"

Yet, after all, he said to himself, bad though it was to be an eye-witness to grief like this—passionate, heartbreaking, uncontrollable—it was better than Mrs. Thorne's cold, iron voice and manner, rigid and stony as death itself.

Lucy calmed herself with an effort.

"No, no—do stay!" she pleaded; "I have so much I want to ask you—there is so much that no one but you can tell me. I have not written to Mrs. Thorne, nor tried to see her, because I promised Rodney I never would unless he gave me permission to do so, and the very, very last time he came here to see me—only the day before the—the accident—he expressly forbade my ever going near the house. I thought at one time that, if I only saw her and pleaded with her for Rodney, she might perhaps forgive us, and we might all be happy together again."

"Rodney knew his mother—she has an iron will," murmured Phil.

"But don't you think this—this dreadful thing may have softened her? Don't you think she will pity me now, and think a little kindly of me, Mr. Wickham? I have thought of her, and pitied her a great deal lately."

Phil shook his head.

"Trouble hardens as often as it softens, don't you know?" he said.

"Then you don't think she will let me go to the churchyard and see him laid in his grave? Oh, Mr. Wickham, do go to her, and tell her how I have set my heart on this thing! I have not asked to see him lying dead. I could not bear to see his beautiful face as it is now. I want always to think of him as he was when I first knew him; but this thing I must do. My place will be there beside his grave, and I ought to fill it. I have set my heart on it—I must go!"

"But why set your heart on such a

thing?" reasoned Phil, knowing how impossible it was for this poor little desire of Lucy's to be given to her. "Pardon me if I say I do not think you are fit for such a terrible ordeal, that I am sure you would break down under it, and thereby, you know, of course add considerably to the distress of everyone present."

"Should I, do you think?" she asked, looking up at him wistfully through her tears.

She was so accustomed to be under control, to bend in all things to those set in authority over her, that it did not occur to her to be very stubborn for her own will now.

"Aye, I am quite certain you would. Look here, Miss Selwyn; I am going down into Buckinghamshire to attend the funeral; give me your wreath, or whatever you would like laid on Rodney's coffin, and I will myself place it there, and see that it is laid with him in the grave before anyone else's."

Lucy made no reply. Her tears came again. Poor child! five consecutive minutes of conversation was all she was capable of just then.

Phil made a little movement as though about to rise from the form.

"I will come again to-morrow morning," he said. "I fear I am only distressing you."

"Oh no, no!" cried Lucy, swallowing down her sobs and dashing her tears out of her eyes. "Do not go yet. Only think—I have seen no one to ask a single question of, since I saw the terrible account in the newspapers, and there is so much I want to know. Tell me, Mr. Wickham, one thing—you were Rodney's dearest friend, you knew all his ways and every thought of his heart, I should say—do you think he had anything on his mind the last few months? Anything, I mean, to trouble him beyond his mother's harshness and his own debts?"

Phil was greatly troubled. This was even worse than Mrs. Thorne's cross-questioning.

"What do you mean?" he asked, Jesuitically trying to find a loop-hole for himself. "What can have made you think he had anything more than his debts to trouble him? He owed a lot of money, you know. The Jews worried him horribly, I dare say."

"Ah yes, they used to worry him a good deal when we were in Paris, but he took it very easily then. But lately he altered so; the last three or four months

he was something quite different to what he had ever been before."

"He might have had some heavy losses at Goodwood, and, no doubt, it was always more or less of an annoyance to him that his property was so terribly tied down; he couldn't get at a penny without his mother's consent, let him want it ever so much."

"I do not think it was a money trouble that pressed on him."

Then she paused a moment, trying to get her courage together to take Phil fully into her confidence in this matter, and have a load, and a very bitter one, lifted from her own heart.

But her courage evidently was not easy to command, and when her next question came, it was put with a tremulousness, with a pleading look on the tear-stained face, and a pitiful ring in the sad young voice, that would have scared the truth from the lips of a bolder man than Phil Wickham.

"Mr. Wickham," she said, twisting her fingers nervously this way, that way, "do you think Rodney loved anyone else those last few months—I mean, better than he loved me, of course?"

Phil was silent a moment.

"What makes you suspect such a thing?" he asked at length, again trying to gain time for himself.

"His manner changed so lately. He was abrupt, absent, and two or three times scarcely seemed to know what he was doing or saying when he came to see me. I asked him at last what it was that troubled him so, and he told me he was a scoundrel, a villain, and not half good enough for me, and then he bent down on his knees and implored me to give him up, said he was not worthy of me, and begged me to let him go alone to his ruin. But of course I told him I would never, never give him up so long as I had breath in my body, and that if he talked like that, I should die—die of the mere thought of such a thing."

Phil's heart was feeling like lead within him. Not one word could he bring his lips to utter.

Lucy waited a moment or so for his reply. Then she began again:

"You knew Rodney so well, and used to visit the same houses in London, I know. Do be honest with me, Mr. Wickham, and tell me if—you—think—there—was—any—one—else—he—loved?"

Her lips—poor, white, trembling lips—

said this, but her eyes, agonised, upturned, pleading, said, as plainly as eyes could say it:

"If you say yes to this question of mine, you will deal me my death-blow."

Phil's face was white and solemn as he answered:

"I did know Rodney as you say, Miss Selwyn, as well as any man could know another, and in all his life I do not believe he ever loved a woman as he loved you."

And the sop Phil gave to his conscience as he said this was that Rodney's passion for Elinor Yorke was a mere midsummer madness, not that real living thing men of reason and education fitly call love.

Lucy's eyes rested on him wistfully for a moment; then she drew a long breath, as one might who hears a sentence of death commuted to one of penal servitude for life.

Phil rose to go.

"There is an envelope upstairs addressed to you. I will go and fetch it," she said, making a little movement towards the door.

Phil stopped her.

"Not now, Miss Selwyn. I will come to you immediately after the funeral, and you shall give it to me then. Here is my address in London; but I will send to you over-night for your wreath."

Then he said good-bye, and went back to his hotel, feeling he had got through a heavy day's work indeed.

ART, SOCIAL AND OTHERWISE

OF all the forms of art, the one that has the greatest possibilities of pleasure-giving is that of conversation; and yet in this age of art-revivals it is the one that is most neglected. For its highest development it requires, like every other art, combinations which, in the nature of things, can seldom be obtained. An individual may not infrequently be found who can and does talk well; who can give you graphic accounts of things he has seen, or a clear account of what he has read—even a comprehensive view of a subject he has studied, or a luminous exposition of some matter of public interest. But conversation is foreign to the genius of the English people, or, at all events, to the present generation of them. Conversation, in its highest form, means the conjunction of at least two people, who possess temper, tact, agility of mind, power and readiness of expression, and melody of voice. This is, of course, a sufficiently uncommon com-

mination of qualities, and we cannot expect to meet many such Admirable Crichtons. But art in any form requires for its highest development exceptional powers, and it is not genius, but ordinary ability in its social aspect that we propose now to consider.

Why is it that English people, as a rule, converse so badly? One would have thought that they, of all people of all times, live in a condition of things that would foster the development of the art. England, more than most of her neighbours, is governed by public opinion. The opinion of society, strongly expressed, will turn out a Ministry and change the policy of the country; and most Englishmen have pretty clearly formed ideas on the subjects of the day, whether they manufacture those ideas out of their own materials, or buy them ready-made of the newspaper-agent. In such a state of things one would have thought that conversation, if not light and graceful, would, at all events, be serious and interesting; that the intellectual movements of the day would certainly find some echo in daily conversation.

Again, in no previous time have subjects for conversation been so abundant, or information so general. Every daily paper contains a very plethora of news on all subjects—art, science, war, politics—and at no time, probably, has the world been regaled with such a wealth of stirring and romantic incident. It is certainly from no lack of subject-matter that our talk flags. But if anyone doubts that conversation is an unknown art in England, let him accept the next invitation to dinner that he receives, and consider afterwards the intellectual repast that has been put before him.

An ordinary English dinner-party is not, it may be said, the condition of things most favourable for conversation. Of all forms of entertainment, dinner-parties may be the most agreeable, and yet, as a rule, they only produce utter boredom. Nor is the cause far to seek, for success can never, except by accident, follow in any affair where the most ordinary rules are so flagrantly set at defiance as they generally are in this matter. This being the case, it is not to be wondered at that conversation should not thrive in their atmosphere. Still, were the art of conversation more generally understood, even our ordinary dinner-parties would not be so heavy, to the great advantage of our health.

A dinner-party, to be pleasant, should not exceed six people, or, at the very outside,

eight. To assemble more than this number is to ignore the hospitable idea that you ask your friends to dine with you in order that you may see them and enjoy their conversation at their and your ease, that each may add his quota to the general stock of information and ideas. With eight people it is difficult for the conversation to be general, with more than eight it is impossible, and if the conversation is not general you might as well be dining at the table d'hôte of an hotel.

Even with the lesser number, the host and hostess must exercise some generalship to make the affair go pleasantly.

In assembling their friends to dine with them, few people consider that the style of conversation of a party of four necessarily differs entirely from that of a party of eight. When only four people are present they can see each other's eyes, catch the smallest inflexion of a voice, watch the varying expressions of a face. The personal attraction of the individuals is able to operate; each one feels its influence, and the party becomes as one. With eight people this is impossible. It is only by very careful guidance on the part of the host that conversation can be kept general, and it is not every host who has this power. There is necessarily a much greater strain in talking to seven people than to three. To have seven people listening to you, and seven pairs of eyes watching you, makes it necessary to put your utterances into a rather more formal shape than would be required for the smaller audience. The nervous man who rather fears the sound of his own voice may be a most charming companion in the smaller party, while in the larger he would merely be a silent oppression; and though many women talk well, few would like to take up the talking-stick with seven auditors. For a party of eight, therefore, you must assemble conversationalists above the average, or must be content to see it break up into a series of duets.

It is, as has been said above, from no lack of subject-matter that our talk flags. We are as well-informed about, and as interested in, the events of the day, and as well educated—or as little uneducated, as we may choose to express it—as our neighbours. It is only in the activity and expression of the interest that we fall short.

And this deficiency of expression is apparent in other ways than verbal communication. English art of most kinds shows the same heaviness of movement.

Most people who care for art find their annual pilgrimage to the Royal Academy a somewhat depressing duty; and that, not so much from absence of talent and good work, as from the preponderance of commonplace—the overwhelming presence of what, in graphic art, corresponds to the discussion of the weather and other stock subjects at Britannic dinner-tables. The walls are covered with commonplace delineations of commonplace subjects; pictures that give one neither fresh food for thought, nor any new ideas on ordinary subjects.

The same thing is apparent in English conversation—the lack of the lightness and freshness, the sparkle that comes of the sun-warmed air and sun-born colour. The artistic instincts that produce the many-coloured streets of a foreign town and all the graceful sights that salute the eyes of the weary Briton when he crosses the Channel, are wanting in England because of the absence of the sun-born beauties that suggest such imitation; and our talk is deficient in the same way, and from the same cause.

There are various kinds of bores who pose as conversationalists; for the average hostess, having the fear of silence before her as the greatest possible misfortune that can befall her entertainment, is thankful if she can number among her guests one or two people who are sure to keep up a continual prattle.

Of the quality of their talk she is not so careful. They are useful because the sound of continuous voices gives confidence to those more diffident guests, who may have something to say, but do not like the music of their voices to be heard without accompaniment.

One variety of the species bore will keep on talking steadily, not only without expecting his neighbour to answer, but even treating any such attempt as a superfluity to be met by a raising of the voice. That, perhaps, is the most harmless kind, for you can follow your own thoughts without further reference to him than an occasional interjection; and the only annoyance you suffer is the enforced neighbourhood of so unsympathetic a creature.

Another and more objectionable kind is the *empresé* man who always answers you in italics, while his vacant eyes betray the lack of meaning in his emphasis. He is usually a very hollow wind-bag, with no higher ambition than to be credited with the outward semblance of “a good fellow.”

This appearance of good-fellowship is not difficult of attainment by those who are ambitious of it; for the majority of people are far too much absorbed by their own affairs and interests to care what their neighbours are thinking or feeling, provided they have a tolerably jovial appearance.

The only requisites in a “good fellow” are that he shall have a good digestion, a temper well under control, the power of always greeting acquaintances in a cheery voice, and, if he be a young man, some amount of aptitude for athletic exercise. No one demands of him that he shall be sympathetic or unselfish; indeed, unselfishness appears to be antagonistic to the satisfactory assumption of the rôle. When a “good fellow” takes the one comfortable chair in the smoking-room everyone is pleased. “Old So-and-so” always takes good care of himself, they say; it is expected of him that he should do so, and his admirers would think none the better of him if he left the seat for someone else.

“Good fellows,” again, are of various kinds; the army “good fellow” being different from the naval variety, the naval from the City species, and that again probably differing from several others—the costermongers, probably, requiring other manners in their favourites from those demanded by the navvies.

Another kind of conversational bore is he who persistently insists on agreeing with you, and will not be gainsaid though you make him contradict himself half-a-dozen times in a minute. He will agree with you before he has heard what it is you are saying; he will agree with you when you have spoken; and, lest he should lose a chance of making himself agreeable according to his lights, he will agree cordially with the exact opposite of your original proposition. From this kind of men, again, you can extract some amusement: you can experiment upon the number of times he will contradict himself in a given period; and there is always the wonder of where he finds his pleasure in life. The only really hopeless kind of bore is the dumb bore—the man who cannot talk, or, at least, who has only rudimentary powers of articulate utterance; men who are not necessarily devoid of intelligence, but who have it only in that unwieldy state that does not admit of its being communicated to their fellows by means of speech. An enforced companionship of any duration with such a man is probably more exhausting

to the nervous system than any other kind of labour; and it has been aptly described as "trying to light a piece of wet tow."

Conversation in its ordinary, everyday form does not necessitate more than ordinary powers of mind. A desire to make yourself agreeable to your companion of the moment is the first requisite. To enter into his thoughts and ideas, and by passing them through your own mind, and re-presenting them to him with some small stamp of your own individuality, assure him of your interest in him as a member of the human family. George Eliot remarks in one of her books; "Giving a pleasant voice to what we are well assured of, makes a sort of wholesome air for more special and dubious remarks to move in." And it is just this provision of "wholesome air" of which we generally feel the lack in ordinary English gatherings. We come together with no distinct purpose. We meet merely because it is the custom to meet. We sit down to meat with each other, merely because some absurd fanciful etiquette makes it necessary that we should do so, not because we have anything to say to each other, or any hope of pleasure in each other's society. No one tries to add to the stock of ideas by his own real thoughts on any subject of public interest, and correcting them, or adding to them by contact with those of his neighbours. Most of us, it is true, have not many such ideas to offer beyond such small residuum as remains in our minds of the dicta of our daily papers or periodicals; but even this meagre material would gain some human interest by being passed through the winnowing-machine of conversation. The dust that flies from a winnowing-machine is not very valuable, perhaps, but one may often gain momentary pleasure by watching it glance in the flickering sunbeams.

The real fault we commit, however, in this connection is our failure to recognise the pleasure that is given by the narration of even the most trivial incident in carefully-apportioned words. No one in talking takes the trouble to form his sentences according to the most ordinary rules of grammar. Our national shyness has stamped us, among other vulgarisms, with that false shame which makes us fear the charge of pedantry if we talk in other than the most clumsy and disjointed way. We are afraid to venture on a phrase—a combination of words that will convey our meaning of the

moment until familiarity has made it commonplace, and then we drag it in by the head and ears on every occasion till it becomes nauseous from its frequency. There is a dreary heaviness in our conversation born of deficient imagination. We discuss, or rather utter our words about the most ordinary matters with a solemnity which at first sight looks like earnestness, but we are not in earnest. We should resent the imputation. Every nation has its own peculiar snobbery—every nation, and each rank in that nation, and class in the rank, and each individual. One phase of it with us is the way in which we copy the habits or manners of the rank above us. The desire to copy implies deficient tact and power of observation, and the effect of the copying is very much that of the maid-of-all-work in a lodging-house who tries to copy the dress of the ladies on whom she waits. She has neither the material out of which to make the clothes, nor the power of wearing the clothes properly if she had them.

The calmness and absence of emotion of patrician manners not unnaturally suggests imitation. People, who from their birth upwards have been accustomed to deference, naturally acquire a manner which takes that deference for granted—an attitude from which the element of assertion is eliminated. The favoured classes with whom that is the case have also feasts of other things, besides the deference of their fellows. Treasures of many kinds are heaped upon them, whether they will or not.

Naturally, in many cases, a mental indigestion follows, producing a languidness of mind that sees everything in a yellow light, and nothing anywhere to admire.

By a singular perversion, this sad defect has come to be looked upon by some people as an evidence of breeding, and as such to be imitated. People are to be found—not individuals merely, but whole classes—who will refuse to be amused or interested, or to attempt to amuse or interest others, lest such an evidence of natural emotion should be taken as a sign of deficient breeding.

This foolish fashion is the death of all reasonable conversation. It is impossible to find any interest in the conversation of people who parcel out their words as if they were dictating cable-telegrams at a guinea a word.

And yet, bad as is the effect of this snobbery, it is not altogether to blame for our national unconversationableness.

The same coldness and stiffness and lack of imagination are apparent in all forms of British art. There is no natural teaching of art in England. In most countries where art flourishes, the ordinary surroundings of the most ordinary life are themselves an art-school—the warmth, the colour, the flickering sunlight, the luxuriant vegetation. Every sun-born glory of sound and sight touches the mind to some more tender and subtle vibration than could be attained to by our coarser, fog-nourished natures.

Every Spanish or Italian loiterer, as he lounges outside a tavern-door, can watch the smoke of his tobacco curling among the tendrils of the vines, and the sun making a mosaic of ivory and ebony on the road in front of him. His brother, in England, is wrapped in fog two-thirds of his year, and when the sun shines it, too often, but reveals the squalor in which he lives. He has no idea of open-air life—the sun shows him no glories, it only brings him heat for which he is unprepared.

The difference of the lives must make itself apparent in the manners of the two men. They may be equally worthy citizens; but their worthiness will have a different outward show. Just as a blind man nearly always has a whining tone in his voice, unconscious though he is of it.

Whatever art is attained to in England is necessarily the result of education—the art that is born of the sunlight in happier climes, in England has to be imported, and laboriously grafted on to the national character. There is certainly evidence in old houses and their decorations that it was at one time indigenous in England, though not, perhaps, in the loftiest forms. It has long been dead, however, and the phrase “decorative art” now only provokes a shudder.

The sunlight has diminished in the country—the actual light of the sun, and the corresponding brightness and cheerfulness of life. The problem of existence seems to press harder on the national life than it did in former generations, although in a large number of cases, one can scarcely conceive the circumstances to be worse now than they must have been then.

There is a grinding, aching care everywhere apparent, however, that seems to leave no soil for art to grow in; a drying up of the sap that leaves life barren and cheerless. In numbers of ways the life of the community is better than it was. Drunkenness, for instance, has decreased

enormously in the last twenty years; our lives are cleaner and more orderly; but the inner life that produces art does not revive, nevertheless. We have picture-galleries by the mile, it is true, and pictures by the acre—but they are acres of commonplace. Very few square feet out of the acres show any sign of that inner sense that stamps the artist—any observation of more than the merest outside husk either of nature or character. Not that that matters much in the majority of cases; for, except where fashion demands that they should be seen, as in the case of the Royal Academy, the picture-galleries have few visitors.

When the comparatively leisured classes, who could visit the galleries at their pleasure, are dead to the feeling of art, it could scarcely be expected that those below them in the social scale—those who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow—should show more vitality in that respect. That they have no greater sense of beauty is apparent to those who have observed the way in which the lower classes of society spend their holidays.

There are few sadder sights than that evident lack of all knowledge of the enjoyments of life. The silly horse-play, the unmeaning personal decoration, the discordant sounds, are distressing to sensitive nerves, both physical and mental. The actual uncoutness, and the evident absence of all the refinements of human enjoyment are equally distressing. Bank Holiday makers flock into the country, not to refresh themselves with the freshness of nature, but to play kiss-in-the-ring and accordions. There are people who look upon the poverty of the labouring-classes as a state of things which merely makes their life simpler and plainer without necessarily detracting from their enjoyment. They know that they themselves have to bear many burdens which seem to them to be out of proportion to the increased conveniences of life that come with them, and they think that life must be better for those who escape both the one and the other; but they leave out of the question all the enjoyments that come of educated perception—they have not imagination enough to conceive what life must be without the joys that make it pleasant to them, what life must be to people living in a gloomy atmosphere, with no more knowledge of the subtle beauties of sound, and form, and colour than if they had been born deaf and blind, with no knowledge even of the language which expresses the more complex thought of the

species, and with only sufficient means to provide themselves with the merest necessities of life.

But this view of life implies a lack of imagination which makes art impossible—a coarseness of mental vision which makes all the lights and shades invisible—in a word, the absence of the artistic faculty. The genius of the age goes in other directions. Only a certain amount of power is possible to a generation as to an individual. The inventive faculty of this age goes in the direction of manufactures and mechanical appliances, and to the scientific investigation of natural phenomena. Life has been revolutionised since the time of our grandfathers. The construction of railways and railway-bridges, of telegraphs and tunnels, has taken the place of the carving of columns and statues. The bustle of modern life and the wonder of it leave us no leisure to spend in the beautifying of its details. When the putting of a girdle round the world is no longer merely a poet's prophetic phrase, but has become an actual fact, so that we can ask a question of the Antipodes and receive an answer in a few hours, we have no longer inclination to spend time and energy in the poetic apportioning of the words we use in those communications; and, when each word costs money, it becomes an art to render our meaning in the fewest possible words. A few disjointed syllables flashed across the world in that way may, almost by reason of their brevity, become poetic; just as a dog's mute caress appeals to our imagination from our knowledge of the limited means by which he expresses so much.

Art of a kind exists among us, it is true, and it is increasing daily. A new phase of art has even been born of recent years. Never—in recent times, at all events—have the more subtle and tender aspects of nature been so carefully recorded, either in language or in graphic art, as in this and the preceding generation. The minute and exquisite work of Wordsworth and Ruskin, of Frederick Walker and Hunt, have no parallel in former generations. They saw the world from a different standpoint to that of their predecessors.

But this is all the art of education—the work of the carefully-trained brain and eye. In former days art was diffused among all classes; the village carpenter and blacksmith had an instinctive knowledge of harmonious outline, and stamped

their individuality on their work. Nowadays we get our decorative work from Manchester and Sheffield, and cast-iron, veneer, and stucco fitly represent our artistic perception.

The age that produces the artistically formed details of daily surroundings must be one of peace and quiet, of concentration on the inner beauties of our environment. You cannot hear the murmur of the woods while you are listening to the sounds of concerted music. We live now in an eager, tumultuous world. The nations have come within touch of each other, and each has a message as yet scarcely understood by the other. The secrets of nature are being forced from her, and we are listening to them open mouthed. Our words are no longer pigments with which to paint imaginative effects, but symbols to express those recurring phenomena which we call the laws of nature.

That is true, but the world in general consists of mere gazers, not of scientific experts. We are concerned with the fairy-tales of science rather than with its formulæ. The general knowledge can be expressed in the simplest words, and the general intelligence is not capable of the use of the bigger ones.

Our modern life is full of movement, and colour, and interest. Every form of human energy is going on around us. We have a wealth of interest such as was unknown to our forefathers, and when we learn to describe and discuss it in adequate language ours will be the most desirable condition that has yet been known to society.

CHRISTMAS-TIME IN UPPER BENGAL.

A BRIGHT fire is blazing and sparkling in the spacious drawing-room of an indigo-planter's bungalow, where a number of ladies and gentlemen are holding an animated conversation. It is evening, and the chill air of the cold season has drawn the guests around the genial and social warmth of the fireside, the only home-like remembrance one does find in India. The short twilight, rapidly passing into night, dimly shows the massive old rosewood furniture; but now and again brighter gleams of firelight wake up the shadows and reveal later acquisitions in the way of fancy tables, lounges, and tasteful ornaments; while among the Christmas evergreens that clothe the walls mingle a few choice water-colours. The walls of the

room are cleft by no fewer than twelve doorways for free ventilation in the hot weather when the punkahs are in full swing. Each door, now closely shut for warmth, is arched by garlands of flowers of strong and brilliant hues, in keeping with the vivid taste of the Aryangardener. The festivities of the late Christmas "meet" are being wound up with a picnic and shooting-party at this fine old specimen of a planter's bungalow, ere the guests all separate again to the quietude of their different homes.

Presently the figure of a native, clad in spotless white, and crowned with a fierce pugri, glides noiselessly round the room, leaving all the lamps blazing in his wake. These illumine several rather pale-faced ladies in evening-dress, and a greater number of gentlemen of more robust exterior, well bronzed with plenty of outdoor exercise under a tropical sun. They are all in keeping, however, with the latest Paris fashions, the ladies displaying also rather a rich variety of English and Indian jewellery. A momentary lull in the conversation seems the signal for the khansamah to enter the room, where, halting before his mistress, he announces, with folded hands and solemn voice, "Khana mez pur," or "Dinner is served"; and the company file through the doorways into the dining-room beyond. As the guests encircle the hospitable mahogany, behind each stands a swarthy, profusely-bearded Mussulman, their spotless white garments relieved only by a coloured sash and band on the turban. Silently their straight figures and solemn faces glide swiftly round the table. The company, meanwhile, discuss, along with its delicacies, the balls, races, and parties of the late meet, accompanied with the usual amount of small-talk and conjecture.

At sunrise next morning, the ever-grateful cup of tea is conveyed to each before rising, through the medium of ayah or bearer; and by-and-by the guests drop into the verandah to enjoy the only fresh air of the day, and partake of the chota hazri (little breakfast), which is already waiting. Coffee and tea, with toast, eggs, and fowl, are the usual items of this meal, and while engaged with it you get a view from between the verandah pillars of a dead-level country, with patches of jungle here and there amid wide tracts of cultivated land, while in the foreground stretches a velvety compound interspersed with ornamental banyan and india-rubber trees, clumps of

bamboos, shrubs, and flowers. Winding along the avenue presently appear four great elephants, which soon draw up in front of the bungalow, and ayahs, bearers, and children, suddenly entering on the scene, turn everything into commotion. Servants hurry to and fro with guns, ammunition, and sporting gear, which the sportsmen see safely deposited in the howdahs; and, lastly, they themselves mount by a swing on the elephant's trunk, or by the rope-ladder that hangs from the side of the howdah, and the mahout gets the order to march. The ladies and children are to join them at breakfast a few hours later at the camp pitched on the hunting-ground.

Meanwhile, to pass the time, some of the ladies saunter down to the garden under an archway of acacia and other tropical trees that line the avenue; while through the leafy canopy glances the genial sun of the cold season with pleasant warmth, illuminating beautiful flowering creepers, parasites, and trailers that have entwined themselves among the foliage.

Entering the garden, we come upon a great variety of home vegetables, now at their height, and while admiring the luxuriant growth of peas, beans, cauliflower, brussel-sprouts, etc., we could easily fancy ourselves in an English garden, till the dusky visage of the scantily-clad gardener hovers before us with his profound salaam. In a shady corner stands the wild-duck house, where fatten some hundreds of teal—a table-delicacy when the burning west winds are roaring over the plains and the appetite requires to be tempted. Down the centre of the garden runs an arched framework, over which the vines hang in open-air luxuriance, and round the garden a thick border of plantains or bananas is overtopped by the long, drooping, feathery canes of the bamboo.

Now we diverge into a rhododendron walk leading to the factory, through which we intend to have a peep. The pathway brings us first to a public road bordered by a deep clear lake, on the edge of which are a number of dhabies (washermen) purifying clothes by dashing them on ribbed wooden boards placed in the water. One old fellow, in particular, amuses us by coolly polishing his head and face with a fine damask table-cloth, much to our hostess's horror and indignation. At a little distance from them swarm the village-washers beetling to a milder hue the native garments of six months' wear. Each

of them has bags of wood-ash suspended, from which is filtering out the strong potash solution for cleansing purposes. Farther on stands the wheel-house where water is raised to the vats for the steeping of the indigo-plant, the first process of manufacture. Close by smoulders an earthen kiln, where thousands of bricks are baking for building purposes. Presently we come upon a domestic group squatted by the wayside of old and young "grammies" busy at their hereditary thatch-and-bamboo trade. They are making thatch huts in separate detail by binding long dried grass an inch or two deep on frameworks of bamboo. Near them, under a long open shed, sit blacksmiths, carpenters, and brass-moulders, all on factory work, while outside the shed are a group of masons, squatted in the same lazy posture repairing an old vat. Passing on, we come to the press-houses, and finally to the long row of deep vats, where the indigo is steeped to extract the dye. In the native cutcherry, or office, near the vats, a low platform surrounding the rooms is occupied by a crowd of lallahs (clerks), Bengali Baboos, and the factory "amlah" generally, who sit cross-legged, writing up books, accounts, and letters in Hindi and Persian. The rough accounts are written on crude yellow paper of native manufacture.

Leaving the factory works behind, we re-enter the compound, where, near the stables, we notice a fakir, of repulsive aspect, all bedaubed with white and red paint and mud, and wearing a necklace of carved beads, made of the sacred root of the mint. In his hand he holds a long tongs, like a forceps, the special badge of his calling. Despite his hideousness, there is a look of deep cunning and conscious power, showing how well he knows the art of preying upon the religious superstition and fears of his countrypeople in order to replenish his stock of cash. Our attention is drawn from him by a tiny Tom-Thumb carriage, drawn by two magnificent up-country goats, coming rattling down the avenue. In it are seated four young children, with a body-guard of ayahs on foot. As we approach the bungalow again, we see an old woman, bent with age, ascending the steps, who had formerly been an ayah of the family, and is now their pensioner. After a number of salaams, she turns to the little girl of the house, and pulling some white hairs from her own head, lays them gently over that of the child,

reciting some chant or incantation to her gods for the little one's long life and happiness. The carriages are now ordered, and we prepare to drive out and join the shooting-party. Presently all are in their seats; children and ayahs are arranged in "shampanies" behind, drawn by bullocks, which bring up the rear at a smart trot.

As our cavalcade emerges from the shady avenue into the brilliant sunshine of the highway, clouds of fine dust now and again envelop us and half hide the large sheets of indigo-lands that stretch away from us in every direction. Beyond lies a rich and varied landscape of trees, fine crops, snow-white poppy-fields, and villages, and in the distance, over a broad, smooth expanse, we witness a mirage, where huts and trees appear floating in the midst of a glittering lake; a scene which keeps changing and vanishing as we progress. Two burly Moslems are stationed behind the first carriage to vociferate at all and sundry to clear the way, for the native pedestrian seems to have no ears to warn him off the centre of the road till he finds himself right under the horses' heads. At the well, or news-exchange of the villages we pass, are to be seen picturesque groups of women, whose musical voices and graceful movements, as they poise the ghyla (water-jar) on their heads, quite interest us. Now, in front of us, a troop of them occupy the entire road, and fail to hear the shouts of the syces till we are close upon them, when suddenly, as the endearing language of their countrymen breaks on their ears, there is a wild scatter, and with a swing of the "chuddur" over their faces—due to the presence of our men-servants—they draw up in line on the side-path and courteously present us with a view of their backs.

Our turf-grown road now leads through a shady piece of jungle, where the trees are quite beset with parasites, whose clinging embrace only one has escaped. It is a banyan, making a little forest in itself with its long pendent roots and arching canopy of branches. As we leave this sylvan scene, our ears are suddenly stormed with the sound of native music, and soon a motley throng passes before us. A number of gay cavaliers lead the way, bestriding white, cream, and piebald ponies. Carried mid-way in the procession, shoulder-high, is a red and gold palankin, in which are seated a little boy and girl, who smile happily about, delighted to be the centre of attraction. The "musicians" follow, meagrely clad, lanky specimens of humanity,

rattling on drums, great and small, their noise, fortunately, helping to drown the shrill, discordant notes drawn from a number of reeds, at one and the same time, on every key of the gamut. A curious instrument, like a buffalo-horn, gives forth a dismal howl at intervals, relieved, occasionally, with the clash of timbrels, and all with the most supreme contempt for time or tune that it is possible to conceive. The rear is brought up by all the tag, rag, and bobtail of the countryside, whose grimy coverings, in all the possible grades of dirty white, throw into strong relief our resplendent heroes in the van. This gaudy show is to celebrate the contract, or engagement, of the children, whose fate has just been sealed and settled to their parents' satisfaction. The marriage ceremony follows some years later, and in the interval they are not supposed to see each other. The boy, however, sometimes makes stolen visits to the village of his affianced, and, lying in wait somewhere near the well, endeavours to get a glimpse of his future wife as she comes to draw water. In the last scene of this matrimonial drama the youthful bride is stowed away in a covered cart, which conveys her to the home of her boy-husband, who keeps her company on foot, while her conventional yells from the cart proclaim the news to the countryside, and her grief at leaving her parents and family for this untried field of life. In this way begins the new life of the Hindoo girl.

But now, as the last remnant of the long procession fades out of sight, we drive over a great plain of turf, at the far end of which is fixed a gaily-coloured awning, surrounded by groups of servants. From another direction elephants approach, wading through long jungle-grass towards the camp, and gradually the green carpet wakes into life. On reaching the awning, we find a long line of tables already spread with our picnic breakfast. A busy scene now ensues, as empty carriages are drawn up under the shade of the trees, horses are divested of their harness, and elephants occupy their time in tearing down branches for their midday repast on the leaves, while ayahs and children scatter about in every direction. Opposite a tent a few yards off bearers are relieving sportsmen of their shooting-gear, while at another tent two ayahs take charge of the ladies and their belongings. In a shaded spot near the river, beneath the dense foliage of a tamarind-tree, little charcoal fires show where

breakfast is being prepared, while far away in the distance, towering above the trees, rise through the clear ether the snow-clad mountains of Nepaul—the mighty Himalayas—two hundred miles off. To our right is a bend of the river Gunduck, a broad tributary of the Ganges, on whose banks, amid the thick shrubbery and jungle foliage, appear occasionally groups of chattering monkeys, brilliant blue jays, and minas, or speaking-birds of the Arabian Nights.

Our much-enjoyed breakfast is at length over, where fish, fowl, cutlets, teal, game-pie, prawn-curry, and fruit taste all the better for being partaken of in the open air; and now the servants hurry off to cook their frugal meal of lentils and rice and fish-curry by the river-side. Some of our party play lawn-tennis; others stroll about among the different camp groups along with the ayahs and children. The crackers distributed among the children yield great fun and excitement to the natives, as each explosion unfolds a brooch, ring, or locket, which the ayahs, with sparkling eyes, duly appropriate. By-and-by the elephants are marshalled in front of the awning, and the sportsmen reascend the howdahs for a few hours' shooting before evening sets in.

A few of the party embark on the river for a cruise a mile or so down, to visit a notable Hindoo temple. It was reached by a flight of steps from the water's edge, and around the outer court pundits were squatted on mats, their monotonous drawl filling the air as they recited aloud their shastras. We are received by one of them, who looks protestingly at our shoes, but, nevertheless, precedes us to an inner court, within which was the door of the temple. Here he informs us that we positively cannot proceed farther except on discarding our shoes, but he opens the door and allows us to peer through. Within this inner sanctuary are a bare stone floor and walls, uninviting in every respect, and not remarkable for cleanliness. In the middle of the place, on a small raised dais, stand three wooden images, life-size, very like big wooden dolls of hideous expression, got up in coloured muslins and tinsel. These, our guide told us, were the personifications of three of their most potent deities; the black-faced one, Mahadeo, being their god of evil, whom their votaries propitiate equally with the others. Nothing more was to be seen, which was rather disappointing, considering the hopes

raised by the splendid exterior, terminating in a lofty spire, all painted sky-blue and bestrewn with gilt stars. Retracing our steps, our swarthy boatman piloted us back to camp, where a refreshing cup of tea awaited us, and we found the sportsmen already there, much satisfied with their day's shikar. Their bag showed a plentiful assortment of hares, partridges, and quail, along with a splendid flovikin, that must have strayed down from the Nepal forests.

The sinking sun soon found us driving full speed en route for the bungalow. Evening fires were being kindled in the clustering villages through which we passed, and the thick rising smoke enveloped the buffaloes in a protecting veil from their relentless foe, the mosquito. The ryots, or peasants, were dragging slowly homewards from their field-labours to their evening meal and the social joys of the hookah. As dusk closed over us, we required all our wraps to protect us from the chill air and heavy dews that were rapidly setting in. Near our destination we overtook the disjointed fragments of our late camp, in the shape of tables, chairs, and baskets, being hurried back to the bungalow on the heads of coolies. The foliage of the avenue was alive with the sparkle of the firefly as we drove through the compound. Once more we were in the bungalow, and soon after met again round the hospitable board, before separating next morning, each for his own fireside.

CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

PINK, crimson, yellow, cream, and white !
They call to mind the lost delight

Of summer's flowery days ;
The wintry wind wails loud without,
While we within draw close about
The hearth-fire's friendly blaze.

The flickering flames flash high and low,
They touch the room with rosy glow,
And make its corners warm ;
They kiss the sombre, pictured walls,
Whereon a gracious shadow falls—
My gentle sister's form.

How soft the rustle of the dress
That clothes her faded loveliness
In velvet's darkest fold !
How soft, how dark, the tranquil eyes,
Within whose sombre shadow lies
A subtle gleam of gold !

How calm she sits in this calm light,
Loose-holding in her fingers white
A blossom pure as snow.
A pale chrysanthemum—ah me !
Yet summer roses bloomed for thee,
My sister, long ago !

And I, too, had my happy share
Of joyous hope, and laughed at care
With boyish unbelief ;

I staked my manhood on the truth
Of that bright idol of my youth,
And won a lasting grief.

God smote me in my careless pride,
And all life's glowing roses died
With swift and sudden blight ;
Shame drew his most enpoisoned dart,
And aiming steadfast at my heart,
He murdered joy outright.

And thou, my white one, clean of soul,
God bade his waves of trouble roll
Above thy gentle head ;
But lighter than my cruel loss
The burden of thy hope-wreathed cross—
Thy lover is but dead.

He is but dead, and thou canst creep
In twilight times to work or weep
Beside his quiet grave ;
To picture meeting on that shore,
The land of God's bright Evermore,
Beyond earth's wind and wave.

But I have no such sacred spot
To kneel and pray at—she is not,
No more than this I know—
Ah, sister ! link thy hand in mine !
No change can touch my love and thine,
Whatever come and go.

And like these homely flowers that grace
Our quaint, old-fashioned dwelling-place,
A quiet blessing comes
Upon the evening of our days,
And growing by the wintry ways
We find chrysanthemums !

THE PRINCE'S QUEST.

A MODERN ALLEGORY.

ONCE upon a time there lived a Prince who ought to have been very happy, but wasn't. He reigned in a gorgeous palace, and was rich, and powerful, and great, and had everything he wanted—that is, at least, he had everything he wanted, except the one thing that he wanted more than anything else on earth, and to obtain which he would have given half his kingdom. He would have given the whole, for the matter of that, only he had already promised the other half to any one who would tell him what it was he wanted.

Everybody had a guess at it, but nobody seemed able to hit upon it. Everything that was suggested he had ; everything that wealth could buy, or skill procure, was his already. So at last he appealed to the wise men of the city, and they put their heads together, and found out the wrong thing, and the Prince became more dependent than ever.

In the palace his jovial companions made laugh and jest, and kept the walls for ever echoing to the tune of their noisy merriment. All day long they hunted the deer through the forest glades, or rode a-hawking in gay cavalcade ; and at night there were feasting, and dancing, and song, and

the wine ran free, and the mirth ran high, and happiness beamed upon every face except the Prince's. In the midst of all the revelry he sat silent and apart, or shunned the chase to muse alone on what this thing could be, the want of which, with all his wealth, made life seem so unfinished.

"Oh, is there nothing that will fill this aching void within me?" sighed the Prince aloud, one day, as he threw himself down on the ground beside a fallen tree. "Oh, is there no one who can tell me what I want?"

"I can."

It was a little old man that spoke; a little, bent, withered old man, with wrinkled face and snow-white hair; but his eyes were brighter than a boy's, and his voice was as clear as a sweet-toned bell, and, as he looked down at the Prince from his seat on the tree, he laughed a merry, childish laugh.

The Prince looked up at him, and wondered how he got there, but was too surprised to speak, and only stared in silence at the merry, twinkling eyes.

"Well," said the little old fellow after a while, "shall I tell you? Would you like to know what it is you want, or have you come to the sensible conclusion that after all it isn't worth the knowing? I think you'd better not know," he went on, changing from gay to grave. "It may make you only more unhappy. It will bring you pain and trouble. You are young and weak—why seek to know? Rest with the happiness you have, child. Joy is only reached through sorrow."

But the Prince heeded not the warning. All eagerness and hope, he started up, and caught the old man by the hand, and would not let him go.

"Tell me, you who are wise, and who know," cried he; "tell me what will ease this gnawing pain, or I shall die. Tell me, and I will seek for it through fire and water. I am strong, not weak—strong to dare, to suffer, and to win. I will find it, if it take me all my life, and cost me all my treasure."

The old man gently laid his hand upon the Prince's head, and a look of pity was in the bright, quick eyes.

"Lad," said he, and his voice was grave and tender, "thou shalt seek thy wish. Thou shalt toil for it, and thy brain shall ache. Thou shalt wait for it, and thy heart shall pant. Thou shalt pass through sorrow and through suffering on thy search;

but when thou art weary and footsore the thought of it shall strengthen thee, when thy heart is heaviest the hope of it shall raise thee up, and in thy darkest hour it shall come to thee as the touch of a mighty hand. Prince, it is Love thou lackest. Go seek it."

So the scales fell from the Prince's eyes, and he stood as one that has suddenly emerged from darkness into light, half-bewildered before he understood. Then stretching out his arms, he called to Love, as though he would draw her down from heaven, and clasp her to his heart.

"Oh, Love," he cried, "why have I been so blind as not to know thy messenger, who spoke within me? I might have wandered lonely all my life, uncaring and uncared for, and never dreamed of thy dear presence, nor ever have known that 'twas for need of thy sweet voice that all the world seemed drear."

Full of gratitude, he turned to thank his mysterious guide, but the little old man was gone.

The Prince's own sentinels scarcely knew their lord when he returned to the palace, and even the old hall-porter who, twenty years ago, had rocked him on his knee, looked hard at him, and seemed inclined to challenge his breathless entrance. Never was a man so changed in half an hour before. Out into the woods had gone a moody, sorrowful youth, with wavering steps and dreamy, downcast eyes, while back had come a gallant Prince, with quick, firm tread, and head thrown back, and eyes that flashed with high resolve. Small wonder if the porter was in doubt.

In the banquet-hall his guests already waited his arrival, and hurrying thither straight, without a word he passed up the crowded room until he reached the dais at the end, and there he turned and spoke:

"Friends," said the Prince, "rejoice with me, for to-day I have learnt the thing that I want. To-day I have found out what is the only thing on earth that can make me happy—the only thing on earth I have not got—the only thing I cannot do without, and that I mean to seek for till I have found. Let all my true friends join me, and at to-morrow's dawn we will start to search the world for Love."

Then one and all cheered loud and long, and swore that each was his loyal friend, and swore that they would follow him throughout the whole wide world, and they drank a bumper to success, and another one to Love, and never in that palace had

a banquet been so gay, and never before had such merry guests feasted in that hall. Long into the night they drank and sang, and their loud laughter filled the palace full, and overflowed through open door and window out into the stillness, and the red deer browsing heard it, and scudded away down the moonlit glens, nor dreamt then of the time when they would fearlessly crop the grass round the very walls of the palace, and rest secure and undisturbed upon its weed-grown terraces.

But no shadow of the coming gloom marred the glittering pageantry on which the morning sun threw down his glory, as gay with silk, and flashing steel, and fluttering plumes, and prancing steeds the gallant train of knights and squires rode slowly down the hill. And hearts were light and hopes were high, but no heart so light as the Prince's, no hopes so high as his, as he rode at the head of that gay throng, the gayest of them all.

At each place that they came to the Prince enquired for Love, but found, to his astonishment, that, though people talked about her a good deal, hardly anyone knew her. Few spoke of her as a reality. Most folks looked upon her as a joke; others, as a popular delusion; while the one or two who owned to having known her seemed half ashamed of the acquaintanceship. There were shams and imitations in abundance, but the real thing, when acknowledged, was considered vulgar, and no one knew or cared what had become of her.

The first place at which they halted was the town of Common-Sense—a most uncomfortable place, all full of close and narrow streets that led to nowhere, and inhabited by a race celebrated for the strength of their lungs, it being reckoned that one man of Common-Sense was equal to a dozen poll-parrots, and could talk down fifty men of Intelligence (their natural enemies) in less than half an hour. The religion of this charming people was touching in its simplicity. It consisted of a firm and earnest belief that they were infallible, and that everybody else was a fool; and each man worshipped himself.

They were quite indignant when the Prince asked them where Love was.

"We know nothing at all about her," said the men of Common-Sense. "What have we to do with Love? What do you take us for?"

The Prince was too polite to tell them what he took them for, so merely bidding

them adieu with a pitying smile, rode off to seek elsewhere for Love.

But he had no better luck at the next place they came to. This was Tom Tiddler's Land, and the people there were very busy indeed. So busy were they, picking up the gold and the silver, that they hadn't time even to make themselves respectable, and their hands were especially dirty—but then it was rather dirty work.

"Love!" said the people of Tom Tiddler's Land. "We don't keep it. Never heard of it. Don't know what it is. But dare say we could get it for you. What are you willing to go to for it?"

"You can't buy it," explained the Prince. "It is given."

"Then you won't get it here, young man," was the curt reply; and they went on with their grovelling.

At last the Prince came to the City of Science, where he was most hospitably received, and where for the first time he learnt the great truth that everything is just precisely what one always thought it wasn't, and that nothing is what one thinks it is. The inhabitants were all philosophers, and their occupation consisted of finding out things that nobody wanted to know, and in each day proving that what they themselves had stated the day before was all wrong. They were very clever people, and knew everything—Love included. She was there, in the city, they told the delighted Prince, and they would take him to her.

So, after showing him over the town and explaining to him what everything wasn't, they took him into their museum, which was full of the most wonderful things, and in the centre was Love—the most wonderful of them all. The Prince couldn't help laughing when he saw it, but the philosophers were very proud of it. It sat upright and stiff on a straight-backed chair, and was as cold as ice.

"Made it ourselves," said the philosophers. "Isn't it beautiful! Acts by clockwork, and never goes wrong. Warranted perfect in every respect. We have a special committee of old ladies to look after it, and it has been highly recommended by the clergy."

"It's very charming," answered the Prince, trying to swallow down his disappointment; "but I'm afraid it's not the sort of thing I wanted."

"Why, what's amiss with it? It's got all the latest improvements."

"Yes," replied the Prince with a sigh,

"that's just it; I wanted it with all the old faults."

Again the Prince journeyed on, and came to the town of Society, where lived a very knowing sort of people called "Men of the World," who had the reputation of "knowing their way about"—a reputation, the acquirement of which it was difficult to understand, seeing they never, by any chance, went outside their own town—a remarkably small one, although the inhabitants firmly believed that it was the biggest and most important place on earth, and that no other city was worth living in for a day.

A dim oil-lamp burnt night and day in the centre of the town, and the people of Society were under the impression that all light came from that, for as they crawled about on their hands and knees, and never raised their eyes from the ground, they knew nothing about the sun. When they had crawled once forwards and backwards across their little town, they thought they had seen "life," and would squat in a corner, and yawn, till they died.

When the Prince mentioned the name of Love to these creatures, they burst into a coarse, loud laugh. "Is that what you call it?" said they. "Why, wherever do you come from! We know what you mean, though. Come along." And they took him into a dingy room, and showed him a hideous, painted thing that made him sick to look upon.

"Let us leave this place quickly," said the Prince, turning to his followers. "I cannot breathe in this foul air. Let us get out into God's light again. So they mounted in haste and rode away, leaving the men who "knew their way about" crawling about the ways they knew so well.

Farther and farther into the weary world wandered the Prince on his search; but Love was still no nearer, and though his heart was ever brave, it beat less hopefully every day. Time after time he heard of her, and started off, only to find some worthless sham—a golden image—a dressed-up doll—a lifeless statue—a giggling fool. Shams, shams, shams! Shams wherever he went, and men and women worshipping, and hugging them close to their breasts—fighting for them, living for them, dying for them, and knowing all the while that they were shams; and each time the Prince turned away, more sick at heart than ever.

Only a thin remnant of all that brilliant

host which years ago had started full of hope and enterprise, now rode beside the saddened Prince, and, as they toiled on wearily from place to place, the few grew fewer still.

Once they came to a place where Love had really been; but that was long ago, and now she had gone, no one knew whither. It was the City of Romance, and all the citizens were poets.

"Ah," said one white-haired old man, whom the Prince stopped to question without the gates, "I knew her well. She reigned here, happy and contented, when I was young; but these new fellows—they have frightened her away. They never let her rest a minute, but worried her to death. One day they would all be worshipping her, and the next they'd call her names, and want to kill her. On Monday she was a saint, and on Tuesday a devil. They made out that she was the cause of all the stupid things they did, and a man couldn't have the gout, or feel a little unsteady after dinner, but she was blamed for it; and when they told her that everyone who met her either immediately died or committed suicide, the poor little thing got so unhappy that she ran away, and we've never seen her since. I don't think they were very sorry. They didn't understand her any more than anybody can understand them. They've filled up her place, now, with a miserable half-dead-and-alive creature, as much like Love as vinegar is like wine, and the way they talk to her is really quite indelicate. Between you and me," continued the old man, "there is a lot of nonsense talked here. Some of us talk so much nonsense, that even we ourselves can't stand it, and we have to turn them out. They are called 'critics' after they are turned out—I don't know why—and they go about explaining what we mean. Why," and he sunk his voice to a whisper, "to tell you the truth, we don't know that ourselves;" and the old poet hobbled away towards the city.

And now, not a single one of all who had shouted their loyalty so loudly was left, when weary, baffled, and disheartened, the Prince at last turned back. A great longing was upon him to be once more among his own people, and to see his own land again; and so, with this last hope, he still toiled on, and each day pressed on quicker, fearing lest death might overtake him by the way, and that his tired eyes never more would rest upon the old grey towers and sweet green woods of home.

But the dreary road came to an end at length, and one evening he looked down upon his palace, as it lay before him bathed in the red of the sinking sun. Restful, now, he stood for a while, feasting his hungry eyes upon the longed-for sight, and then his thoughts ebbed slowly back to that morning, long ago, when he had bidden it adieu, and had ridden forth into the world upon his quest for Love.

But ah! How changed the place! How changed himself since then!

He had left it as a gallant Prince with all the pride of pomp around him, and a gaudy throng of flattering courtiers at his side. He crept back, broken-hearted and alone. He had left it standing fair and stately in the morning light, and bright with life and sound; now it was ruined, desolate, and silent; the bats flew out of the banquet-hall, and the grass grew on the hearths. Another had usurped his throne; his people had forgotten him, and not even a dog was there to give him a welcome home.

As he passed through the damp, chill rooms a thousand echoing footsteps started up on every side, as though his entrance had disturbed some ghostly revel, and when, having reached a little room that in old times he had been wont to go to for solitude, he entered, and shut himself in, it seemed as though the frightened spirits had hurried away, slamming a thousand doors behind them.

There, in the darkness, he sat himself down, and buried his face in his hands, and wept; and sat there long through the silent hours, lost in his own bitter thoughts. So lost, that he did not hear a gentle tapping at the door—did not hear the door open, and a timid voice asking to come in—did not hear a light step close beside him, nor see a little maiden sit herself down at his feet—did not know she was there till, at last, with a sigh, he raised his head and looked into the gloom. Then his eyes met hers, and he started, and looked down at the sweet, shy face, amazed and half in doubt.

"Why, you are Love!" said the Prince, taking her little hands in his. "Where have you been, sweet? I've sought you everywhere."

"Not everywhere," said Love, nestling against him with a little half-sad laugh; "not everywhere. I've been here all the time. I was here when you went away, and I've been waiting for you to come back—so long."

And so the Prince's quest was ended.

CAROLS.

WE do not know whether the word "carol" was used in England as a synonym for a song before the time of Chaucer, but we find that poet using it in a sense which has now fallen into disuse in this country, namely, dancing. The primitive conception of a carol, whether as a dance or a song, or a combination of both, is one of festivity or rejoicing. None of our surviving carols, however, go far enough back to throw any light on the infancy and youth of carol literature. Among the oldest we possess are to be found both the religious hymn and the joyous secular song in honour of Christmas. This, therefore, may be taken as the natural division of all our existing carol literature—the religious hymn fit to be sung in churches or religious assemblies and on solemn occasions, and the joyous song which might usher in the wassail-bowl in the halls of the great, or enliven the kitchen of the peasant or the parlour of the village ale-house. There were regular wassail-songs, which, from their character, could only be sung on special occasions, or at particular stages of a feast, or by persons going from door to door with a wassail-bowl. But although the carol is now associated inseparably with Christmas, it was not confined exclusively to Christmas rejoicings.

The custom of singing at Christmas dates, of course, from the beginning of the Christian era, and it is certain enough that the secular song was not associated with the sacred hymn in Christmas festivities until Christmas itself, as a genuinely solemn Christian festival, had become, to some extent, secularised by blending with pagan rites and conceptions. It was at a very early date in the history of the Church that feasting to excess was forbidden by the Fathers; and if excess in eating, drinking, and dancing had grown to such proportions in the second, third, or fourth century as to call forth a rebuke from some saintly ecclesiastic like Gregory of Nazianzen, we may take for granted that the secular song had taken its part also in the celebration of the festival.

Secular singing at Christmas had become common in this country long before the Norman Conquest. The outbreak of plays, masques, spectacles, mummeries, and disguisings which followed the Norman Conquest, with dancing and games of dice, was no doubt accompanied with secular singing. These pageants were attended by

strolling minstrels, and although we know only very indifferently how the early common-place minstrels amused the common people, we fortunately possess in a manuscript in the British Museum, which has been reprinted by the Percy Society, the song-book of a minstrel of the sixteenth century. This collection shows at least that at the latter date these wandering Homers were stocked with an extensive supply of pieces fitted for every occasion, from the most solemn to that of the wildest revelry. Warton, writing of the middle of the seventeenth century, makes mention of two itinerant singers named "Outroaring Dick," and "Wat Wimbas," who sometimes made as much as twenty shillings a day by singing at fairs, festivals, and celebrations; and they would, no doubt, be as willing to earn an honest penny by singing carols as by singing jovial songs.

It is not till we come to the sixteenth century that we find carol-singing becoming a widely popular custom at Christmas and other festivals. In fact, the sixteenth century and a portion of the seventeenth may be regarded as the great carol-singing period of our national manners—including under carol both the jovial Christmas song and the more or less sacred Christmas or Easter hymn. We give a verse or two from a very old one describing a contest for supremacy between the ivy and the holly, which is found in a manuscript of the age of Henry the Sixth (1422-1461), and has been printed by Ritson:

Nay, ivy, nay hyt shall not be I wys,
Let holly have the maystry as the maner ys.

Holly stond in the hall fayre to behold
Ivy stond w'out the dore, she ys ful sore a cold.
Nay, ivy, etc.

Holly and his mery men they dawnsyn (dance) and they syng,
Ivy and her maydens they wepyn (weep) and they wryng.

The contrast, to the discredit of the ivy, is carried on through several verses. The same manuscript contains one of a sacred character of the same age, from which we also quote an example:

When Cryst was born o Mary fre
In Bedlam in that fayre cyte
Angellis sangen w' mirth and gle

In excelsis gloria
Herdmen beheld these angellis bright
To them appeared w' gret light
And seyde Goddis Sone is born this night
In excelsis gloria.

In one of the Coventry pageants belonging to the early part of the same century, there are three carols, of which that sung by the shepherds who saw the Star in the East may be given as a sample:

As I rode out this endenes (last) night,
Of thre joli sheppardes I saw a sight,
And, all aboute their fold, a star shone bright,
They sange terli terlow
So merrell the sheppardes ther pipes can blow.

By 1551 carol-singing had become common enough to justify W. de Worde, one of our earliest printers, in printing a set of them, from which we see that the singing of a boar's head carol at the introduction of the boar's head on the occasion of the Christmas feast was a custom then in use. Even as far back as the year 1170 it was introduced at one of the banquets of Henry the Second with the sound of trumpets. Dibdin, in his *Typog. Antiq.*, vol. ii, p. 252, gives a later version of the song than De Worde's, as it was sung in Queen's College, Oxford, but the difference between them is slight. The earliest extant poem, dating in the time of Edward the Sixth, ran thus:

The bore's head in hand bring I
With garlans gay and rosemary,
I pray you all syng me merely,
Qui estis in convivio.

The bore's head I understande
Is the chefe servyce in this lande,
Loke, wherever it be fande
Servite cum cantico.

Be gladdes lordes, both more and lesse
For this hath ordeyned our Stewardes
To cheere you all this Christmase

The bore's head with mustarde.

On the other hand, Sylvester, in his *Garland*, quotes one which he considers much older than De Worde's. But there are better boar's head carols than any of these, specimens of which will be found in Ritson, the music for some of them being in Mr. Stafford Smith's *Musica Antiqua*.

As the splendour of the Christmas festive celebrations increased at Court, in baronial hall, and throughout the country generally, carol-singing became an indispensable part of the ceremonial and enjoyment. Among our earliest carols there is abundance of evidence that bands of persons roamed about from house to house singing carols, which generally contained a begging appeal for some Christmas charity in return for Christmas good wishes. By Shakespeare's time carol-singing in the streets was quite common. Sometimes the carol makes the singers beg to be admitted to a share of the Christmas cheer. There was probably no distinguishable difference between a wassail song and a convivial carol, as is shown in Stevenson's *Twelve Months*, where we read of "the chearfull carols of the wassel cup."

The Puritan Revolution brought carol-

singing, like many other social amusements, almost to an end for a time. Before the Civil War even broke out, an effort was made to substitute Psalm-singing for Christmas carols. As early as 1597, a book of "Godly and Spirituall Songs" was "collectit" and published at Edinburgh, with the object of superseding the secular songs of the period—the tunes of the secular songs, however, being retained. In 1684 a similar assortment of pious and godly songs was printed in English at Ghent with the like object. With the Restoration the rebound occurred, and carol-singing was resumed along with so many other old English customs, and held its sway until towards the close of the eighteenth century. All through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, collections of carols continued to be made and published, or republished, and these form but a mere drop in the ocean of carol literature in England, nearly all of which is now lost. Many a chorister in village churches tried his hand at carol-making, adapting the words either to an old favourite air, or—as sometimes happened—to a tune of his own composition. But as the old middle-age notion of Christmas continued to die out under the advancement of Protestant feeling and modern ideas, the significance of the carol to a great extent evaporated, and we read in Hone (on *Mysteries*), for example, of a carol with the curious title, "A Christmas Carol on Pekoe-Tea," published in 1729; and in a collection of Welsh carols, published at Shrewsbury in 1779, we read of a carol to Cupid, and also of a nightingale carol. Besides Christmas carols, the Welsh collection contains summer carols, May carols, and winter carols, showing, as we have already said, that the carol was not necessarily identified with Christmas.

While Chaucer uses the word "carol" in the sense we have already indicated, we have both with him and with the French the word "nowel," which not only means Christmas, but also a carol-song and a cry of joy. It had become so common in England as a name for Christmas and for carol, that it is constantly occurring in the old English carols in the one or the other sense. The following stanza from a carol belonging to the age of Henry the Sixth illustrates this point :

Nowel, nowel in yis halle,
Make merye, I prey zu alle,
On to y' chylde may we calle
Ullo sine crimine.

And this of the age of Henry the Eighth further illustrates it :

I am here, Syre Cristmasse,
Welcome, my lord, Syre Cristmasse,
Welcome to us all, both more or lesse,
Come nar, Nowell.

The history of carol-singing can be traced to as early a period in France as in England, and the collections of old carols are perhaps more numerous in the former country than in the latter. The ignorance of the middle ages sometimes, however, led to an amusing misuse of the word, as in the case of a priest at Dijon, who, confounding Noah and Nowell several times in a sermon, spoke of the patriarch Nowell (Christmas), and of the rainbow of the covenant entered into with Nowell (Christmas). It is said that in Burgundy the common people confound the name of the patriarch with the name of Christmas in the same way.

Sandys quotes an amusing story from Pasquill's jests of a humorous old knight who, to make himself merry at Christmas, sent for many of his tenants and poor neighbours and their wives to dinner. He would not allow any of them to eat till someone had the courage to assert that he ruled his wife and to sing a carol on behalf of his male friends. No one cared about venturing on so hazardous an enterprise in presence of his better-half; but at last, "with much adoe, after a dry hemme or two, a dreaming companion drew out as much as he durst towards an ill-fashioned ditty."

The humorous old knight laid a similar obligation on the women—that none of them should drink until she that ruled her husband had sung a Christmas carol. Whereupon everyone of them fell "to such a singing, that there was never heard such a catterwauling piece of musicka. Whereat the knight laughed so heartily that it did him as much good as his Christmas-pie."

Sometimes carols were sung in parts, and there are manuscripts of the time of Henry the Seventh and Henry the Eighth, with music for them set to three or four voices. Among the expenses of the former King is a sum of thirteen shillings and fourpence, paid to William Cornish, a court poet and composer, for "setting of carrall vpon Cristmas Day in reward." Sandys mentions the entry of a sum of three shillings and fourpence in the churchwardens' account of one of the London churches, in 1537, "for carrolls for Christmas." It must be owned that the

literary quality of the old carols is very poor, except in the case of the few which come from the hand of such writers as Robert Herrick, Ben Johnson, or Pope. Charles Wesley's immortal hymn, Hark, the Herald Angels Sing, is the grandest, as well as the most popular Christmas carol of our own or any time, and seems destined to survive all its literary kith and kin. Comparing the old carols with modern hymns, the inferiority of the former is immeasurable, and to pass from the one to the other is to enter a totally new world.

The subject-matter of the carols consists very often of some middle-age legend, the versified narrative of some scriptural incident, a little religious or moral poem, and the genuine Christmas social or roystering song. Among the legends and scripture incidents, The Three Kings of Cologne, The Cherry-Tree Legend, the message of the Angel Gabriel, the birth of Christ, the visit of the Magi, and the three ships, are favourite topics. In the carol of The Holy Well is to be found, perhaps, the sweetest stanza in the whole of carol literature. Jesus, when a child, had obtained his mother's permission to play, and on requesting some little children who were playing at the Holy Well to allow him to join them, they refused with a jeer at his poverty. Turning home in tears to his mother, he tells her what they said, and she, knowing the child's Divine power, advised him to return and destroy them. Jesus replies in the following exquisitely simple and beautiful lines :

"Nay, nay," sweet Jesus mildly said ;
 "Nay, nay, that cannot be,
 For there are too many sinful souls
 Crying out for the help of me."

While the metres of the carols are infinitely various, the verse is too often the merest doggerel. But they are redeemed by their piety, their artlessness, their earnestness and simplicity ; and from the point of view of the historian, they are of value as embalming sentiments which have long since passed utterly away.

LEFT OUTSIDE.

A STORY OF KENSINGTON GARDENS.

CHAPTER III.

"WHAT does all this mean, Miss Lane ? A 'grand lady with blue gloves and gold boots' wanting you to go and see her, and giving Flo sweets—nasty, unwholesome things, I've no doubt, and just what I

should most disapprove of. 'Gold boots !' Have you been making acquaintance with some ballet-dancer ? I really should like to know what my child is talking about."

It was on Sunday, and the whole family were assembled at lunch, a meal dignified for that day by the name of early dinner, as was proper in an orthodox Church of England household, with servants' souls to be considered—in the evening ! Flo had been holding forth for some minutes in her childish treble, respecting certain sweetmeats which Egbert and Tommy accused her of secreting in a soap-dish, and eating in privacy instead of sharing with them. Mrs. Farquharson's voice broke in on the discussion in a tone of sharp, imperious annoyance, calculated to shatter the nerves of the most hardened criminal.

"They were bronze-coloured kid-boots, not gold," said Susie, blushing vehemently. "That is only Flo's way of describing them ; and indeed, as to the little box of sweets the lady gave her, I have taken care she should not eat more than three or four at a time. I thought—that is, I didn't like to—to seem rude by refusing them."

"The lady ! What lady ? Do I know her, may I ask ?"

"I—I don't know. No, I—think not. She is an American," Susan stammered faintly, her cheeks burning still.

"I think not, too," Mrs. Farquharson retorted sarcastically. "An American lady with bronze boots and bright blue gloves eating bonbons in the Gardens of a morning ! An American circus-rider, or something of that sort, I should say, Miss Lane. I am surprised at you. And to bring my child into contact with such a person ! I would not have believed it."

"Was she a circus-rider ? But—oh, mummy !—they're always on white horses, and she hadn't a horse at all, or a hoop with paper on it either," Flo cried out eagerly.

"She left 'em behind her at the circus," said Egbert patronisingly. "We'll all go there and see her jump. Will she let us in free, Laney ?"

Susie's confusion and timidity made it difficult for her to get a hearing at all.

"Indeed, Mrs. Farquharson, she—she was a lady," she said, more earnest in her friend's defence than she would have dared to be in her own. "I—I am sure you would have said so if you had met her. I think they are quite wealthy people. They—her mother and she—are staying at the Great Western Hotel for a few weeks, just

to be near the Row and Gardens, and we happened to be sitting on the same bench one day. It was quite by accident. We have only met two or three times altogether, but—but she asked me last time—I mean she said she wanted me to know her mother, and that if you could spare me—if you didn't mind my going there this afternoon. Of course I did not promise, but it would only be for an hour, after the children's service, and——"

"Not on any account," Mrs. Farquharson interrupted; "I couldn't think of such a thing, and I am surprised you should ask me. I always thought you so steady, Miss Lane, and if even these people were old friends of yours, or your parents—but strangers, possibly most disreputable——"

"What is 'disreputable,' mummy?" Flo asked quickly. "Is it something bad? I didn't like her, though she did give me the sweets, 'cause she called me ugly for telling Miss Lane to pick up my ball, and you know, mummy, you said I wasn't to dirty my white silk gloves, and Miss Lane's gloves is only common grey cotton ones. I 'fought' that lady very rude, and I shall call her 'disreputable' when I see her again."

"You'll do nothing of the sort," put in her father sharply. "My dear," frowning with marital significance at his wife, "I wish you would be more careful what you say before the children. Some of my best customers at present, people I wouldn't offend for anything, happen to be Americans. It would be pleasant for me if this girl turns out to be one of them, and Flo tells her we say she is disreputable."

Mrs. Farquharson coloured and looked annoyed.

"I don't see what reason you have to imagine such an unlikely thing," she observed testily.

"The same as you have to imagine the other. There is Van Groedner, now. I don't know a man I want more to stand well with at the present moment. He lives in Lancaster Gate, and has more than one daughter——"

"Who—lives in the Great Western Hotel!" put in Mrs. Farquharson crushingly.

But for once, Susan forgot herself, and before Mr. Farquharson could be crushed, turned to him with glowing cheeks and rounded eyes.

"Oh," she said eagerly, "she—the young lady, I mean—did speak of a Mrs. Van Groedner. She is not one of her daughters. She is a Miss Medicott—her-

self, and her brother is something in the Embassy here; but she said Mrs. Van Groedner was going to present her at the next Drawing Room. She—she was on her way to Lancaster Gate when I saw her last."

"Aha! there, my dear, what did I tell you?" cried Mr. Farquharson with male injudiciousness.

His wife retorted on it immediately.

"What, my dear?" she repeated innocently. "Really, I don't remember. I was busy carving, and your conversation with Miss Lane not being a very interesting one, I am afraid I did not listen to it as attentively as I might have done. If it had to do with the person in the bronze boots, I can only repeat that whatever account she may give of herself, she is quite as likely to have made it up as not. If she had been anybody decent, or desirous of knowing me, she would not have set about it by striking up a clandestine acquaintance with my nursery-governess. Miss Lane, I must really ask you to drop the subject. I am sorry, even for once, to be obliged to refuse any request of yours, but in this case I feel sure your estimable stepfather would say that I was only acting in defence of your youth and inexperience."

Susie said nothing. In truth she was not made for fighting; and the grievousness of the disappointment only had the effect of crushing out her powers of pleading against it. She went upstairs after dinner and cried bitterly—cried till she made her nose red, and set all the children exclaiming at her; but how could she help it? To have the very first request for leave of absence she had ever made refused; to be shut up in that dull, hot schoolroom with three noisy, unsympathetic boys and one fretful girl, when she might have been walking happily over the green grass with her friend—for Virginia had promised to meet her at the fountains, and escort her to the hotel—oh, it was too bad! The poor child could have cried again each time she thought of it!

But fate had kinder things in store for her, if, indeed, it was fate who was kind and Mrs. Farquharson cruel, as to which there may be doubts. Only a few days later, as Susie was entering the silk-department of Whiteley's huge establishment, a familiar voice greeted her with:

"Why—if it ain't my Miss Lane! Mother, do see!" and she found herself in the clutch of a little outstretched hand from one of two ladies seated at the

counter, and almost before she recognised the speaker, was being introduced to her mother, a forty-year-old edition of Virginia, more powdered, more fringed, and, if possible, more dressed, with the blue eyes looking as if they had been boiled, the lilies and roses turned to whitey-brown paper, and the delicately sharp outlines of cheek and chin lost in seamy bagginess; yet at the same time so ridiculously like her daughter that no one would have dreamt of questioning the relationship for a moment.

She looked the essence of good-humour, however, and was certainly more polite than many English dowagers might have been under the circumstances; for she not only gave Susie her hand, but told her, in a very powerful nasal accent, that she was delighted to meet an acquaintance of Virginia's of whom she had already heard so much.

"Now, mother," said Virginia, pouting, "I'll not have that. Miss Lane ain't an 'acquaintance' of mine at all. Acquaintances are people you're introduced to in drawing-rooms, and just say ten stiff words to, and never feel like wanting to meet again. Susan Lane's a real friend of mine, and I found her out all by my own self, and thanks to a special providence. Say now, isn't she like Elizabeth?"

Mrs. Medicott looked dubious.

"Well, she is, some," she replied amiably; but Virginia was not contented, and whisked Susie off, declaring that she would go round with her, as mother would be sure to be an hour over her silks. The little fairy was in a more effusive mood than usual, flitting from counter to counter at her friend's side, talking all the time, abusing Mrs. Farquharson for not having allowed her to keep her Sunday's engagement, and buying half-a-dozen things which she didn't want; among them a string of blue Venetian beads for Susie, and a pair of long white mittens, which, as the little governess never went out of an evening, were not likely to be the smallest use to her; but which Virginia assured her she must have, because Elizabeth Emery had once given her just such another pair.

Nor was this all. It chanced that Mrs. Farquharson had carried off the three elder children to spend the day at Wimbledon, leaving her governess with no further obligations than a tolerably long list of things to be ordered at Whiteley's and other shops in Westbourne Grove, and

when Virginia found out this, nothing would satisfy her but that Susie should hurry over the shopping in her company, and then return with them to the hotel for some afternoon-tea; after which they would drive her home through the park.

Susie remonstrated in vain. It seemed to her simply impossible and undreamt-of that she—she who had never been inside the Farquharsons' brougham, except when sent with the children to convoy them to or from some juvenile party—should take her place in that grand open carriage, to which an obsequious commissionaire was that moment bearing a multitude of parcels; should wedge herself in beside those gorgeous beings whose glistening silks and broideries made her plain little gown and toque of dark-coloured merino look still poorer and commoner by contrast. But Virginia would listen to no refusals. She had set her heart on the enterprise; and as—with all her shyness and humility—Susie was too innately a lady to think very much about her dress in the matter, seeing that it was perfectly suited to her position, and that that was well known to her companions, Miss Medicott got her way.

But what a delightful "way" that was! What a delightful sensation to be rolling along in that smooth-sprung chariot under the clear sunshine and cloudless sky; and how wonderfully different the world looked when surveyed from the elevation of that luxuriously-cushioned seat, to its general appearance from the standpoint of two tired little feet trudging along through the dust!

Yet there was a further treat still in store for her, for, as they drew up at the hotel, Virginia exclaimed, "Why, if there isn't Calton!" and, almost at the same moment, a young man, slight, dark, and gentlemanly looking, wearing a carefully-trimmed moustache and clothes of immaculate fit, came up to the side of the carriage to help them to alight. Susie experienced a slight shock at first. Despite her short-sightedness, and the *couleur de rose* halo through which she viewed everything, she could not help being aware that this elegant little being was very different from the majestic and fair-haired "Arthur" of her dreams; but when he took off his hat to her, baring his head more completely than an Englishman would have done, it was a comfort to her to see that his eyes were blue, and that his features, though small and neat, were possessed with a

certain air of decision and gravity which completely redeemed them from insignificance.

His manner to his mother and sister, too, no less than to herself, was delightful—a mingling of graceful cordiality and old-world deference which quite fascinated Susie after the domestic bickerings and rudenesses of Clanricarde Gardens, and went far towards recalling the “high thoughts, and amiable words, and courtesy,” etc., of the stainless king, notwithstanding the Bond Street exquisites of Mr. Medicott’s attire.

He was extremely quiet. Mrs. Medicott and Virginia rattled away at the very top of their voices, and at a speed hitherto undreamt of in Susie’s slower mind; but though Calton smiled gravely, and listened with the greatest politeness to each, he said little himself, and that chiefly to Susie, in a voice pitched studiously low, and with barely enough American accent to give it an agreeable originality. It is true that he, too, began by asking her questions; but they were chiefly about pictures and music, in both of which subjects he seemed so much at home that Susan felt half ashamed to own that she had not yet been to the Academy, and had never heard either Patti or Joachim in her life. Fortunately, however, the avowal did not seem to overwhelm him with surprise, or make him despise her; and, indeed, the very sweetly naïve admiration with which she evidently regarded the vastness of his “cultural” experiences, and the timid earnestness of her “Will you tell me about them, please?” may have been rather refreshing to a young man blasé with the society of advanced girls, and the shibboleth of conventional art-gossip which criticises all things and reveres none. It was a slight shock certainly to him when, on mentioning that he was going to dine with Sir Frederick Leighton that evening, to meet Millais, he found that Susie mistook the last-named painter for the author of the *Angelus*, an exquisite photograph of which was lying on the centre-table, and had already excited her fervent admiration; but he was glad at least that she knew what to admire, and not only took the trouble to tell her all he knew of the French artist’s life, but even hunted out an old volume of Scribner, containing some excellent woodcuts of his pictures, to show her. Susie felt as if she could sit there for ever, listening in happy silence, and enjoying her tea and macaroons; but the carriage was waiting, and when she realised

how late it was, even the delight of a drive through the Park, in all the pomp and brilliancy of its afternoon gathering, could not banish an anxious look from her soft eyes, or keep her from being nervously restless to get home.

“You poor little Cinderella!” said Virginia tenderly. “I do believe those people treat you real badly for you to be so frightened of them;” for Susie, blushing terribly, had begged to be set down at the corner of the terrace, instead of at the Farquharsons’ door. “Why don’t you run away?”

“Where to?” asked Susie, smiling a little at the idea; but Virginia was prompt with her answer.

“To us! You come to us, and we’ll carry you off to America, and have lovely times together; won’t we, Calton?”

“I wish you would, if you would only profit by Miss Lane’s society and learn not to talk slang,” said Calton with his grave smile. “Why don’t you try to do like the people you admire?” But Virginia only laughed and gave Susie’s hand a little squeeze.

“If I could do just like her, I shouldn’t admire her so much,” she said saucily; “and Susan Lane don’t mind my slang. She’s my friend, not yours—aren’t you, Susan?”

Susie’s eyes filled with sudden, delicious tears.

“Oh,” she said tremulously, “if I might be——” But the very depth of her feeling almost choked the words; and as the carriage drew up for her to alight, her “Good-bye! Thank you very much!” sounded so bald and constrained, even in her own ears, that she could have beaten herself as soon as she was alone.

“How cold and ungrateful they must think me!” she said to herself. “If only I wasn’t so horribly shy and nervous, or could do something to show that dear, beautiful girl how I love her! To think of her calling me her friend! And I who have so longed for one! Well, my life will be happy enough now, and I must try to read more, and make myself more worthy of her. I wonder if her brother guessed why I asked him where that magazine of Scribner’s was to be got; but I shouldn’t mind his knowing. He must have seen how stupid and ignorant I was, and yet he was not a bit impatient or contemptuous, and he said he wished she would speak like me! Oh yes, and he meant it, too. He is not the sort of man, I can see, to say

anything he doesn't mean; though she needn't have minded, for all that. I would rather talk like her, slang or not, than that she should change, even in a single thing."

I have put all this down to show you that Susie belonged to that almost extinct specimen of girlhood which still believes with highest faith and most fervent enthusiasm in some member of her own sex; and, like most enthusiasts, was not only ready to die all deaths for her faith, but to sweeten all her life with it. Even the sight of the schoolroom clock pointing to six, and the cold tea and plate of bread-and-butter waiting for her on the table, could not take away that novel sweetness at present; nor yet the pert tone of the housemaid asking if she was to clear the tray away.

"Miss Lane hadn't said she was teazing out, and it had been standing there an hour already."

Miss Lane apologised meekly. She had met some friends, she said, who had made her go with them for a cup of tea. She was very sorry to be so late, and her voice was so sweet and gentle that even the irate damsel was soothed, and condescended to say it didn't matter; the while Susie's new friend was asking her brother as they drove homeward:

"Well, John Calton Medicott, and what do you think of her? Say now, I don't want to hurt you; but isn't she like—"

"Not the very least," said her brother decidedly. "The two faces are as different as possible. This one is a child."

"And a very homely-looking one," put in Mrs. Medicott; "but it's just like Jinny. She always does take a fancy to the oddest sort of people. Last time it was an Italian fruit-woman, a dreadful creature with ten lovers."

"Miss Lane's face is not pretty," said Calton gravely, "but it has that infantile purity which you see in Carl Müller's and some of the old masters' pictures of the Virgin. There is something touching, certainly, in its perfect innocence."

But Virginia wouldn't listen to either of them.

"Mother, you're perfectly hateful! I'm sure I wish now that Italian woman had been smothered; and, don't you be so wise, Calton. Susan Lane wasn't like herself to-day, or she wouldn't have looked so happy and childish. If you had seen her

the first time I did, and the look in her eyes—"

"I saw them full of tears when she bid you good-bye. Poor child! I guess she don't have a high time up there," said Calton, with a pardonable relapse into the luxuries of his own language for the moment.

No one, however, need have wasted pity on Susie at that moment. What a wonderful thing happiness is! What a rejuvenator—what a beautifier! What a glorifier of heaven and earth! How easy, too, of attainment; and—alas!—how easy to lose! But why talk of losing it, when it has only just come, and with Susie there had not been even any attaining. It had dropped from heaven into her lap, as it were, and she had taken it into her heart, had hugged and embraced it, and thanked Heaven on her knees for it, without one pang of doubt or even misgiving, such as persons older and riper in this world's wisdom cannot help but entertain over the brightest prospects.

And yet this was no such great thing, after all. She had made a friend—perhaps two—that was all!

But then she had never had a friend before; and only a few days before it had seemed to her as if she should never have an opportunity of gaining such a happiness.

She had even thought herself content without it: content with the dull, starved, colourless life which for four years she, a girl in the heyday of life and youth, had been leading: the life with no warmth in it, no love, no hope, no warm hand-clasps, no sympathetic glances.

If you keep a man in total darkness long enough, you may blind him with the light of a farthing candle.

It was in this way that Susie was blinded now. So, if we take leave to laugh at her, we will keep some tears for the pain of the after operation which too often has to follow on such mental cataract.

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LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"My punishment is greater than I can bear. Come to me here, I implore you, and unsay those bitter words you spoke to me the last time we met. The thought of them is driving me mad.

"ELLINOR YORKE."

This was the note Phil found waiting for him at his hotel on his return from Rodney's funeral in Buckinghamshire.

He had spent just one night at Thorne Hall; the hour fixed for the funeral had necessitated that; then he had thankfully made his way back to his London hotel, and this was the note that greeted him on his return.

Phil always went to one hotel in London—a quiet, unpretending one in a quiet, unpretending street running off the Strand. Colonel Wickham had been wont to put up there, years before Phil had come upon the scene and been eligible for an annual visit to the great city. It suited Phil in many ways; for one thing it was within easy distance of every theatre worth the trouble of a visit, and Phil was yet young enough to go without his dinner to enjoy the play, and feel no ill effects from it afterwards; for another the discharge of his six weeks' or two-monthly bill there did not absolutely empty his purse of every sixpence he had, but left him just a few spare guineas for a trip to Dresden, Paris, or any other lively capital at the close of the London season. So year after year found him established in the same quarters, his friends learnt to address to him there, and on his arrival at the conventional period shortly before or shortly after Easter, he

was apt to find a whole packet of cards and sundry letters awaiting him.

It was therefore a matter of no surprise to him that Miss Yorke should know his London quarters, and address to him there. That which was a matter of surprise to him was that words of his could have taken such a deep hold upon this woman's heart, as to wring from her this exceeding bitter cry: "My punishment is greater than I can bear."

He read through the letter some half-dozen times before he could bring himself to believe that in very truth it was written by Ellinor Yorke. He knew her to be a proud woman; he had judged her also to be a cold, stubborn-hearted one from whom no pursuing Nemesis could wring cry of terror or remorse. Yet here was she, before the Daughter of Night had had time so much as to harness her griffins to her chariot, crying: "Mea culpa—my punishment is greater than I can bear."

Phil folded the letter, and put it away for future attention. At that precise moment he had another matter on hand which seemed to him to call for more immediate consideration:

"It is the old cry of Cain," he said to himself, "and the part she has played has been the part of Cain. Out of her own mouth she stands convicted. If she had been condemned to go through the awful scenes I have experienced the last few days, it would only have been common justice; as it is, she is let off lightly."

The thought of the painful, heart-breaking sorrow of the two women bereaved by Rodney's death hardened his heart not a little towards Ellinor Yorke. Lucy's grief especially touched him; she was so simple, so childlike, so willing to be reasoned with in her sorrow, and withal had seemed to be so unfairly treated all round, that he

felt his manhood especially appealed to on her behalf.

He had all sorts of plans forming in his brain—definite and indefinite; some of them scarcely wise, others unutterably foolish—for this friendless young girl. She had, so it seemed to him, special claims on his time and attention just now. Ellinor must wait; and if, while she waited, her thoughts tortured her with an almost unbearable torture, whom had she to thank for it save her own vain, cruel-hearted self?

These were Phil's thoughts as he set off to pay his second visit to Lucy Selwyn, according to his promise, on the day after Rodney's funeral. He had had no opportunity of mentioning her name, or pleading with Mrs. Thorne on her behalf, as he wished and intended, for the simple reason that Mrs. Thorne had remained in strictest seclusion through the whole of that mournful day, and he had not once set eyes upon her. He had nothing specially to communicate to Lucy as to future arrangements for her comfort; but the desire was, nevertheless, strong upon him to see her, and to do his best to speak the few words of consolation he had at command.

She received him, as before, in the linen-room of the house. There seemed to be no other apartment at her disposal. She was calmer than she had been when he last saw her; she talked with him less hurriedly and nervously; thanked him, though tremulously, for having laid her wreath before any other in Rodney's grave. Then little by little, and in answer to his gently-put questions, she told him all she had to tell of herself and her parentage.

This in outline was her story. She was the daughter of a clergyman—a London curate, who, with little more than his curacy to depend upon, had married a young girl somewhat beneath him in station—an assistant, in fact, in a large West End millinery establishment. Soon after Lucy's birth the father had died; he was an only son of an only son, and no relatives remained to offer aid of any sort to his widow and orphan. Mrs. Selwyn at once fell back upon her old occupation, and for some years supported herself and Lucy in London by bonnet and mantle making. An opportunity for increasing her income presenting itself in the invitation of a large Paris firm to go across the Channel and do work for English customers, she eagerly seized it, taking Lucy with her and putting her at school in the vicinity of her place of business. Eventually,

after some years of hard work and poor pay, Mrs. Selwyn died, and Lucy, thrown utterly upon her own resources, availed herself of the only chance that seemed open to her at the moment of gaining a livelihood, and undertook the duties of wardrobe-keeper at a large boys' school. Here Rodney, calling to fulfil a commission entrusted to him by a friend, met her, fell in love with her, and acted the part of the Young Lochinvar, with a good deal more impetuosity than even that doughty young chevalier displayed, and a good deal less of constancy.

Phil listened, scarcely saying a word till the sad little story was ended. Then he questioned Lucy if there were not one relative anywhere of either father or mother, who would be able to give her a home till her future could be decided on.

Lucy shook her head mournfully. She could think of none. In fact, she could have no relative, she knew, for her mother in her sorest extremity had known of none. Then she placed in Phil's hand the large envelope addressed to him in Rodney's writing.

Phil opened it there and then; there might, so he thought, be in it something it behoved Lucy to know. He read it through by the one jet of gaslight beneath which they sat. It was simply a legally-executed will, made at the time that the special correspondentship had been talked about. It was written from beginning to end in the lawyer's writing, and bequeathed to Lucy the furniture and works of art in Rodney's rooms in Jermyn Street, all his jewellery, and all the money he had, at that time, a right to bequeath—the sum of one thousand pounds invested in some City company. The firm of solicitors who had drawn up this will, and Phil Wickham, were appointed sole executors. Then followed Rodney's signature, the only scrap of his writing which the document contained,

Lucy's face fell as Phil finished reading and re-folded the blue paper. In her secret heart she had been counting upon some tender, loving message from her dead darling out of that big square envelope. If it had been only one word, how grateful she would have been for it!

She sighed and looked up wistfully in Phil's face.

"Is that all? Is there nothing else?" she asked.

Phil thought she must be referring to the legacy.

"I fear it is all," he answered. "It is very little. Really this is not how you should have been provided for."

Lucy flushed crimson.

"I was not thinking of the money," she said. "That is enough—more than I have ever been accustomed to have for my own. I was only hoping there might have been a message—a little message for me. Of course, it was silly of me. I ought to have known——"

Her tears stopped her.

"Oh, those tears!" thought Phil, looking around him despairingly, as men are apt to in such unpleasant circumstances, for wine, water, eau-de-cologne—anything that he might administer as a restorative.

What a misfortune it was that in the whole of London he could not call to mind one tender-hearted, motherly woman to whom he might take this poor, friendless, sorrowing orphan for sympathy and protection! How confoundedly hard fortune had been upon her! If Mrs. Thorne could but see her now, surely her marble heart must relent. If Ellinor could but see the result of her coquetry and vanity, surely she would be well-nigh driven to imitate Rodney's example, and end her frivolous life with her own hand. And as for Rodney—— Here Phil shuddered, and drove an ugly thought from his brain. Somehow, as he sat there watching Lucy weep for her lover, his own grief for his friend seemed to die in his heart.

He strove to turn Lucy's thoughts.

"I will send this—this deed on to the lawyers at once, Miss Selwyn, and they will see that Rodney's wishes are carried out. But you—have you thought at all what you mean to do in the future?"

Lucy shook her head.

"I haven't begun yet to think about myself. I suppose I must take a situation of some sort. A thousand pounds wouldn't be enough to live on."

"It might bring you in fifty pounds a year if it were properly invested; but that, as you say, would not be enough to live on," Phil answered.

He had a little plan forming in his brain, according to which, Lucy was to go down to Stanham Hall, and live there as companion to Edie till he and she married, and he could offer her a home in his own house. It would not, however, be judicious to mention this plan till Edie had been sounded on the matter; also, it was as well to set Lucy's mind at work on something other than, and independent of,

her own all-absorbing subject for sorrow. She was eminently of a practical turn of mind. Once set thinking on the matter, ways and means of living began to suggest themselves to her.

"Fifty pounds a year seems a great deal to me," she said. "It would pay for clothes, and everything except board and lodging, and I could easily get that by offering my services as wardrobe-keeper in some school. They might take me here, perhaps, if I asked them."

"It would be a dreary life for a young girl like you."

"All life must be dreary to me now," she answered gravely, "and you know I am not accomplished. I speak French, of course, as I was brought up in Paris; but I am not sure that I speak it as ladies do, and I could not play on the piano, or sing, out of church, to save my life."

Then they sat together for about another half-hour, talking in the little bare room about possibilities and practicabilities, Phil offering and giving advice sagely and gravely, for all the world as though he had been old enough to be this young woman's father instead of being her senior by exactly three and a half years, and Lucy listening gratefully—reverently, almost—for was not this tall, handsome, brother-like young man Rodney's own dearest friend, and had not Rodney, in a manner, left her in his charge and to his care?

Phil did not get back to his hotel that night till past seven o'clock; he sat down to his dinner at once, for he was feeling not a little weary and over-done. The fates, however, had combined against him, and he was not to be allowed to eat his dinner in peace, however well he might have earned it. The man who always waited on him brought in with his soup a small sealed note, the address of which he at once recognised to be in Miss Yorke's writing.

His eye ran quickly over it. It did not take a moment to read. Thus it ran:

"—, Grafton Street,

"I have waited in all this afternoon hoping to see you. If you only knew the torture your words have condemned me to, I feel sure you would come to me at once.

"E. Y."

Phil put the letter on one side; he put his soup on one side also, untasted, and pulled on his overcoat once more—possibly not with the cheery alacrity he generally displayed when about to respond to the

summons of a handsome young woman. The night was setting in chill and wet, also he had had next to nothing to eat all day, and that of itself is sufficient to make a man of healthy, vigorous appetite depressed and out of sorts with himself and the world at large; but most of all, and worst of all, the errand to which he was compelled was not to his liking. In all the world, could search have been made, a woman more antipathetic to himself than Ellinor Yorke could not have been found. In his secret heart he despised her for her vanity, he hated her for the coldly-cruel use to which she put her rare beauty and grace; and the despising and the hating were done with an intensity for which he could not offer to himself a sufficient reason. It might have been that a little spice of fear—or, as some would be pleased to put it, the instinct of self-preservation—added a something to the flavour of both feelings, making them appear more pungent than in reality they were.

A man thinks he loathes a worm, he abhors a rattlesnake, but if it were possible to divest his mind utterly of the notion that at some not very distant day he himself would furnish a repast to the larvae of sarcophaga mortuorum, or, if he could be assured that the deadly fangs of the rattlesnake had once and for ever been deprived of their deadliness, depend upon it, both loathing and abhorrence would appear in greatly modified forms.

GILLRAY'S "BONEY."

THERE is no greater libel than that which charges "the multitude" with fickleness. True, the so-called "popular favourite" of yesterday has sometimes been the execrated outcast of to-day. Sejanus, on Monday the most powerful man in Rome, was on Tuesday dragged, before the breath was well out of his body, through the streets, and flung into the Tiber. But, when we come to look into things, we generally find that the so-called popular favourite was never a favourite of the people; he was forced upon them by an outside power, and they accepted him with outward acclamations, but with the set purpose of getting rid of him when they could. To their own leaders "the people" are by no means fickle; they put up with very much; they are wonderfully patient where once they have loved; their firm faith is like that of a trustful woman.

Read Browning's "Lost Leader," and you will feel that the poet is right, and the popular adage wrong.

Of course our attitude towards the Napoleon family is not a case in point. We did change thoroughly; never in the world's history did a nation's feelings go more completely round than ours, from the days when Gillray's caricatures exactly expressed the natural sentiments about "Boney," to the halcyon times of the *entente cordiale*.

But then there was a reason for the change. We had had fifty years of political training, and had learned the wisdom of leaving other nations to settle their own affairs. The first Napoleon was a selfish adventurer, who waded to power through seas of blood, and who had none of the heroic attributes with which Thiers, and Beranger, and Victor Hugo, and the other creators of the Napoleonic Legend have invested him. He probably deserves most of the very hard things which M. Lanfrey and several other modern French historians have said of him. Some people say very hard things of his nephew; he, too, had his coup d'état—by no means an edifying one. But the difference was not so much between the first and third Napoleons as between the British public in 1800 and in 1850. We were coarse and vulgar then; there is no denying it. You can account for it as you please; you can say that the Stuart reaction against Puritanism, diluted with Hanoverian sottishness, turned out to be a bad mixture; anyhow, the fact remains. In those "good old days" delicate satire would not do; humour must be "broad" if it was to tell; grinning through a horse-collar was the beau-ideal of fun; and caricature was as brutal and truculent as that of all decent comic papers nowadays is singularly the reverse.

For our unfairness to "Boney"—for we were unfair as well as brutal—there was the less excuse because he was in a sense our own creation. "Pitt made the first Napoleon," sounds like "Tenterden steeple made the Goodwin Sands;" but it is at least as true. Had he left the Republic to itself, instead of loosing against it the Coalition, and getting France invaded on all sides, the Republic would have run its course perhaps not very differently from that of 1871, and Bonaparte, instead of being hoisted on to the pinnacle of greatness by the absolute need of finding a general who could make head against the world in arms, would have had to content

himself with such triumphs as French Admirals and Generals are now winning in Tonquin and Madagascar.

Our caricaturists began with "Boney" from his infancy. In May, 1800, Gillray published, in eight plates, Democracy; or, a Sketch of Bonaparte's Life. Of these the first, Democratic Innocence, is something to make one heartily ashamed, both of the artist and the public for which he catered. A smoky cabin, with clothes drying on a line across the rafters; not a scrap of furniture, save a cauldron, and an upturned washtub on which is set a big dish, for the contents of which five squalling brats are tearing one another's hair and putting their thumbs into one another's eye. In the opposite corner the mother, barefooted, squats like an Irish beggar-woman, cuddling a babe, her face, with blubber lips and snub nose, being as far as possible removed from the severe beauty of "Madame Mère." That is Gillray's idea of the Napoleons at home, the joke being that the future Emperor, having made a dash at the food, has succeeded in getting hold of the bony part of a shin of beef. The next plate, Democratic Humility, is just as bad. Scene, the Ecole Militaire at Paris, the head-master wearing his order of St. Louis, the boys, like diminutive subs, with epaulettes, and lace, and shoe-buckles; enter Napoleon—really, we must remember, a boy of over fifteen, who had already been five years at Brienne—an abject-looking, barefooted, shock-headed, tattered street-Arab, brought in by a French Bumble. The thing is as unfair as it is ridiculous. Young Nap was at that time a dandy, very fond of going about in his long artillery boots; Madame Junot tells us how, when he once laughed at her as being only a child, she retorted by saying, "You are nothing but a puss in boots!" a joke which tickled him so much that, poor as he was, he spent a lot of money in having a toy made representing the puss of the fairy-tale running in front of the Marquis of Carabas's carriage. This was his new year's present to her.

Worse than these is the Josephine series. Josephine must have been, as everyone says she was, graceful and beautiful, or else she never would have become Viscount Beauharnais's wife. Yet she is represented, first as a short, fat workhouse-girl, with almost negro features; then as a stumpy Countess, all feathers and jewels and ill-breeding; then in half-a-dozen other disagreeable characters; and lastly as Empress, fatter than the fattest of typical cooks, and gorging

food at a rate which outdoes John Bull himself in the plate that represents his banquet on French ships. This plate, more than any of the rest, shows the coarse fibre of the time. John Bull, in Punch and the rest of our modern comica, does not always come up to one's ideal, but just compare him with his prototype, as drawn by Gillray in 1798, and entitled British Cooks cramming Old Grumble Gizzard with Bonne Chère. The "chère" is Fricassee à la Nelson, Fricando à la Howe, Dutch Cheese à la Duncan, etc., which he is washing down with huge draughts of true British stout, crying out, with sufficiency of bad language, which we need not quote, "Why, where do you think I shall find room to stow all you bring in?" It is not pleasant to reflect that, in our grandfathers' days, this was the national ideal, the typical Englishman.

Even Gillray's typical Englishwoman is no great beauty. In 1803 there was peace, and the caricaturist published The First Kiss These Ten Years, or the Meeting of Britannia and Citizen François. Britannia, who has put her shield and trident in a corner, is almost as blowsy as the Empress Josephine. The long, lean Frenchman has the greatest difficulty in getting his arms half round her.

The letterpress in those days was quite on a par with the drawing—racy and strong, but certainly not over-decent. A Life of Buonaparte, published in 1803, says that his great-grandfather kept a low drinking-shop, and being convicted of murder and robbery, died a galley-slave at Genoa. His wife had been an accomplice, and died in the House of Correction. Another account is even more circumstantial: "His grandfather was a butcher of Ajaccio; his grandmother the daughter of a journeyman tailor. His father, a low pettifogger, served and betrayed his country by turns; and after the conquest, he was a spy of the French Government." A more respectable genealogy traces the origin of the family to the Man with the Iron Mask. His gaoler, one Bonpart, had a daughter, whom the prisoner secretly married; the children kept their mother's name, and were, for safety, sent to Corsica, where Bonpart became Bonaparte.

It is curious how few caricatures there are about the Italian campaign. Of course the looting of pictures and statues is portrayed, not by Gillray, but by George Cruikshank, who—then very young—worked for his father, Isaac; many of the

plates signed by the latter being really the work of the former. About Egypt, Gillray and his brethren had a great deal to say. Napoleon turning Turk, his Cairo massacre, his cruelties at Alexandria, the Nile victory, were all illustrated. One of several plates by Gillray about the Battle of the Nile, represents Nelson bringing home two crocodiles as a present to the King. The said crocodiles, fettered and muzzled, represent Fox and Pitt, weeping floods of "crocodiles' tears." Another caricature shows the supposed feeling of the Whigs when the news of the victory was announced. "It's all a lye," says the Duke of Bedford, with the customary oath. "Nelson and the fleet's a sickening toast," says the Duke of Norfolk, as he sits among a score of empty port-bottles. Erskine calls out: "I shall faint!" Sheridan says: "I must look up my jaw;" while Fox says: "Farewell to the Whig Club."

Our naval victories are, all through, the most popular subjects of all. A very amusing plate by Rowlandson represents all the subject nations working as hard as they can at ship-building. Everyone is grumbling. The Dutchman says: "Donder and blazan to dis fraternisation! Instead of smoaking mine pipe and sacking de gold, dis French broders make me build ships that Mynheer John Bull may have de fun to take dem." John Bull, as a sailor, with a whip in his hand, is urging them to their work. "What, couldn't you find out that before, you stupid dupes?" he cries. "But, since you began the fun, you shall keep on. So work away, else Jack Tar will soon be idle." News travelled slowly in those days. A month after the Battle of the Nile, "The True Briton" gave a circumstantial account of the total destruction of the French fleet, and of the loss of Admiral Nelson, "who died of his wounds just two hours after he had received Bonaparte and all his general staff prisoners on board the 'Culloden.'" Nor was the account of the wholesale poisoning of the sick French at Jaffa to save them from falling into the hands of the Turks, more veracious than that of the Nile victory. Napoleon did order opiates for a few; but why multiply by ten the number actually dosed; and why add that on a former occasion Napoleon had strangled a number of French and Copts who were ill of the plague? Equally unfair was it to stigmatise Napoleon as Egalité, though Gillray's

Allied Powers unlooting Egalité, is as good as anything he ever drew. Everybody is getting something from the crestfallen robber; whom Jack Tar has fast round the waist and arms. A Dutchman is pulling away the cheese on which Napoleon had set his foot; a ferocious Turk, with a fringe of human ears round his robe, is tweaking his nose, and slashing at him with a reeking scimitar, labelled "St. Jean d'Acra." Prussia backed up by Russia is drawing off one of the boots—to wit, Italy; which is stuffed with gold pieces. The farce of Egalité, as Gillray elsewhere calls it, soon came to an end, when Napoleon, having given the caricaturists abundant material by his flight from Egypt, turned out the Council of Five Hundred.

Of course the Boulogne flotilla, in 1801, gave ample scope to the caricaturists. The light boats of which it was composed were well laughed at by the French themselves. Brunet, the comic actor, interpolated a bit of satire into a scene that he was acting. He began eating walnuts, the shells of which he floated in a tub of water that was set near him. "What are you doing?" asked his fellow-actor. "Faisant des péniches"—the Paris nickname for the flat-bottomed boats. For this ill-timed joke Brunet had twenty-four hours' imprisonment; and, next time the question was asked, he was silent. Again the question was asked, and again there was no reply. "Perhaps you do not know what you are about," said his fellow. "Oh yes; I know very well what I am about," replied Brunet; "but I know better than to tell." But this time there was no real invasion-panic; before the year's end there was peace; and so delighted were we at the prospect, that the mob took the horses out of General Lauriston's carriage—the "Times" of the day calls him Durostan—and drew it from his hotel, in St. James's Street, to Downing Street. Cobbett wrote down the still un concluded peace, and Gillray drew it down. One of his pictures represents the dream of Windham, the leader of the war party. Among other "prospective horrors" he sees Britannia, with broken shield and trident, and a halter round her neck, dragged by Napoleon to a guillotine.

One of the things that Talleyrand bitterly complained of to Lord Whitworth was the licence of our British press; but it was just as severe on our own statesmen when they did not fall in with popular views. Look at Gillray's

Evacuation of Malta—February, 1803. Ferocious little Boney holds Addington by his necktie, and, flourishing his big sword, compels him to give up Malta, Egypt, the Cape, St. Domingo, etc. In vain Addington pleads: "Pray do not insist on Malta! I shall certainly be turned out, and I have got so many cousins, and uncles, and aunts to provide for yet." Boney yells: "All— all, you wretch! and think yourself well off that I leave you Great Britain."—a sketch which was not calculated to strengthen the hands of the Addington ministry.

Now came the real invasion scare, with caricatures innumerable. We were readily frightened, and wanted to keep up our courage. Here are a few of the prints. In one, a huge Bonaparte tries to put his foot on Britain, but little John Bull cuts it off. Boney dances with pain, and shouts, "Oh, you tam John Bull; you have spoil my dance; you have ruin all my projects." In another, Boney is trying to dig through the globe and get at John Bull, who, sword in hand, with his ear to the ground, is ready to cut off his head as soon as it shows above the surface. In another, Boney, in a monstrous cocked-hat, hops from Corsica to France, and thence from Ambition to Power, and then takes a flying leap from Calais to Dover, where, as he comes down, little Bull catches him on his sword-point. Another shows Boney, mounted on a three-legged stool, looking at the moon through a very big telescope, and deciding that as Emperor of the Moon will be a fine title, he will get his balloon army in order at once. John Bull is quietly chuckling and saying: "Yes, my fine fellow, you will get there quite as easily as you will over here." One of the best is Gillray's King of Brobdingnag and Gulliver, the former George the Third, the latter Boney, whom he holds in his hand, saying, in Swift's words: "You are one of the most pernicious little odious reptiles that nature ever suffered to crawl on the earth." Sometimes the fun becomes ghastly. In Gillray's Boney Forty-eight Hours after Landing, a savage volunteer, with oak in his hat, holds up Boney's head on a pitch-fork, crying: "Ha, my little Boney! What dost think of John Bull now? Plunder Old England, ha! Make French slaves of us all, ha!"

The same thing is repeated by Ansell, the volunteer moralising: "Why, hark'ee, d'ye see, I never liked soldiering afore; but, somehow, when I thought of our Sal,

the bears, the poor cows, and the geese, why I could ha' killed the whole army my own self." In Gillray's Fairplay for Boney, John Bull as a sailor, stripped to the waist, wades across to the Boulogne port, shouting: "If you mean to invade us why make sush a rout? I say, little Boney, why don't you come out? You are a coming, are you; then why don't you come?" Cruikshank gives the annihilation of the French flotilla, John Bull dragging Boney to a gallows, and answering his appeal for "misericoord; hanging is not good for Frenchmen," with, "I sha'n't measure the cord. I'm sure it's long enough for a dozen such fellows as you." Roberts depicts Bull in cavalry uniform swimming his lion across the Channel, the French generals, on frogs, hopping nimbly off. Bull shouts: "I'll be after you, my lads. Why don't you come? D'ye think I put on my regimentals for nothing?" Piddcock's menagerie, one of the sights of Bartholemews Fair, was pressed into the service. A showman holds by a chain a big monkey in a cocked-hat, and explains that if he lets him go "he'll break up your crockery, drink your wine, do mischief here as he did in Egypt," etc., etc. Here is another sample; every trade is to have a share in punishing the invader:

Says the butcher, I'll knock the dog down like an ox;
Ories the constable, let's shut the knave in the stocks;
Says the chandler, when once to the pillory he hies,
Rotton eggs will I furnish to bung up his eyes.

A Boney in portentous cocked-hat leaning against a guide-post marked "Road to England," moralises in Hamlet's style:

To go or not to go; that is the question.
Whether 'tis better for my views to suffer
The care and quiet of yon hated rival
Or to take arms against the haughty people,
And by invading end them? To invade—to fight,
To fight? Perchance be beat; aye, there's the
rub, etc.

Boney's Grand Triumphant Entry shows the invader seated, bareheaded and handcuffed, with his face towards the tail of a white horse, his legs being tied under its belly. The horse is led by two volunteers: and on a flagstaff is Boney's huge hat labelled "For Saint Paul's." The mob is shouting, "We may thank our volunteers for this glorious sight." Ansell's Little Princess and Gulliver shows the Princess Charlotte plunging a pigmy Boney into a basin of water, and beating him with her fist as he rises to the top, saying: "There, you impertinent, swaggering, boasting imp, take that! You attempt to take my grand-papa's crown away, indeed! I'll let you

know that the spirit and indignation of every girl in the kingdom is roused at your insolence." Ansell's *None but the Brave* Deserve the Fair carries out this idea. A yeoman, with dripping sword, carrying Boney's head on a pole, grasps also the bleeding heads of a score of other Frenchmen. He cries: "There, you rogues! There! There's the Boney parts of 'em. Twenty more; killed 'em. I've destroyed half the army."

England felt the Continental blockade; and *The Giant Commerce Overwhelming the Pigmies*, shows our feeling on the subject. Commerce has a cap of Wedgwood ware, a face of Staffordshire ditto, eyes Derby porcelain, mouth Worcester china; its body is wool, and its arms printed calico, its gloves Woodstock, its shawl Norwich, its stockings fleecy hosiery, its shoes Stafford, etc. It is peppering Boney with Birmingham buttons, London porter, British spirits, etc.; the idea being that, despite the blockade, all these things made their way in contraband. As good a caricature as any of them is Cruikshank's *Gulliver Towing the Fleet into Lilliput*. Admiral Gambier brings over the Danish fleet; George the Third, with his spy-glass, cries: "What, what; Gulliver the Second! He he, Gulliver the Second! More Nelsons; more Nelsons; brave fellows!" Boney is stamping about in a fury, and a British tar explains to a protesting Dane: "You know as how you used to rob our forefathers, you lubber; and so you wanted to help that French monkey to do it again; but it wouldn't do."

The caricaturists soon grasped the import of the Spanish war. Gillray's *Valley of the Shadow of Death* is very suggestive. Boney, with notched sword, leading the Russian bear, is pursued by the German eagle and the ghost of Charles the Twelfth. A fiery comet, with tiara—the Pope—as nucleus, hurls at him the thunderbolts of excommunication; the Portuguese wolf, the Sicilian terrier, and the English lion are rushing on him in front, while Death appears, riding "on a mule of true royal Spanish breed." Cruikshank describes the sending of the French army into Spain as Apollyon, the Devil's Generalissimo, Addressing his Legions.

The old coarseness comes out in the *Elba* series. A Madman's Amusement shows Boney, with a straw crown, firing with a straw cannon at straw dummies of Austria, Russia, etc. The cannon naturally

takes fire; and his army, one corporal, cries: "Ah, diable!—nay, you was burn your playthings." Another sketch shows him with broom for sword, reviewing his ragged army of three and a drummer-boy. Of course, when he disappeared, the note was changed. In the *Flight of Boney from Hellbay*, Rowlandson has drawn the arch-fiend blowing bubbles, on one of which Napoleon is going aloft, to the delight of admiring demons. In *The Corsican's Last Trip* under the Guidance of his Good Angel, the fiend is helping him over the leap from Corsica, and pointing him to the imperial crown and throne. Waterloo was scarcely a subject for caricature, though Cruikshank attempted it, giving the French army in full flight; while Napoleon, seated on the eagle, whose left wing is gone, exclaims, as he clutches the bird round the neck, "Sauve qui peut; run, my boys, your Emperor leads the way. My dear eagle, take me safe to Paris, as you did from Moscow and Leipzig." Little Boney's Surrender to the Tars is also by Cruikshank. The sailor's remarks are very unlike Captain Maitland's. One says: "My eyes! what a sneaking hound he is!" Another: "I say, Jack, do you think they'll clap him in Exeter Change among the wild beasts, or put him in the monkeys' den in the Tower, or send him about with the dancing bear?"

It is no use moralising on the difference between our notions of caricature and those of fifty years ago; it is much more profitable to compare a volume of "Punch"—one of those in which Napoleon the Third was caricatured almost every week—with a set of Gillray and Rowlandson and the rest, or with Mr. J. Ashton's selections, if you cannot get at the originals. The comparison ought to put anyone in good-humour; for it shows that, in refinement and delicacy and regard for the feelings of an adversary, we are certainly better than our fathers. Their caricaturists were clever draughtsmen; but even in their best things there is a stamp of vulgarity which is happily absent from all the decent caricaturing of our day.

AUTHORSHIP UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

HEINRICH HEINE, the sweetest singer Germany has ever produced, wrote his "Romancero" under circumstances of great suffering. When paralysed and nearly blind, he wrote a woven web of satire and pathos, in which he spared nothing, not

even his own racked and anguished frame. "My body," he said, "has gone to rack and ruin, so that almost nothing is left but my voice, and my bed reminds me of the melodious grave of the enchanter Merlin, which is in the Forest of Broceliande, in Brittany, beneath lofty oaks, whose top-most branches blaze up like green flame to the sky. Ah, colleague Merlin, I envy you those trees and their fresh waving boughs, for no green leaf rustles here in my mattress-grave; a grave without rest, death without the privileges of the dead, who have no need to write either letters or books. I have been measured for my coffin some time ago, and my obituary written, but I die so slowly that this becomes a tedious affair for myself, as well as for my friends. Patience, however; there is an end to everything. One morning you will find the book closed where the puppet-show of my humour so often amused you." One night, indeed, it was so, but not until he had endured his "mattress-grave" for eight, long, weary years. One night he moved into that last and best bed, where "the weary are at rest."

"It is possible," remarks Professor Gubernatis, "that works of genius may be produced sometimes in a state of nervous excitement, I suppose when the shattered nerves begin to relax. Manzoni wrote his masterpieces when in a state of painful nervous distraction. When I have been writing works of fiction, for instance, my Indian and Roman plays, I have nearly always been subject to great nervous agitation. When I suffered most from spasms I had short intervals of freedom from pain during which I could write, and those around me asked in astonishment how I could, in the midst of such suffering, write scenes that were cheerful, glowing, and impassioned." The Professor's experience is obviously uncommon, though one instance of the same extraordinary faculty occurs to us. The Rev. T. T. Lynch is said to have produced some of his most beautiful writings amid spasms of angina pectoris.

But it has been contended that when the disease of which the sufferer is dying is consumption, or some disease which, between paroxysms of pain, leaves spaces of ease and rest, that it is nothing wonderful that good work should be done. Some of the best of Paley's works were written under such conditions, and some of the best of Shelley's. Crabb Robinson said

that Goethe never had an affliction which he did not turn into a poem. Mr. Philip Gilbert Hamerton has noted a very peculiar effect which the act of composition had upon Wordsworth. When engaged in composing *The White Doe of Rylstone*, he received a wound in his foot, and observed that the continuation of his literary labours increased the irritation of the wound, whereas by suspending his work he could diminish it. Absolute rest produced perfect cure. In connection with this incident he remarked that poetic excitement, accompanied by protracted labour in composition, always brought on more or less of bodily derangement. He preserved himself from permanently injurious consequences by his excellent habit of life.

It is curious that times of illness, when the eyes swim and the hand shakes, are oftentimes rich in suggestion. If the mind is naturally poetic the hours of illness are by no means wasted. Such was the condition of Mr. Green, the historian, who literally died in harness. Few pages in literary history are so touching as the preface in which Mrs. Green tells the history of the making of *The Conquest of England*. When he had finished the fourth volume of his *History of the English People* there was a pause in the advance of the lung disease which afflicted him. Eager for fresh work, he began to shape new plans, but early in the spring of 1881 he fell ill again. "In the extremity of ruin and defeat he found a higher fidelity and a perfect strength." Most men give up their work when their end seems near; but Mr. Green is said to have worked all the harder because his days were numbered, and strove to obtain and diffuse as much light as possible before the coming of the night. "Under the shadow of death the Making of England was begun," and the night came before it was finished. The death of Mark Pattison was equally sad; for in one of his last letters he wrote: "It is hard to feel my physical powers ebbing away, while my intellectual powers were never more vigorous. I have gathered with infinite pains the materials for my great work, but they will all be wasted; for I shall not live to finish it, and no one else will find the clue."

Colonel Wilkins, an American writer, appears to have had some presentiment of his approaching death. He translated the following touching little poem from Heine, read it to various relatives, and pinned it

to the foot of his bed the day before he died :

Lay your dear little hand on my heart, my fair;
Ah, you hear how it knocks in its chamber there?
In it dwells a carpenter, grim and vile,
And he's shaping a coffin for me the while.

There's knocking and hammering night and day;
Long since they have frightened my life away;
Oh, carpenter, show that you know your trade,
That so to sleep I may soon be laid.

Blindness would seem an insuperable drawback to writing, yet Prescott, the historian of Mexico and Peru, overcame the difficulty into which he was plunged by the failure of his sight. While a student in Harvard College, one of his fellow-students threw a crust of bread at him, which struck one of his eyes, and deprived it almost wholly of sight, while the other was sympathetically affected. When writing a history of Spain his eye gave way, and prevented him from reading. His literary enthusiasm, however, was too strong to be quenched even by this calamity; he engaged a reader, dictated copious notes, and from these notes constructed his history, making in his mind the necessary corrections.

The possibility of falling ill, as was the case with Julian Hawthorne, raises the question whether it is fair either to the author or the reader to publish portions of his work before the whole is completed. So far as the public is concerned, an answer has been given in the affirmative. It is contended that the public would probably prefer that even part of a story should appear than none of it, on the principle that half a loaf is better than none. Whatever view be taken of the wisdom of the practice, several famous novelists have followed Mr. Hawthorne's plan. Sir Walter Scott began to print his work before it was even half written, but Mr. R. P. Gillies said that he never heard of this being adopted by any other authors unless by one very impatient or one very needy; whereas in Sir Walter Scott's case it was a self-imposed difficulty, for which there seemed no assignable reason except that he required "to spur on the press." When he began *Waverley*, he had no idea what would come of it; for he had no plot. In the morning he would think it over a while, then go right on. The characters took care of themselves, and it all came out right in the end. Anthony Trollope seems to have been in the same fix with his heroes. "When I sit down to write a novel," he confessed, "I do not at all

know—and I do not very much care—how it is to end."

Trollope, though doubtless the most prolific writer ever known in England, made it a rule never to part with any portion of a novel till the whole was finished. "I was aware," he remarks, "that an artist should keep in his hands the power of fitting the beginning of his work to the end." But the offer of one thousand pounds for a novel, for use in the *Cornhill Magazine*, tempted him to relax his rule; and he agreed to let the editor have the first instalment of his serial within six weeks from the date of the offer. On the other hand, the majority of novelists finish their stories before printing the first portion; and the same rule is followed by American writers. W. D. Howells, for instance, keeps his manuscript for six or seven months ahead of the time for publication. Being of a nervous disposition, he could not rely upon himself to furnish matter at short notice. When possible, he completes the book before giving a page of it to a magazine.

The difference in the nervous condition of authors is quite as great as the difference in their methods of working. One writer cannot endure the presence of either wife or child, whilst another is totally unmoved by the frolics of his family. Tom Hood wrote generally at night, when all was quiet and the children were asleep. "I have a room to myself," he exclaims in a letter describing a change of lodgings, "which will be worth twenty pounds to me; for a little disconcerts my nerves." Even a separate room, however, will not always secure absolute quiet. "I remember," writes one, "being in company pervaded by the breezy presence of Anthony Trollope. Someone was talking of the Franco-German war and of its practical issues. 'There is one thing it did,' Trollope said, striking in with his loud voice and hearty manner. 'It took away all the German bands from London, and many of them have never come back.'" As with most people who work with pen or pencil, a German band was death to a day's work with Trollope. Oddly enough, it was to one of these curses of civilisation that his death was more or less directly owing. A little more than a month before he died, a German band arranged itself outside his house and struck up its soul-destroying noise. Trollope sent a servant to order it off. The men would not go, and Trollope, leaving his work, went out

and had a row with the leader of the band. This upset him in the delicate state of his health, and the same night, at the dinner-table of his brother-in-law, he had the seizure which ended fatally.

There are, of course, both men and women who can write in spite of the braying of German bands and the crowing of cocks. Bishop Wilberforce could not only write in railway-carriages, but also in shaky country chaises, driven over rough and stony roads. Trollope's own performances were no less remarkable. Dr. Thorne was begun on a very rough winter passage from Marseilles to Alexandria, and Barchester Towers, as well as the greater part of his other novels, was composed in railway trains. "It was," he says, "while I was engaged on Barchester Towers that I adopted a system of writing, which for some years afterwards I found to be very serviceable to me. My time was greatly occupied in travelling, and the nature of my travelling was now changed. I could not any longer do it by horseback. Railroads afforded me my means of conveyance, and I found that I passed in railway-carriages very many hours of my existence. . . . If I intended to make a profitable business of writing, and, at the same time, to do my best for the Post Office, I must turn these hours to more account than I could do even by reading. I made for myself, therefore, a little tablet, and I found after a few days' exercise that I could write as quickly in a railway-carriage as I could at my desk. I worked with a pencil, and what I wrote my wife copied afterwards. My only objection to the practice came from the appearance of literary ostentation, to which I felt myself to be subject when going to work before four or five fellow-passengers. But I get used to it."

If Trollope did not inherit from his mother his particular quality of production, he certainly inherited that remarkable power of keeping himself steadily to his work, whatever the hindrance or distractions; for just as she, the tenderest of mothers, could write pages of her novels in the intervals of watching by the bed of her dying boy, so he—and the performance is even more wonderful—could write in the cabin of a Mediterranean steamer while a gale was blowing, and when from time to time he was forced to throw down his pen, and rush to the vessel's side.

But for indifference to his surroundings the palm must surely be given to Victor

Hugo. According to one of his friends, he wrote Notre Dame during the Revolution of 1830, while bullets were whistling across his garden, and barricades were being erected almost at his door. "He shut himself up in one room, locking up his clothes lest they should tempt him to go into the streets, and spent the whole of that winter wrapped up in a big grey comforter, writing against time to complete his work by the 1st of February, 1831." The author of a work on French Political Leaders, tells us that Victor Hugo wrote that terribly pathetic drama, "Le Roi S'Amuse," during the insurrection. The first act was written in four days. As he lived near the Tuileries garden, he was accustomed to walk there under the trees, and to compose his verses as he walked. One day when hard at work on a monologue, he was interrupted by a riot, whose angry waves penetrated almost to his peaceful retreat and compelled him to take refuge in a neighbouring arcade. The tide of battle followed him, and the poet, forgetting his verses, had to get behind some columns for protection.

Mrs. Somerville had, to some extent, the same power of concentration, and became so absorbed in her task as to be unconscious of what was going on around her. Dr. Somerville told Harriet Martineau that he once laid a wager with a friend, that he would abuse Mrs. Somerville in a loud voice to her face, and she would take no notice; and he did so. Sitting close to her, he confided to his friend the most injurious things—that she rouged, that she wore a wig, and other such nonsense, uttered in a very loud voice; her daughters were in a roar of laughter, while the alandered lady sat placidly writing. At last her husband made a dead pause after her name, on which she looked up with an innocent, "Did you speak to me?"

Southey and Miss Edgeworth wrote in the common sitting-room, in the midst of the family. "This I cannot understand," remarked Miss Martineau. "Though I am writing this memoir under circumstances which compel me to surrender my solitude under a heart-disease, I cannot ask or expect to be left alone; and I really find no gêne from the presence of one person, while writing this simple and plain account of my life." I can imagine that Miss Edgeworth's stories would not require very much concentration; but how a man can write epics in the midst of the family-circle is inconceivable, even to some of Southey's warmest

admirers. The comment is inevitable, that his poems might have been a good deal better if he had placed himself under the ordinary conditions of good authorship. The experience of the great thinkers bears out this conclusion.

Buckle's high-strung nerves required absolute quiet and privacy while he wrote. These were also essential to Kant, who was extremely sensitive. While lodging in one house he was disturbed in his meditations by the crowing of a cock in a neighbouring yard. Although he offered a considerable sum for the noisy fowl, the obstinate owner refused to sell him, as he could not conceive how a cock could annoy a philosopher. As the disturber of his meditations could not be silenced, Kant removed to another locality.

Another nuisance which cannot unfortunately be removed by an appeal to the law is that arising from callers. One evening Carlyle pointed out to Mr. Moncreu Conway, an inn to which Thackeray used to retire to escape calls and company, when he had on hand a piece of work requiring special care and solitude. According to Patmore, when Hazlitt had an entire volume in hand, he invariably went into the country to execute it, and almost always to the same spot—a little wayside public-house, called The Hut, standing alone, and some miles distant from any other house, on Winsterslow Heath, a bare tract of country on the road to, and a few miles from, Salisbury. There, ensconced in a little wainscoted parlour, looking out over the bare heath to the distant groves of Norman Court, some of his finest essays were written. Thirlwall also found the upper room of an inn the best place to secure absolute immunity from intrusion. Anxious to finish his *History of Greece*, he took lodgings at a village inn. In July, 1840, Lord Melbourne wanted a new bishop for St. David's, and sent a letter offering it to Mr. Thirlwall. The servants at the rectory did not know where he was to be found; one of his intimate friends undertook to find him, but for some days searched in vain. At length, as he passed after nightfall a village inn, his eye rested on a shadow on the window-blind, cast by a strong light within. He could not be mistaken. "My man at last!" he said, and, entering, presented the letter which made his unexpectant friend a spiritual peer.

Edison, the inventor, sleeps in the daytime and works at night. The reason given is that by no other course can he

avoid the influx of curious visitors who desire to see and talk with him. If he had lived in Shakespeare's time, the world would not have heard of him until long after his death, and he could have applied his genius by day without the fear of being troubled by irrepressible admirers. In scientific work, as well as in historical research, solitude is essential. As Professor Tyndall points out, the men who have most profoundly influenced the world from the scientific side, have habitually sought isolation. Faraday, at a certain period of his career, formally renounced dining out. Darwin lived apart from the bustle of the world in his quiet home in Kent. The late Sir Archibald Alison had great doubt whether the meetings of the British Association were of real service. "Genius," he said, "is essentially solitary; its home is the library or the fireside, not the assembly or the lecture-room. All great discoveries have been made by the unaided efforts of lonely thought; the intercourse of the world may extend the circle and their application, but it adds nothing to the food of original invention."

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

IN the old coaching-days travellers to Cambridge entered the county at Royston, whose steep high-street marks the descent from the Hertfordshire wolds to the level flats that merge insensibly in the great watery plain of the fens. This Royston (called afterwards forgotten Dame Roesia) is noticeable only for a curious cavern in the chalk—a deep shaft, with excavations at the bottom—which may have been a hermitage, and which in origin, perhaps, was an attempt to reach the denser chalk below for building purposes: perhaps in the days of the Romans, perhaps when the priory, now represented only by a modernised dwelling, was originally built. More attractive is the fine range of downs called Royston Heath, the haunt of the Royston crow, if the species still survives, but, anyhow, a fine broad-backed hill, strangely marked with the barrows and burial-places of old races, and scored with the trenches of their ancient dwellings. From this vantage-ground stretches before you a goodly portion of this shire of Grantbryag, the shire that took its name from some, probably Roman, bridge over the river Granta, or Cam. The river itself rises not

far to the left, where the village of Ashwell takes its name from its headspring, and before us stretches the wide valley of the Cam, if valley it can be called, that wide-reaching plain rippled with undulations, and varied in hue like a changeful sea of land. The river itself, a mere brook, steals quietly along, its presence only revealed here and there by a line of alders or of willows, with clumps of foliage where it passes through quiet villages—Steeple Morden, with a touch of irony in the name, for the distinguishing steeple tumbled down long ago; with Wendy, and Meldreth, and Harston; a fertile district which, long ago, bore the name of the Dairies, from the cattle that fed on its pastures. Here among these pastoral villages, the curfew may still be heard at twilight, and at harvest-time the gleaner's bell. Sometimes a ruined gateway leads into the desolate court of some manor-house long since pulled down, and in chancel or chantry you may find monuments and knightly effigies of families which have long since disappeared from the scene.

But the most notable feature in the landscape, after all, is Wimpole, with its groves and lordly avenue, some three miles long, and the heavy, stately mansion that makes itself felt as the presiding landmark of the scene—the habitation of the Earls of Hardwicke. Few lawyers have writ themselves larger on this earth's surface than the founder of this family, who began life, early in the last century, as Philip Yorke, articled clerk to Mr. Salkeld, attorney, of Brook Street, Holborn.

The career of Philip Yorke interests us more than that of successful lawyers in general, for it seems that in early life he had stirrings of the heart towards literature. He went through the fever and cold shivers of anonymous authorship; he dropped his contributions, with fear and trembling, into the lion's head of the Spectator office. He knew the joys of acceptance and success, and as Philip Home-spun, he had the proud consciousness of having written a Spectator, Number Three Hundred and Sixty-four, and having thus found a place on the breakfast-tables of beauty, rank, and fashion. Happily for him, perhaps, his destinies took another turn, for, as his biographer justly remarks, "He who would slave in Grub Street, if he takes to Westminster Hall may become the most illustrious of Chancellors." The strange part of Philip Yorke's experience was, that he rose from the attorney's desk

to the woolstack almost without effort and without a check. The son of a humble country attorney, he was received into the office of his father's agent, Mr. Salkeld, as a gratis clerk, but his good looks, winning manners, and unflagging industry—qualities so rarely in conjunction, that wonder ceases at his success—gained the favour of all who came in contact with him. The story will be remembered of his mistress sending him to buy vegetables in Covent Garden, and to cheepen fish at Billingsgate, which was well enough when he came a raw lad from the country, and without pretension, mark you; but when he got on, and was entered by his master as a student in the Temple, the duty became irksome. Adroit as usual, Master Yorke would charter a coach on these occasions, and enter the charge in his incidents, till his master, puzzling over such items as "Coach hire for celery and cabbages," "Hackney-coach for barrel of oysters," enquired into the matter, and, sympathising with his clerk's feelings, prevailed on his wife to engage the services of a less dignified errand-boy.

But Yorke's most influential patron was Lord Chief Justice Parker, in whose house in Lincoln's Inn Fields he took up his abode as legal tutor to the boys of the family. Parker, who had been himself a country attorney, pushed on his favourite in every way, fair and unfair, and from his first call to the bar in 1715, Philip Yorke enjoyed a constant supply of briefs. He went the Western Circuit, and one of the judges—the Justice Stareleigh of the day—remarking his appearance as a junior in every cause, suggested—as bar and bench were cracking sundry bottles together at parting—that Mr. Yorke had doubtless "written books," the writing of a law-book being then supposed, be it understood, to be one of the royal roads to practice. Yorke modestly replied that he had not written one, but had one in his mind, and pressed for the subject, replied: "A metrical version of Coke upon Littleton." Justice Stareleigh took in all this very gravely, and very much wanted to have a sample of the work. Upon which Mr. Yorke recited the following:

He that holdeth his lands in fee
Need neither to quake or to quiver,
I humbly conceive; for look, do you see,
They are his and his heirs for ever.

Presently Chief Justice Parker became Lord Chancellor and Earl of Macclesfield, and by his unscrupulous influence Philip Yorke became Solicitor-General within a

few years of his call to the bar. He wanted a seat in Parliament, and it fell into his mouth. He wanted a wife; a widow courted him, comely, well-jointed, and connected with the great dignitaries of his profession. His patron fell into irretrievable disgrace, but without affecting his brilliant fortunes. Walpole's trusted Attorney-General, the favourite of the powerful Duke of Newcastle, Sir Philip Yorke had no rival to fear, and in due time he reached the woolsack and the peerage. All the lawyers allow him to have been a great judge, and his time is looked back upon as the golden age of equity. For nearly twenty years he held the seals; during which time he for once becomes an historic figure as Lord High Steward at the trial of the rebel lords of 1745. Before then he had purchased Wimpole, and become one of the territorial aristocracy. And he died full of years and honours, and worth, it is said, a million, acquired during the golden age, and yet without having ever incurred the reproach of rapacity or the suspicion of corruption.

That father and son should successively rise to the highest honour in the State has been thought a cogent argument in favour of the hereditary principle; but in the case of Philip, Lord Hardwicke, and his son, Charles, which has often been quoted, it is doubtful whether the example goes for much. Charles Yorke, with the influence of his father behind him, could hardly fail to rise at the bar. He became Solicitor-General in the same year that his father resigned office, and as Attorney-General filed the information against Wilkes's famous Number Forty-five. Then, after passing some years in retirement, he was offered the Chancellorship in the room of Lord Camden. Under the personal management of the King, the Government of the day had become the object of general disgust and dissatisfaction, and no lawyer could be found of any standing willing to accept the seals. Charles Yorke also refused them, and his refusal was applauded by all his friends and by the party to which he was attached. But he had not the strength of mind to refuse the personal solicitations of the King, and he was sworn in as Chancellor, and raised to the peerage. Not a friendly voice was raised to congratulate him in his promotion; his elder brother refused to see him; and, overwhelmed with the general reprobation of which he felt himself the

object, he took to his bed, and died a few days after, report said by his own hand. "He felt himself degraded by his compliance," writes Junius in one of his celebrated letters, "and was unable to survive the disgraceful honour which his gracious sovereign had compelled him to accept—death has redeemed his character."

Down at the foot of Royston Heath, to turn away from the fascinating sight of Wimpole, to admire which briefless barristers might be brought all the way here—down there, on the margin of the heath, may yet be traced, in brickwork of the seventeenth century, some remains of the King's stables, belonging to a favourite hunting-lodge of James the First, connected with certain of the least savoury passages of the national annals. All along these downs was a favourite hunting-ground with the Stuart Kings, and with the slight break of Royston town, the bare hills stretch right away to Newmarket, and farther still, to the distant coast of Norfolk. And over the hills runs the great highway to Newmarket, little frequented now, but once all alive at times with carriages, coaches, and post-chaises.

On the left of the way to Newmarket, lies Babraham, in a pleasant sheltered combe of the chalk downs—a hall once inhabited by the well-known Sir Horatio Palavicini, a long-headed Genoese, who, during Mary's reign, collected the Pope's taxes in England, and then, when Elizabeth came to the throne, abjured the errors of Popery and converted the Pope's ducats to his own use. Still, he lent the money freely in support of the Protestant cause, and equipped and commanded a ship against the Spanish Armada. His memory is preserved in the well-known epitaph beginning:

Here lies Horatio Palavazens
Who robbed the Pope to lend the Queene.

But the knight's son, Sir Toby, who might well have been the original of Sir Toby Belch, squandered the estate with riotous living, and played ducks and drakes with the Pope's ducats. In recent years Babraham has been noted for its flocks and herds, and the name of Webb, of Babraham, is not unknown to fame in that connection. Beyond the sheltered combe stretch the bleak hills which are known as the Gog-magogs. How they came by the name that recalls the famous City giants of the Guildhall is not very evident, but one explanation is that long ago the scholars of Cambridge, whence these hills form a

prominent object in the landscape, cut out on the hillside the figure of a giant, ogre, magyar, or whatnot, long visible from the valley, and scoured or renewed it at times after the fashion of the white horse in the Berkshire valley. But whether this was done as a mere freak or to commemorate some academic victory does not appear. But possibly the name existed before that, and may have suggested the scholars' feat.

At the summit of these hills stretches a level plateau with remains of entrenchments pretty evident, surrounding a camp which bears the name of Wendlebury. Here, if tradition may be believed, was the retreat of a body of Wends or Vandals, who levied contributions on the surrounding country. Lest people should be incredulous about the Vandals, we may quote Gibbon in *The Decline and Fall*: "Into Britain, and most probably into Cambridgeshire, the Emperor transported a considerable body of Vandals. The impossibility of an escape reconciled them to their situation, and in the subsequent troubles of the island, they approved themselves the most faithful servants of the State." Anyhow, superstitious dread seems long to have encompassed this wild and lonely spot, and the legend of the elfin knight, which Walter Scott has carried to the far North, has here its original home.

The rampart seek whose creling crown
Crests the ascent of yonder down;
A southern entrance shalt thou find:
There halt, and there thy bugle wind,
And trust thine elfin foe to see
In guise of thy worst enemy.

That excellent antiquary, Gough, indeed, sees in this Wendlebury camp one of a chain of forts stretching across from the quaggy forests of Essex to the impassable fen country. It is evident, indeed, that at some time or other this range of downs was a point of great strategic importance, being the one accessible pass from the west into the East Anglian country. And thus, besides entrenched camps, there are these parallel lines of entrenchments crossing the downs, the most important and best known of which is the Devil's Ditch, close to Newmarket Heath, and the starting-point of races "from the Ditch in," according to the old-fashioned programmes. This is a mighty defensive work, evidently intended for the protection of the country eastward, as the rampart is on that side; but whether made by East Angles or Iceni, or some still earlier race, there is no evidence to show. Camden tells us that

the Devil's Ditch was the boundary of the kingdom, as well as of the bishopric of the East Angles, and we learn also that it was the usual meeting-place of the array of Norfolk and Suffolk when summoned to attend the King to fight the Welsh.

And so we come to Newmarket, whose races possibly began in the rude border-sports of Iceni and Trinobantes, with chariot-races later on, and athletic sports in the presence of the prefect of the district, and under the patronage of the most respectable the Count of the Saxon shore.

But there are authors, whose names mostly betray a Scottish origin, who pretend that the Stuarts brought the practice of horse-racing with them from Scotland, and, as far as Newmarket is concerned, there is no doubt that King James the First gave the place its first importance. James loved this county, which, with its barren heaths and great rolling downs, recalled the windy wastes of his native land, and among the Sir Tobys and Sir Andrews of the district, always on horseback, hunting or racing, the King's horses and the King's men found free quarters and abundant hospitality. The learned doctors of Cambridge and their scholars entertained his majesty with feasts and masques, and these lonely, miry ways were lively enough then—couriers riding to and fro; noblemen, with their trains of followers; poets and players tramping along to scenes of festivity; and gay dames of the Court, in their gilded coaches, with pug lap-dogs and lovers on every side. And so, with an interval of gloom in the civil wars, things went merrily on at Newmarket. Under Charles the Second, the Court migrated en masse to the racing town. Nell Gwynne's house is still shown, but the King's lodgings have given place to an Independent chapel, and there is little in modern Newmarket to recall its past history. And yet, perhaps, there never were such crowds as at the present day on the heath when some great race is to be decided. But they come like shadows, and depart; the splendour and gaiety of the scene are gone; and Newmarket is as businesslike in its way as any commercial town. The "metropolis of the turf," as it is sometimes called, has already been described in these pages,* and we may pass on.

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 17, p. 152, "At the Devil's Ditch."

An episode of the days when the Merry Monarch was at Newmarket may, however, here be told. It was one of the King's hunting-days, and the chase led him along by the ditch into Burford Marsh, and beyond far away towards Ely. Weary and hungry after the long run, the King espied the roof of a comfortable mansion in the distance, which proved to be Sphany Abbey—once a monastic cell, but now, in King Charles's time, a country dwelling. It was inhabited, the King was told, by a very honest gentleman, with whom a sportsman would be sure to find a welcome. So the King, and those of his attendants who had lasted out the chase, entered the courtyard, and awaited the appearance of the master of the house, at sight of whom, one of the King's suite, snatching up a hay-fork, placed himself in front of him, and marched before him in a stately manner. The King frowning at this ill-judged pleasantry, as he took it, the man explained that he had been accustomed to walk before this gentleman as mace-bearer in Ireland, when he was Lord-Lieutenant of that country, and that this was indeed Mr. Henry Cromwell, the son of the late Lord Protector. The King was too easy a man of the world, and too little of a bigoted Royalist, to feel any embarrassment at the meeting. Cromwell entertained the son of his father's great enemy with the best in the house. And Cromwell and Stuart, after pledging each other freely enough, parted with mutual good-will.

Henry Cromwell died a few years after this strange interview, and was buried at the adjoining parish church of Wicken, where a marble slab, with an inscription to his memory, still exists.

We must now retrace our steps towards Cambridge, which, lying among the river-flats, is in no way imposing from any of its approaches. And yet the entrance by Trumpington, when the trees are in full leaf, and the evening light is shining through them, is full of quiet beauty and refreshment. The homely town itself, with its country bustle and market-day stir, mixed with the pervading element of caps and gowns, has a pleasant friendly appearance. To find ancient Cambridge, the Camboricum of the Roman itinerary, we must leave colleges and busy streets behind, and cross the river to find the site of the old castle, occupied by county-court and county-gaol, and of the old churches of St. Peter and St. Giles. These are within the ancient enclosure of the Roman station,

the walled city described by Baeda as standing waste and desolate among the fens, the tombs of its ancient inhabitants lying rifled and despoiled. Yet, even then, there might have been scholars and teachers among the humble thatched roofs of the Saxon settlement on the opposite bank of the river.

The more recent Cambridge, the seat of the University and home of its colleges, has grown up about two ancient highways, converging to the bridge: the older Roman way which has traversed the Gog-magog hills from the direction of Colchester, and the highway from London, through Royston, which is known as Trumpington Street. By a happy accident this last, which runs for some distance almost parallel with the river, was chosen for the site of many of the colleges, and thus has come about the most beautiful feature of Cambridge, those charming meads, which Cambridge people call the "Backs," with their stately trees and sloping lawns,

Where willowy Camus lingers with delight, with the comely bridges, shining white against the dark background of foliage, and the quaint roofs and towers of the colleges that rise among the trees.

Of the colleges which were founded in Cambridge for the half-clerical, half-classical culture of mediæval times, Peterhouse is oldest, dating from the thirteenth century, while the most recent of the endowed foundations is Downing College, which owes its origin to the will of a territorial magnate of the last century, a descendant of the Downing, Cromwell's envoy to the Netherlands, one of the weak-kneed Republicans who betrayed his master's confidence to the exiled Charles. But still more recent is the latest development of modern ideas, the feminine Girton, with its girl-graduates, and golden-haired professors, and those who wear over the elaborate garments of the sex, the simple academic gown; as if they had only come to their own again. Even at the early date of the foundation of Peterhouse, however, there is evidence of existing hostels for the accommodation of scholars, and of grammarians and rhetoricians, who made a living by teaching. And we read in a monkish chronicle how Joffrid, Abbot of Croyland, sent to his manor of Cotenham, near Cambridge, Sir Gislebert, his fellow monk, with three others, well instructed in philosophical theorems. No house, barn, or church could contain the scholars who thronged to their classes and disputations.

so that they separated into various sections and followed the form of study of Orleans.

But if we ask what originally brought students and scholars to a spot which must in those days have seemed remote and inaccessible, and where learning must have been sought for its own sake, without any pleasant endowments to make it palatable, we can only surmise that the Roman city may have been the site of one of those public schools which were established in the various provinces of the empire. The story of its foundation by Cantaber from Spain, 375 B.C., and the charters of Arthur and Cadwallon, will not stand the test of critical investigation; but it may fairly be said that, in the earliest trustworthy records of its history, the town of Cambridge appears as already the resort of scholars and philosophers.

If a spark of vitality still lingered in Cambridge through the days of barbarian invasion, and if the ancient tower of St. Benet—one of the most venerable architectural memorials in the land—ever looked down on Anglo-Saxon schools, something may be due to the great fair which from the earliest times has been held in a field outside Cambridge, at the junction of the Cam and its small tributary, the Stour. Stourbridge Fair was no mere country feast, but a great gathering of merchants and traders, which is described, as late as the seventeenth century, as one of the greatest fairs in Europe. Tradition, indeed, describes the origin of the fair to a trivial accident. A Kendal clothier, travelling from Westmoreland to London with bales of cloth, found the bridge over the Cam broken down, or failed to find it at all, and, in fording the river, the bales fell into the water. The clothier spread his cloth to dry in Stourbridge field, and so many people came to look at it and offer for it that in the end he sold his wares to better advantage than he would have done in London; and so next year, our Kendal webster brought his cloth to the same market, and hence the fair. Now it is a fact that the Kendal men claimed the right of appointing a bailiff to regulate the fair, and that some mock celebration commemorated their claim, up to recent times. But this was probably because they were the traders of chief importance in the fair, and the story may have been invented to give support to the claim. Anyhow, Stourbridge Fair was in existence in the time of King John, who bestowed its profits upon a lepers' hospital in

the neighbourhood; but at the dissolution of religious houses the rights over the fair were transferred to the Corporation of Cambridge; and, according to ancient custom, the Mayor and Aldermen and the rest of the Corporation would ride forth on St. Bartholomew's Day, and set out the ground, while on the 7th of September they ride out again in full municipal state to proclaim the fair. The ground on which the fair was held had been brought into cultivation, but all the crops on it must be cleared before St. Bartholomew, the 24th of August, or the booth-men might trample them down. The booths must be off the ground by the feast of St. Michael, or the ploughmen might carry off the materials. From the year 1605 hackney-coaches from London made their appearance at the fair. Four or five City dealers would share the expenses of the hackney to the fair, and there would be money to be earned in driving between the town and the field and among the various rows of the fair. There was Ironmongers' Row, with Cooks' Row, Booksellers' Row, Garlick Row, and others; while in the centre stood a square of large booths called the Duddery, where mercers, drapers, and clothiers sold their wares. This was the great meeting-place for chapmen from all parts of England, and the wholesale dealers who supplied them with goods, the transactions being often very large and amounting to thousands of pounds. Within the Duddery, on Sundays, was erected a temporary pulpit, and the minister of the neighbouring church held forth to the assemblage—not the rough, uncultivated gathering of a modern fair—but of grave citizens and worshipful merchants in their gowns and chains, who gave so liberally to the collection that followed, that the priest gained more on Stourbridge Sunday than the whole yearly revenue of his cure.

There is little to attract attention on the way from Cambridge to Ely. The long straight Roman road soon comes to the great fen level, where the cold grey plain is bounded only by the cold grey sky. Here and there a hamlet clusters upon some slight eminence, with sometimes a grand old church, such as the fenmen loved to build. Afar off loom the towers of Ely; as it were a city of refuge in the wilderness. Dark, deep waters flow sluggishly through the black soil, bordered by rows of willows or tall poplars, through which the chill, damp breeze whistles uncannily. It is not difficult to realise how, before the drainage of the fens,

Ely was indeed an island unapproachable, surrounded by deep channels and a morass still more dangerous, while the island itself appeared as a succession of insignificant hillocks just rising above the general level, and containing seven or eight village settlements, with the abbey and the extensive monastic buildings as the nucleus of the whole. In Baeda's time it was a country of about six hundred families, and it had varied little probably in population up to the time that the Conqueror grimly surveyed it from the mainland, when it formed the last spot of English ground that held out against his iron rule.

Some of the bravest of the English had taken refuge in the island at the invitation of the Abbot of Ely, who, alone of the great Churchmen, had dared to defy the Norman duke. Hereward was there, whose legendary fame has obscured the real facts of his career. Earl Morcar was there, and Siward of Northumberland, and many other English thanes; and, as the news spread of the head of resistance that had been established, volunteers came in from even distant parts of England.

With the map before us it is not difficult to make out the Conqueror's plan for the reduction of this formidable camp of refuge. To the north of Ely the fens spread out in a labyrinth of watercourses and morasses quite impregnable, and sweep round the island in a generally broad band of black waters and blacker bog; but there is a point on the south-west, where, between the village of Willingham on the mainland and Haddingham on the island, the enclosing fen is at its narrowest. And here on rising ground, now known as Belsar's Hill, William established his entrenched camp, of which there are still traces. Behind him William had his two strong castles of Cambridge and Huntingdon, connected by the fine and still existing *Via Devana*. Thus secure in his communications, the Conqueror began a skilfully constructed causeway across the strip of fen. This strip of fen follows the winding course of the river Ouse, which spreads itself in a broad channel at ordinary times, and at flood times covers the whole flat with deep waters. It is a watery district even now; and when the river rises in flood, and people have to fly from their cottages, they say it is the bailiff of Bedford who is blustering down upon them. There exists a track across the fen known as Aldrey Causeway, which, if not the actual work of the Conqueror, seems to have

followed the same line. But when the work was fairly advanced, the bailiff of Bedford came down in a summer flood, and swept away the greater part of the embankment. And then William, baffled for a time, sought some other way, and rode round the fens, probing here and there, and coming to Brandon, in Suffolk; he may have heard of a track across the fens—the very track the railway follows now—and pondered over it for a while, finally coming to the conclusion that the only vulnerable spot was that which he had first marked out. And so he began his causeway once more, bringing every kind of material to the work—stones, which were scarce; trees, not much more plentiful; hides, and rubbish of all kinds. Meantime the besieged were not idle under strenuous Hereward, harassing the workers, and assailing the stores of materials, burning what would burn, and scattering the rest. Some spell seemed to hang over the work, which scarcely advanced a jot, and to encourage his working parties, William, so the story goes, established a famous witch upon a wooden tower to bless the besiegers and ban the defenders, with the rather unexpected result that Hereward burnt tower and witch and all.

But at last, in spite of resistance, the causeway advanced steadily to its end, and the Ouse was crossed by a bridge of boats. No opportune flood came down to sweep them away—the elements had gone over to the patient William—and in the final assault on the camp the English cause went down in fierce fighting and carnage.

The Conqueror's success was partly due to the treachery of the monks of Ely, who grew tired of the contest and the hardships it involved, and contrived to obtain a conditional pardon as the reward for revealing the secrets of the fens. And so, excepting for a heavy fine, William spared the monks and the minster. Indeed, the one vulnerable spot in the Conqueror's stern heart was his reverence for the accredited saints of heaven. He is reputed to have visited the shrine of Ethelfleda in devout and awestruck mood; to have remained at a humble distance in devotion, and to have forwarded his offering to the shrine by other hands; and then to have departed before the monks had awakened to the fact of his presence among them. The Conqueror may have felt that it would not be safe to approach too nearly the shrine of the Saxon princess, who might have stirred in her marble coffin at

the footsteps of the destroyer of her country and kindred.

For Ethelfleda, the patron saint of Ely, or St. Audrey, as the people loved familiarly to call her, was a real princess of the East Anglian line, whose story, in the legendary vein, is told in the sculptures which adorn the choir of the abbey. Her informal marriage, much against her will, to old Tondberht, the chief of the fen people, and afterwards to the more formidable King Egfrid; her veiling in spite of marriage-vows, when she formally embraced the celibacy which was her earliest choice; the rooting of her staff and its bearing leaves; her preservation on a rock when pursued by her lawful master, after the fashion of one of Ovid's stories, the waters springing up and surrounding the island—the venerable bailiff of Bedford to be thanked for this; then her installation as Abbess, her death and burial—all these events are more or less legible in sculptured stone in the great minster of the fen country.

There are several features which give the cathedral of Ely a strange, unfamiliar, and yet taking aspect. The stately, solemn Norman nave and transepts are impressive enough, but then, instead of the customary twin towers enclosing the western front, we have one great highly-ornamented western tower, with porch and transepts of its own—one transept, at least, for the one on the north side has perished—and again, when one looks for the heavy central tower, instead we have a light octagonal lantern of pleasing outline. The heavy Norman tower was once there, but it came down, in 1322, with a huge crash—as such towers are apt to do—demolishing a great central slice of the building. The result was the great glory of the church, its central octagon, quite unique in its way, and one of the best efforts of the best period of English Gothic work. The date of the Norman part of the cathedral can be definitely fixed, as records show that it was commenced in 1081; and early in the following century the abbey had to share its dignity and emoluments with the Bishop of the newly-created see of Ely, and from that time the influence of the monastic establishment began to decline. The first Bishop of the see it was who obtained a charter for the great fair that was held about the abbey church, and which had, no doubt, come into existence from the concourse of pilgrims to St. Audrey's shrine; and certain lace collars

that were sold in memory of the saint obtained the name of St. Audrey laces, which is the origin, perhaps, of the word tawdry, although in its first application the word had no depreciatory meaning, as the Yeoman of Kent's son sings to his sweetheart:

One time I gave thee a paper of pins,
Another time a tawdry lace.

And Mopsa demands a "tawdry lace and a pair of sweet gloves" from the basket of Autolycus.

There are interesting remains of the old monastic buildings enclosed among the dwellings of the cathedral close, and most people will carry away a certain tender feeling towards the old abbey which has stood for so many centuries among the bleak fens; the abbey where lights shone and whose music sounded forth when all else was dark and dreary around, remembering that sweet fragment of old song, which is, perhaps, not so sweet in modern English:

Merrily sang the monks within Ely
When Canute the King rowed thereby;
"Row me, knights, the shore along,
And listen us to these monks' song."

LEFT OUTSIDE.

A STORY OF KENSINGTON GARDENS.

CHAPTER IV.

It was more than a week before Susan saw anything more of her new friends. She was a little disappointed, of course; for she and Flo went to the Gardens every day, and, despite Flo's disapproval, the young governess insisted now on always walking in the same direction—from the Round Pond to Speke's monument, and so along the grassy way parallel with the Uxbridge Road; her short-sighted eyes gazing ever hopelessly before her at each new figure that came in sight till the boundary was reached at last, or Flo's patience gave out, and she petulantly demanded a return to the "nice part where the ducks and uvver children was." But Susie was not cast down. She even laughed at herself as she turned obediently away; for did she not know how many other places Virginia had to go to besides Kensington Gardens; and had she not, besides, the ever delightful memory of that sunny afternoon, and Virginia's blue beads and mittens, and a more delicious reminder that she was not forgotten in the shape of a parcel which came for her three days after the memorable drive, and

which contained a fresh copy of the number of Scribner's Magazine with Millet's life in it, and the beautiful photograph of the Angelus, which she had already so much admired?

It was addressed in a small and clerkly, but distinctly male hand, and on the back of the photograph was written by the same: "Virginia wishes you to have this, as you appreciate it so much more than she does, and it will serve to recall Millet to you when the magazine is torn up." Torn up! Susie could almost have cried out at the idea; but the thought of who had written the words, of the double gift, the double remembrance; of not only Virginia, but Virginia's brother deigning to think of her and minister to her enjoyment, silenced her for very wonder and pleasure; and forgetting for once the sums she was in the act of correcting, disregarding even the three pairs of eyes fixed inquisitively upon her, she flung the slate down and fled upstairs to her own room to give one look at her treasure in private, and then hide it away till evening should give her leisure to enjoy it.

Her grateful little note of acknowledgment caused some astonishment, however, when it arrived. Virginia broke it open with an exclamation of surprise.

"Do tell! Whoever can be writing to me on such miserable paper, and in such an old-fashioned, niggly hand!" but next moment she began to laugh. "Why, it's that little Susan Lane. I declare I'd 'most forgotten her. Now, mother, if you laugh, you sha'n't see a word of it, and it's too good to be lost; but what does she mean? I never sent her a magazine."

"I did," said Calton. "It was the number with Millet in it. I promised it to her."

"And you've sent her the Angelus, too? Ain't you real cool, when it wasn't yours a bit! Never mind! I didn't care about it, and I reckon she does; especially as I get thanked for it! Calton Medicott, when you've read this you'll realise you're own brother to an angel; and for myself, if I hadn't a hundred other things to do, I should go right off, and give that girl a kiss for pointing out the fact to me so prettily."

It was Calton Medicott, however, who happened to see "that girl" next; though seeing that he was a young man of the most exemplary propriety, the meeting was quite by accident. It was in the afternoon, and she had turned into the Gardens with

the boys so that they might have a race together. The weather was very hot, the grass burnt yellow with the sun. She had on a faded pink cotton gown which repeated washings had rendered at once too tight and too short for her, with a muslin kerchief tied loosely about her neck, and on her head a big flapping Leghorn hat which had been her mother's when a girl, and which cast into soft shadow the transparent paleness of her face. The boys had placed her where she was for a goal, and she stood still in the hot sunshine, her hands clasped loosely before her, her grey eyes gazing dreamily out into the blue, hazy distance in such utter unconsciousness of all about her that Medicott, who had not recognised her at first, stood still for a moment to enjoy the pretty picture before disturbing it. Even then she did not see him till he spoke; but the first sound of his voice awakened her, and brought such a flood of pure, rosy colour into the cheeks, such a liquid, radiant dazzlement to the eyes, as seemed to transfigure her and made him ask himself if he had been dreaming before not to see the beauty of it; and when he apologised for startling her, her innocent answer, "Oh, you did not. It was only that I happened to be thinking of—you and your sister just then," bore with it such a burden of unconscious flattery that the coldest and most self-composed man could hardly have failed to be moved by it. He was too correct a person to linger there talking to her for more than a minute or two; but he told her, meaning only to be polite, that Virginia was longing to see her again; and Susie said tremulously, "How good of her! Ah, but if she knew——!" and broke off, too timid to put into words the longing that she felt for another glimpse of the bright little beauty. Perhaps Calton understood, however. Indeed, for the moment he felt almost angry with Virginia for thinking so little of this tender-hearted friend of hers, and, as he took off his hat in farewell, he turned back again to say:

"But, Miss Lane, you must promise to come to us again. My mother and sister will be leaving town so soon now, that it will be a great disappointment if you say 'no' to the invitation which I believe you are going to receive to-morrow. May I not take back your assent in advance?"

Poor little Susie! it was piteous to see the colour dying out of her face at the words "leaving town"—and yet, had she not

known it must be so? Did not everyone—the Farquharsons included—go away at the end of the season; and was not she herself looking forward ere long to that yearly visit home, which not even the presence of a stepfather could make anything but delightful? Her lip trembled as she said something about being “afraid Mrs. Farquharson would not like——” but Calton would not hear her.

“Mrs. Farquharson must like,” he said peremptorily. “Trust that to us. Virginia shall call on her, or my mother will write. I reckon we’ll fix it somehow.”

After which he broke off short with a slight colour in his sallow cheek at having been betrayed into a Yankeeism, and bowed himself away with extra ceremony, to make amends.

He was as good as his word, however. Not that either Virginia or Mrs. Medlicott resorted to the strong measures suggested; but after four or five days (days fraught with almost sickening anxiety to Susie) a sweet little note came to her from the American girl urging her—on paper almost as thick as cardboard, and with an enormous monogram in blue and gold at the top—to come and dine with them on the following evening, and enclosing a formal message from her mother to Mrs. Farquharson, in which the former used the name of “their mutual friend, Mrs. Van Groedner” as a plea for hoping Susie’s employer would consent to spare her young governess to them for this one occasion before they left London.

Mrs. Farquharson did consent, partly for fear of her husband—Susie, with a diplomacy which she never showed before or afterwards, having made her petition when that good-natured gentleman was present—and partly for very shame of refusing so trifling a request without any valid excuse; but she did it in the most disagreeable way, making as many difficulties as she could, and even observing, in conclusion, that she was sorry Miss Lane was developing a taste for dissipation and going out at night, as she must own she considered it to be one utterly incompatible with the position of a nursery-governess—in her house, at any rate—a covert threat which, under most circumstances, would have frightened Susie into relinquishing the most longed for pleasure in the world. But she could not relinquish this. Virginia wanted her—Virginia and Calton too. They had said so as earnestly as words could say it, and would she have

been worthy of the generous friendship accorded her if she had not been willing to risk anything—her employer’s favour, even her situation itself—rather than say “No” when they asked for “Yes”? Happen what might, she would go to them this time, snatch at this bit of happiness, and then——!

Her chief difficulty now was what to wear. The invitation was for the day following, so she had no time to make up anything, even if she had had the money to buy it with, and her evening-dresses were limited to two, a somewhat prim blue and brown checked silk, and an old white muslin, her confirmation-gown, when she was seventeen, and scarcely worn since.

Under ordinary circumstances, she would have fixed on the silk at once; but, only a few days before, the children had taken advantage of her absence on a shopping errand to make a raid on her wardrobe for things “to dress up in,” and, fixing on this gown, had managed to tear a three-cornered rent in the front of it. She had mended it as neatly as she could, but the darn was so apparent as to make the dress—neither a new nor pretty one before—look deplorably shabby even in her own eyes, and in despair she fell back upon the muslin. That, too, was limp and yellow with lying by, and made with almost childish simplicity, as became the event for which it was designed; and Susie, in her ignorance of artistic effect, deeply regretted that she had no time to send it to a laundress, and have it made stiff, and white, and starched. But, at least, she could shorten the sleeves a little, in imitation of those pretty elbow ones Virginia wore; and when she saw the effect of this, she even went a little farther, and, trembling nervously at her own boldness, ventured to cut down the neck a couple of inches, and ruffle it round with a deep frill of lace her mother had given her, so as to give better effect to the blue beads—Virginia’s beads, which, after kissing tenderly, she clasped round her soft white throat. The long mittens were drawn on afterwards, and then vanity itself could achieve no more, and, in a sudden access of shyness of herself, Susie was glad to hide her unwonted glories under the cover of a dark waterproof, and slip out of the house as quickly and quietly as possible.

Virginia received her with open arms.

“Dear little Saint Susan, this is sweet of you; and how sweet you look—too

picturesque for anything!" she said, embracing her warmly, and herself removing the dingy waterproof with her pretty, jewelled fingers. "Mother, ain't she like a picture—one of those old ones in the National Gallery, the—you know, Calton, you admire them so much—the Sir Joshuas?"

"Miss Lane isn't like a picture, because she is a picture in herself," said Calton seriously. "If you will let me, Virginia," rolling forward a crimson velvet armchair as he spoke, "I will put her in a suitable frame, and then you can admire her at ease. Sir Joshua's fair damsels always sat to him, and this one by her looks has been standing too long already."

Susie looked up at him gratefully, amid her blushes. In truth, she had been feeling pale and tired; for the day had been made as hard as possible to her by Mrs. Farquharson's snubs, the nurse's ill-temper, and an extra display of naughtiness on the children's part. She had walked the whole way to the hotel, too, so that all this praise and petting was almost too much for her; and when Virginia, declaring that she must be in the frame, too, threw herself on a stool at her friend's feet, and took her hand in hers, Susie's eyes filled with tears, which she was fain to hide by stooping her head over the fringed and frizzled one beneath her. She hardly knew whether to be pleased or sorry when Virginia, with some natural triumph in the treat they had prepared for her new protégée, told her that she need not think she was going to spend a stupid evening with them. They had something better for her than that. What did she say to the opera and to hearing Lucca in Faust; for Calton had got them a box, and if she liked they meant to go!

The opera! Susie had never heard, never hoped to hear one in her life. She only knew the divine music of Faust as churned out by a barrel-organ, or strummed over in a set of quadrilles. The mere idea paled and awed her as though someone had said, "You shall go to heaven to-night;" and yet, the anticipation of that "stupid evening" at the hotel, with the friends who were so much to her, had been such a precious and delightful treat, that to relinquish it gave her faithful heart a pang, even in the midst of her happiness and gratitude. She lost it after the luxurious little dinner, however, when Virginia insisted on lending her one of her own opera wraps, a costly thing of white satin feathered round with marabout;

and when Calton, coming quietly to her side, put an exquisite little bouquet of pale pink and creamy yellow tea-roses into her hand, saying in his low, pleasant voice: "I got geraniums for Virginia, but you ought not to wear anything cruder in colour than these roses, Miss Lane. Nothing else would be in harmony with you."

Susie took the roses as if she were in a dream. She could not even thank him; only her eyes, large with rapture, shone out like two pure lamps, and her parted lips seemed exhaling some voiceless prayer of praise.

And the evening that followed was like a dream too—a dream every tittle of which seemed burnt into her memory afterwards, to last as long as life did, but which, at the same time, seemed little more than a swift succession of sensations, blissful, hazy, thrilled through and through with an intensity of sweetness, and ever throbbing higher and higher, deeper and deeper, as if some pulse in her being, hitherto unguessed at, or only touched on to jar, had been suddenly wakened to swell up in one pure stream of answering melody to fill the divine chord of bliss about her. Time, place, and circumstance faded away before it. The passionate pleading of Lucca's thrilling voice; the dazzling house, lined tier on tier with brilliantly-attired women; the glittering lights; the pathetic cadences of the chorus, and grand thunder of orchestral symphony; the heat, the perfumes, the touch of Calton Medlicott's coat-sleeve against her bare arm; now and then, a bright glance from Virginia, or a pressure from her pretty little hand in the intervals of the young lady's flirtations with two other gentlemen who had joined them in their box; all made part of one wondrous, halcyon, harmonious whole, in which she lived and breathed without any actual consciousness of either.

Even between the acts the dream went on unbroken. Virginia was eager to know what Susan thought of Lucca. Calton got her an ice, and seemed rather unnecessarily annoyed at its not being a vanilla one, any stronger flavour being, as he declared, a desecration of her soft old muslin and tea-roses, and Susie gave smiles and answers of readiest sympathy to both; but she had neither smiles nor sympathy when she was appealed to by the other young men, one an Englishman and an Honourable, on what he called the execrable flatness of certain of the tenor's high notes, and the other, a

vivacious little American, who called Virginia by her christian-name, on some of the lighter topics of the day. They both thought her an abnormally dull young person, and turned with renewed ardour to their previous divinity, and no wonder. How could Susie criticise a note here or there with her whole being still thrilling with what had been to her like an outburst of a heavenly choir; and what did she know of the back hair of Oscar Wilde, or the "breakdowns" of Lotta? She was so completely outside of all these things that the society shibboleth of the day conveyed no meaning to her brain, shut away from the very echo of such follies between the four walls of her dingy little schoolroom. When Calton described to her a picture of Faust and Marguerite, which had been in the Salon that year, and told her that she must not expect to see much of art "when" she came to America; and when Virginia whispered to her that Marcus P. Goldbetle was an old lover, who had followed her to England, Susie listened with fullest and most delighted interest; but these other people spoke a language apart, and had no contact with her. She scarcely noticed when they made their adieux and disappeared.

Virginia herself was in high spirits all the way home. The devotion of Marcus P., and the consequent jealousy and increased attentions of the Honourable, had excited her little feather-brain to bubbling-point. She held Susie's hand squeezed in both hers all the way, and whispered confidences in her ear which the roll of the carriage-wheels over the stones half drowned.

"He's known me ever since I was three years old. We used to eat butter-nut candy on the leads over the washhouse, and I thought him the cunningest little boy I'd ever seen. Susie, I must tell you about it. Will you be sure to be in the Gardens to-morrow? Promise! Oh dear, I guess you'll say I'm an awful little flirt, for I know the other thinks so. Say, Susie, you're my friend, and you shall advise me. We can meet at the fountains to-morrow; and, oh, I've a scheme for you as well; such a lovely one, I—— Why, I declare if this isn't the hotel already!" So it was, and a dainty little supper was awaiting them there, but Susie could not stay to partake of it. The sight of a clock on the mantelpiece, and the hour to which it pointed, had startled her with a sudden shock of recollection of her real position in

life; the next day's duties; the face of the servant who would have had to stay up to let her in; and the face of Mrs. Farquharson when she heard what time that staying up had extended to; and she was so earnest in her assurances that she must go home then and there, that her entertainers were obliged to give in to them. But both Mrs. Medicott and Virginia kissed her at going: the latter holding both her hands in hers, as she said:

"Remember to-morrow, Susie! I've scarcely made out to say a word to you this evening; and I can't settle any till we've had a long talk; but I shall be in the Gardens early, so if you're not too tired to be there too——"

"Oh, I am there every morning," said Susie; in the intense excitement of the moment even her shyness had melted away. "How could I be tired! It has been like heaven. Oh, I can't thank you! I don't know how. I never knew there could be such happiness," she said with her soft cheek pressed against the little American's.

Calton took her home. He had kept the carriage waiting, and his American politeness would not hear of her going alone; but Susie hardly spoke the whole way. The awakening from her beautiful dream was so near now that every moment seemed fraught with blended pain and bliss too keen for speech—almost for bearing. Mr. Medicott could not guess what was in her mind; but as they alighted and stood together on the doorstep of Number —, Clanricarde Gardens, he looked down on her very kindly. In her white dress, with the dark waterproof falling back from her shoulders, and the bunch of yellow roses clasped against her breast, she looked so pale, so pure, so young, that he could scarcely help but feel tenderly towards her.

"I hope you will not have to stay here long," he said, releasing the bell-handle after a second pull, the first having received no attention. "My sister has a plan for you, I believe, which, I dare say, you will talk over together. I am sure you would like America, you know, if you would consent to try it. We haven't all the culture of the old-world yet, but we would endeavour to be hospitable to you."

America! The repetition of that idea was something too grand for Susie to grasp. She could not even answer; but he had taken her hand in farewell, and her slight

fingers closed over his with a nervous grip of which she was quite unaware, though it expressed a whole world of voiceless gratitude and feeling too strong for utterance. Perhaps he understood it. Some young Englishmen indeed, knowing that she was only a nursery-governess, might have taken advantage of the girl's innocence and emotion, and stolen a brief kiss from those parted, quivering lips; but Americans treat women of all classes with more respect than we do. He bent his head over the little hand, and touched it with his lips instead; and at that moment the door opened, and a yawning housemaid showed herself in the entrance.

"Good-night," said Calton, quite unashamed, "and au revoir!"

But Susie's good-night was drowned in the noisy closing of the door. She was behind it now, and her dream was over—but there was to-morrow!

It was about midday on the morrow when a telegraph-boy trotted up the steps of the Hyde Park Hotel and gave in a yellow envelope addressed to Mrs. Medlicott. The sun was shining with a fierce heat, which is not an uncommon manifestation with it, even in London, in the month of July, and though Virginia had arisen—at ten o'clock—with the intention of repairing to Kensington Gardens after breakfast, a very brief inspection of the glaring, dusty thoroughfare outside the venetians convinced her that the temperature was too warm for any such exertion, and she subsided instead on to a sofa, with a fan and a novel, and went to sleep. The sudden rushing into the room of her mother with the telegram aroused her, and for some minutes there was wild excitement on the part of both ladies, which was not lessened by the arrival of Calton in a hansom-cab, and his joining them with another telegram in his hand.

"So you've heard? You've got one too, and of course you're going off at once? You won't delay. It's half a million, remember," Mrs. Medlicott cried out energetically.

"Dollars," put in her son, who had lived long enough on this side of the water to

think of that sum as representing a yet larger amount. He added: "Yes—oh yes, I shall go. I guess it won't be difficult to get leave, as I've only been a supernumerary here. We shall travel by the same steamer, of course. There's a boat goes on Friday. Can you be ready by then?"

Both ladies set up a scream.

"Friday! And this is Tuesday. Oh, my dear boy, impossible! Think of the loads of people one will have to see, and things to do. There's that dinner at Lady Congerton's, too, on Saturday, and the fancy fair on Monday. I couldn't miss them on Jinny's account; the latter especially. She hasn't met the Prince yet, and you know how he admires American girls."

"And Madame Denise making my costume for it, this minute," put in Virginia. "Oh, mother, to think we must miss our country house visits, after all, and everyone says they're the best experience of England you can have. It's enough to make one real mad."

Mrs. Medlicott tried to put on an expression of severity.

"Jinny, I'm shocked at you. To talk about country visiting, when your uncle and my only brother is dying; and you know that that minx, his wife's niece, is trying to get a hold of him and cut out Calton! I should guess you've no feeling, to hear you talk. That reminds me, though, I was thinking, as there is no hope of his surviving, if we hadn't better get our mourning now. Denise wouldn't take a week over it, and no one would know. It would be ever so much cheaper, and better too."

"Only, if you wait for that," said Calton calmly, "I reckon you must go alone; for, if I'm to leave at all, it ought to be at once."

"Why, certainly, my dear, we can follow at the end of next week, and perhaps Marcus P. could make out to escort us instead—eh, Jinny?"

"I'll tell after I've bid the Hon. Bertie good-bye," said Virginia, laughing. "I shall go right off to his sister this afternoon and tell her. Mother, do tell Denise lots of crape; then folks'll know it's English."

9 pages 1 ace

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
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LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIX.

"YOU are expected, sir," said the servant who opened the door of the house in Grafton Street to Phil, as he showed him into a small room on the ground-floor; a room that seemed a hybrid between a boudoir and a study. Books abounded, one or two small writing-tables were stationed here and there, and on either side of the fire were placed large reclining-chairs and foot-stools, suggestive of a lady's occupation of the apartment.

In one of these chairs, placed to face the door, sat Ellinor Yorke. The light from some six or eight wax-candles, above the mantelpiece, fell full upon her face, lighting up the pure, pale complexion, the full, drooping white eyelids, the scarlet-red lips, the glow of gold in the hair. She was dressed in some plain, tight-fitting black garment, without ornament of any sort.

Phil noted this, as she slowly rose from her chair and advanced to meet him.

"You have come to tell me it is not true?" she said, making no pretence of greeting; scarcely, indeed, waiting till the servant had closed the door behind him.

"What is not true?" asked Phil, trying to get time to collect together his thoughts.

"It is not true that Rodney Thorne died by his own hand;" and now she had come close up to him. She was nearly as tall as he; their eyes were almost upon a level—her large, full, dark ones were looking straight into his.

"The jury brought in a verdict of accidental death," answered Phil, meeting

her gaze with a look as steadfast as her own.

"And they brought in a right verdict. I say it was a right verdict. I read the evidence, word for word. They were bound to bring in that verdict, and no other."

Phil stood silent.

Ellinor went on, her tone increasing in intensity and vehemence.

"I read every word of the evidence that man—his servant—gave. His master told him to bring the pistols in their case. He said he had sold them to a friend, and wished to see they were in order. He did not know they were loaded, the servant did not know either. The man left the room for a moment; he heard a shot; he came back and found his master dead. It is as plain as possible. It was an accident. What right would they have had to bring in any other verdict than accidental death?"

"What right indeed?" asked Phil coldly, clearly, sarcastically. "Who was there who would have dared come forward and say the man was half-mad, befooled, besotted, and had a desperate reason for putting a desperate end to his life?"

Ellinor drew back a step; for the first time her eyes drooped beneath his.

"Why—why—why——" she began vehemently once more. Then she suddenly broke off, took another backward step, flung herself into the armchair she had just quitted, hiding her face in her hands.

Phil's heart began to soften all in a moment. Anger, vehemence, effrontery even, he was prepared to meet, but for such an utter collapse as this he was totally unprepared. No doubt, if he had been a wise or an experienced man, he would have said, "Miss Yorke, allow me to ring for your maid," and would there and then

have taken his leave. Being, however, not very wise, nor overburdened with experience, he took an altogether opposite course; he went over to the young lady's side and addressed her, gravely, it is true, but in tones from which coldness and sarcasm had together disappeared.

"Miss Yorke, I entreat you not to give way like this," he said. "What is past is past; we shall do no good by discussing it. I have let my friendship for Rodney carry me over the borders of politeness, I fear."

But Ellinor did not withdraw her hands from her face; she only bowed her head lower, till it almost rested on her knee.

Phil went on, his manner gaining in warmth:

"I had no right to speak to you as I did a moment ago—as I did in the garden at Stanham. Great Heaven! who am I to pronounce judgment on my fellow-creatures in this way!"

Who was he, indeed, his thoughts repeated to himself, that he should set himself up as a ruler and a judge? Heaven only knew what sins he might have been guilty of had he been born a woman, and, above all, a woman with a face and figure like Ellinor Yorke's. Why, as she bent forward thus in all the abandon of her grief and remorse under the full light of those eight wax-candles, her figure, in its tight-fitting black robe, presented a perfect outline of poetic classic grace. He had been—yes, he was willing to confess it—a little hard upon her, had spoken the truth plainly—nay, more, brutally to her.

He very much doubted, in fact, whether Mrs. Thorne herself could have pronounced a harsher judgment, and as for Lucy Selwyn, there could be no doubt that, bitter as her wrongs had been, they would never have wrung from her gentle lips so hard a sentence as his own had dared to utter.

There is a place for repentance, so the preacher said, for the worst of sinners under heaven; who was he to say that Miss Yorke was never to attain to it?

And so he repeated once more in a voice that showed even deeper concern:

"Miss Yorke, I entreat you not to give way like this. If words of mine have pained you, I can only repeat, I, at any rate, am not the right person to utter them."

No shadow of doubt as to the genuineness of her remorse or repentance crossed his mind. A man blessed with all his faculties (save that of eyesight) might well have harboured a transient suspicion, but for a

man of six-and-twenty, momentarily bereft of all his faculties (save that of eyesight), it would have been an impossibility.

Ellinor drew her hands slowly from her face, and lifted her bowed head. She was white with an almost death-like pallor. There were no signs of tears on her face, but her eyes had a mournful, haunting look in them far more pathetic than the drawn redness which tears are apt to give. Her voice was slow and tremulous as she said, half turning her head towards him:

"Your words were true words; you had a right to utter them, but if ever it should happen to you to have your heart broken and miserable as mine is now, I pray to Heaven that one may go to you speaking kinder and more merciful words than you have spoken to me to-night."

Phil began to feel more and more what a hard-hearted brute he had been.

"I did not think you would take it in that way," he stammered. "I ought to have seen—ought to have known—"

"That I had a heart in my body, though I did not choose to lay it bare to every chance passer-by," finished Ellinor, speaking in the same low tremulous tones as before. "You thought I could hear of this man's death—aye, and have it laid to my charge, unmoved, without a twinge of remorse. Even now you will scarcely believe me when I say that henceforth to my very last hour remorse and pain can never leave me, that all joy and pleasure in living is over for me for ever."

"I vow and protest—" Phil began.

But Ellinor interrupted him, laying her hand upon his arm as he stood in front of her.

"Mr. Wickham, tell me one thing, and I shall be for ever grateful to you. What can I do—what is it possible for me to do to prove to you—to all the world that my sorrow is genuine, and that I am bent on making atonement? Shall I go to Mrs. Thorne, own all my fault, and implore her forgiveness, or what is there I can do?"

Phil would rather she had left him and "all the world" out of the question, and simply said: "What ought I to do by way of atonement?" However, after all it came to much the same, he said to himself philosophically; it was only putting the thing in another form. His thoughts flew swiftly to Lucy Selwyn.

"There is one to whom acknowledgment and recompense are due far more even than to Mrs. Thorne," he answered gravely. "Not that it is possible that

either can ever be adequately rendered. But the attempt might be made."

A sudden flush passed over Ellinor's face. "You allude to Miss Selwyn, of course." She paused a moment. "You would like to make me feel I have injured her—you would like me to go to her and beg her forgiveness? Mr. Wickham, I am no saint. I have never pretended to be one, and shall never attempt to be one, and I tell you frankly that you could not have set me a harder thing to do than to go to this girl and beg her pardon."

Phil began to see his way a little through what seemed to him a succession of difficulties.

"I said nothing about begging pardons," he answered. "I don't see the slightest necessity for such a thing. Where would be the kindness of laying bare to Miss Selwyn the faithlessness of the man she loved and trusted? No; what I meant was, that if you are inclined to do anything to show—I mean, for poor Rodney's sake—there would be plenty of scope for kindness towards Miss Selwyn. She is utterly without friends, has very little money. She is very young, very gentle, very broken-hearted—"

Ellinor lifted her white eyelids, for one moment letting her eyes rest on him with a curious expression. Then she said:

"Give me her address, please. To-morrow I will call and see her, and if you will call in on me here on the day after, I will tell you the result of our interview, and consult with you as to what can best be done for her. Say good-night to me now, Mr. Wickham. I am very tired—very worn-out. Do not forget, the day after to-morrow."

And somehow it seemed to Phil that, while she was saying these words with her lips, those dark, passionate, mournful eyes of hers paraphrased them somewhat in this fashion:

"Do not forget that all my hopes of repentance centre in your help and counsel. You, who have stricken me into the very dust with your harsh, cruel words, hold out your right hand and help me to stand upright again."

Phil went back to his hotel that night in much better spirits than he had been when he set forth from it, tired and hungry though he was, and well might be. He could not help feeling that he had, on the whole, accomplished a very fair evening's work—shown Ellinor Yorke a deed worthy of her doing, and, in all probability, raised

up for Lucy Selwyn a valuable friend for life. It did not occur to him for one moment to doubt the genuineness of Ellinor's sorrow, nor the benefit that her friendship, once accorded to the friendless Lucy, would be to her. Gracious and kindly thoughts began to fill his heart towards these two young women, so far apart in beauty, in station, in acquirements, yet somehow linked together in his fancy by a common sorrow.

Now, it is all very well for a young man of six-and-twenty to have his heart filled with gracious and kindly thoughts towards two gracious and kindly young women. Men with older brains and less expansive sentiments are apt to detect in such thinking a spice of danger for, say, two at least out of the three persons concerned.

CHAPTER XX.

"THERE'S one thing I'm resolved upon, at any rate. No one shall accuse me of wearing the willow for Phil," said Edie Fairfax to herself, as, with a marvellous expedition, she put the finishing touches to her morning toilette.

Edie was a mistress in the art of swift dressing. Few could hope to rival her nimble fingers in the rapid adjustment of hooks, buttons, or tapes; none could surpass them. It is true that her room, after the process of robing or disrobing had been gone through, was apt to present an appearance of "most admired disorder," over which old Janet would wring her hands in despair. Garments would lie here, there, everywhere; brushes and combs might be found comfortably reposing in the fender; pins by the dozen would bestrew the floor. What did it matter so long as my little lady turned herself out fresh as a daisy, radiant as Hebe herself, in something under twenty minutes?

On this particular morning that Miss Edie had spoken out so bravely her personal objections to that "true plant" "wherewith young men and maids distrest, and left of love, are crowned," dressing operations had been conducted with even more than ordinary despatch. Janet, tapping at the door, had been dismissed with so peremptory a reminder that she should wait till she was rung for, that the old body dissolved into tears on the spot. And then the bright brown hair had had a vehement brushing, a rapid twisting and turning, and been tucked up into the tightest and simplest of knots at the back of the wilful little head, while the said

wilful little head had nodded sagely to its own reflection in the mirror opposite, and had announced its brave intentions of inaugurating a new régime in the days that were coming.

"I've made up my mind, whatever happens, I won't show I'm miserable—no, I won't—I won't—I won't! No one shall come pitying me, and laughing at me all the time in their sleeves," she vowed as she stuck a final hair-pin in her twist of hair. "Why, I would far sooner people hated me outright, and called me the horriest of flirts, and the most vicious of vixens, than be fussed over, and pitied, and crooned over by all the old maids in the place. The creatures! and after all, what is there for me to grow sallow and lackadaisical over. Everything is going on just exactly as I wished. I made the arrangement, not Phil; he simply falls in with it as he does with everything I arrange. Next year will soon come round, and we shall be laughing together over it all before we well know where we are. Yes, after all, there is nothing for me to break my heart over."

It was all very well for Miss Edie, in the bright morning sunlight, thus to assure herself that there was nothing in the world to break her heart over. Last night's stars might have told a different tale as they peeped into her bedroom-window long after midnight, and saw her lying face downwards on the floor; only not crying because every tear she had at command was shed, and uttering neither plaint nor wail because her powers of utterance were exhausted with the long hours of passionate weeping she had passed in the solitude of her room.

Edie had received through Colonel Wickham on the previous day a message from Phil, and probably to it might be traced both her tears of overnight and her brave resolutions of the morning. Phil's message had run somewhat as follows:

"Tell Edie I shall be off to New York in a day or two—met Arthur Kenrick last week (you remember Kenrick, he rowed three in the Cambridge boat two years ago), and he's just starting to shoot buffalo in the plains. I've told him time hangs rather heavily on my hands just now, and I'm exactly in the humour for a tramp through Utah, or anywhere else he likes to go. But tell Edie she may expect to see me on the 1st of October, next year, without fail"—the last sentence being much underscored.

Possibly it was the underscoring of these lines which brought back hope and courage to little Edie's heart. "There is nothing small in art;" in a yet deeper sense there is nothing small in love: a sigh will speak volumes, a look may tell a whole heart's history, and, as in Edie's case, the underscoring of six consecutive words give them the weight of Cæsar's decrees, or of inspired prophecy itself. Anyhow, with a step as light as a bird's, and a face that seemed to have the sun itself shining on it, she went down to the breakfast-room that morning.

The squire looked up from his paper as she entered.

"The barometer's rising," he said to himself; "Heaven grant it may last." Aloud he said, determined to take advantage of the promise of fair weather: "Edie, it will be cattle-market to-morrow; you may as well ride down with me to Green Farm. There are a lot of little Alderneys I should like you to see, before I tell Melhuish to make an offer for them."

It must be admitted that Edie's whimsicality of temperament, her sudden storms and sunshine, took not a little of the pleasantness out of the squire's life, and savoured to him somewhat of the mysterious and inexplicable. He had shambled through life himself in easy, slippered fashion; why in Heaven's name couldn't other persons do the same, instead of mounting themselves on stilts to go down a hill, or putting on hob-nailed boots when nothing but the smoothest of pasture-lands lay before them?

But stilts and hob-nailed boots were for that day, at any rate, laid on one side. The squire and his little daughter enjoyed the most cheery of rides together, and inspected the Alderneys in the most amicable of tempers. Even the poor people, as Edie rode through the village towards home, said one to another, "Our young lady looks more like herself than she has for many a day past."

"Our young lady" was the name by which Miss Edie was known among the cottagers, whom alternately she petted and scolded, over whose small vices she was wont to grow furious, and over whose equally small virtues she was apt to be enthusiastic.

Someone else beside the villagers noted Edie's bright looks that morning.

"She is like an incarnate sunbeam," said Lord Winterdowne to himself, as a sudden turn in the road down which he was riding brought him face to face with

Edie and her father on their spirited chestnuts.

Now a poetic simile in the mouth of Lord Winterdowne was an altogether unusual occurrence, and showed him to be in an altogether unusual frame of mind. For truisms and platitudes he had an almost fatal facility, but, as a rule, when he courted the Muses, they shrugged their shoulders and turned their backs on him.

This Lord Winterdowne, seventh baron of that name, lord of the manor, and owner of so many thousand acres on that side of the county, was an exemplary man—a type of a certain class which, no doubt, so long as our country lasts, will have its representatives among the peers of the realm. His mind was of the neat and unpretending order, so likewise were his manners and appearance. He was a man who seemed born to preside at learned or scientific societies; to eat charity dinners; to respond to toasts in elegant and appropriate language. This up to the present moment had seemed to be all that life had required of him, and so far he had acquitted himself admirably of his duty. His succession to the Winterdowne estates and title had in nowise caused him to diverge from the even tenour of his way. The management of the estate was lodged in competent hands, and beyond the addition of a Holbein to the picture-gallery, and the renovation of a large but disused observatory built out from the castle, there really seemed nothing calling for any special exertion of brain-power on his part. In age he was about forty-five years, in appearance he was tall, thin, slightly bald, with stooping shoulders, and a very high bridge to his nose. What his eyes were like did not in the least matter, as they were invariably sheltered by slender, gold-rimmed eyeglasses. When it is added that whatever else in life he might overlook or ignore, one thing he never forgot—namely, that he was a Winterdowne, and the son of a Winterdowne, all has been said that need be to give a sketch in outline of this far from remarkable English nobleman.

His first remark to the squire, after the usual greetings had been said, showed that he was in a somewhat disturbed state of mind.

“I was going up to your house”—his horse’s head was turned in an opposite direction—“a—that is, I should have been going if I had not met you,” he said. And as he said this his eyes, not a doubt, said

over and over again, while he peered at Edie through the gold-rimmed glasses: “An incarnate sunbeam—yes, a sunbeam incarnate, that is what she is!”

“Delighted to see you at any time!” responded the squire heartily. “So—ho—quiet, my lamb!”—this to his fidgety chestnut. “Anything I can do for you?”

“I was going to trespass on your kindness, if I might be allowed,” was Lord Winterdowne’s reply. “I have been told that it is expected of me to inaugurate the Christmas gaieties in the county by festivities of some sort at the Castle. Now a ball seems to me the right sort of thing. What do you think?” here directly appealing to Edie, who replied immediately with an earnestness that made Coquette start, lay back her ears, and whisk her tail:

“A ball! Oh, how heavenly! Depend upon it, it is the right and only sort of thing you could do at Christmas.”

“Exactly,” Lord Winterdowne went on; “but here is my difficulty—the ball-list! Now, in every county there are people who must be asked, and people who may be asked, and people who neither must nor may. Now, I am too new to the county to be able to make out my list unaided, and—”

“Ah, I see,” interrupted the squire, who was anxious to set his fidgety chestnut going again; “you want Edie to run her eye over the list. Come in to-night and talk it over—dinner at half-past seven as usual, or luncheon to-morrow at half-past one—shall expect you. Yes, beautiful morning for a canter! To-night, then—shall be delighted to see you. Good-bye!”

“I wonder,” thought Edie, as once more, side by side with her father, they set off at a good pace down the country-road, “I wonder if Phil will put off his trip to America, and come down for the ball when he hears of it?” And she mentally registered a resolve that long before the important matter of the ball-list could be adjusted and the invitations sent out, Phil should somehow receive private intimation of the intended festivity.

OUR PLAYGROUNDS.

TRULY a cheerful sight for Christmas is this—prison doors opened wide, the great iron gates swinging idly on their hinges, cells and corridors all deserted, while the silent echoing quadrangle is open to any

casual passer-by. And this is Horse-monger Lane Gaol, once the dreariest of all London prisons, and now, perhaps, the happiest spot of ground in all the metropolis. For there is an open gateway pierced in the tall, gloomy prison wall, through which you may hear a shrill hubbub of small voices, and, looking in at the gate, you may see the strangest and yet merriest collection of little elves that were ever brought together. There is a great courtyard, about an acre in extent, surrounded by the high prison walls, over which the pale winter sunshine is now cheerfully streaming, while over the rough ground within children are swarming in hundreds. There are giant strides stepping out to the fullest extent possible to the arms and legs of their lilliputian patrons; swings in full swing; see-saws working up and down, with half-a-score of youngsters clinging to either end. Other athletic imps are hanging on to the parallel bars—hanging on by arms or legs as may happen, and twirling about and going through their small feats and displays of strength with the greatest enthusiasm. Then there is a football flying about, quite regardless of Rugby or other rules; but everybody has a kick at it. And the least among the small, who can do nothing else, can jump up and down and shout to the full extent of their tiny lungs, as if life were a thing of joy and abundance, and as if they, in spite of broken shoes and ragged garments, were getting a full, overflowing measure of all good things going.

They come in little flocks, these children, from all directions, hurry up to the prison gate—its gloom has no terrors for them—and as they pass into the big playground they seem to shake off the cares of the world already creasing their infant faces, and with a hop, skip, and a jump, they dart shouting into the thick of the throng. There are girls, too, as many as boys, but these make their way to the farther end of the ground, which is fenced off for their use. The high walls keep off the chill wind, and make things snug and pleasant, while there is a great breadth of open, sunny ground, rough as you please, and uneven with old foundations sticking up here and there; but all the better fun, it seems, for the children; and if there were a blade of grass anywhere visible, be sure it would be quickly shuffled away by hundreds of tiny feet. Anyhow, the place seems exactly to suit

the children of the neighbourhood; they throng to it at every available moment, and at times nearly three thousand children may be seen collected there, or rather there dispersed, all playing and shouting to their very utmost—not such shouts as you might hear in the playing fields of Eton or at Rugby, but a thin, piping outcry like the chirping of myriads of London sparrows.

There are children of all sorts here; some with comforters and warm caps and knickerbockers, as bright and warm as you please, and some bare-headed and bare-footed, with festoons of rags about their limbs, but they all seem to agree remarkably well; and the caretaker says, that, as far as keeping order goes, a word from him is enough, and that quarrels and bad language are unknown. And they caper, and shout, and jump about with as much joy and delight as if they had all comfortable homes and warm firesides to return to, and the prospect of a cheerful meal at the end of their play, when darkness comes on and the playground is closed, and the long lines of shops in the great thoroughfares begin to sparkle and glow with lights; whereas very many of these children are, as the caretaker remarks, "like the burrds of the air, and know as much where their next meal shall come from."

Fortunately, there are kind people in the neighbourhood, who have a thought for these birds of the air, and send sundry little pickings to the playground, where they are soon picked up by the hungry little sparrows.

It is a capital notion to have as caretaker a man who can give instruction in athletics, and here is one who has been a soldier-instructor of the same for fifteen years or so, and who now looks after the athletic principles of this crowd of young people, and tries to infuse a scientific element into their unformed gambols. Our caretaker can show the result of his labours.

But just at this moment a cry of distress is heard, and our caretaker is away in a moment. A small damsel of seven or eight years is making this way, crying lustily, "Melia Jane went and throwed dirt in my eyes, she did." And statistics and everything else are forgotten as the kind-hearted fellow kneels down and carefully wipes the little damsel's eyes, as he listens 'o her tale of 'Melia Jane's atrocities. And leaving him to distribute justice among the rival

daughters of Eve, we will take a glance at the surroundings of the prison.

There is a notice on the prison-wall dated 1791, but the prison was not ready for its inmates till 1798. "A miserable low site," writes one of its visitors, coming to see Leigh Hunt, who here passed two weary years' confinement for a harmless satire on the Prince Regent. Moore and Byron came to visit him in 1812, and we may fancy the little dapper warbler and the pale, aristocratic Byron glancing up at these stern, unhandsome-looking walls.

It is still a gloomy, lowering passage between the busy, shabby Newington Causeway, where omnibuses and trams are spinning along so merrily, and the once dreary prison with its sinister memories. You may picture to yourself the crowds that seethed and whirled through that narrow, darksome pass on the hanging mornings of former days, when the scaffold was erected high over the prison gateway. Such as on that gloomy November morn described by the late Charles Dickens, when the Mannings paid the penalty of their crime, and when the most lamentable accompaniment of the dread spectacle was the swarm of young children, with their shrill shouts, and cries, and imprecations, who formed a large proportion of the ribald, mocking crowd. What a terribly long way, or rather, what a cheerfully long way is this from our playground of to-day, with its hundreds—nay, thousands—of merry little grigs, shouting and chirping over their play!

It was this Horsemonger Lane, by the way, which is now no longer known as the Lane, but has taken to itself the name of Union Street, as if even the very stones of the street were anxious to throw off their prison associations—it was this very street or lane that witnessed the last of the public executions in London. And Horsemonger takes up the dreary record of public executions almost from the time when Kennington Common was the usual place of execution for the criminals of these parts, as Tyburn was for the rest of London. One of the earliest and most noted of these scenes on the scaffold, was the execution of Colonel Despard and six of his associates, in 1803. The Colonel had been arrested at The Oakley Arms, Lambeth, with about thirty others, all agog to subvert the British Constitution, and these were tried at the Sessions House adjoining the prison—the Sessions House is still in flourishing existence, with its

highly respectable frontage towards Newington Causeway, and its offices of the county officials adjoining—and the pick of the criminals were condemned to death. It was a trumpety conspiracy, which had been best punished with contemptuous mercy, but the frightened Government took it seriously, and insisted upon all the clumsy, cruel elaboration of a prosecution for high treason. And so, with all due formalities of dragging on a hurdle, hanging, beheading, and quartering, the last "high treason" decapitation that has been done in England, and that probably ever will be done, came to an end. But enough of these gloomy reminiscences. Let us return to the cheerful playground of to-day.

The credit of getting this famous playground for the children of this crowded, thickly-populated neighbourhood, is due almost entirely to the Metropolitan Public Garden, Boulevard, and Playground Association, and chiefly to their chairman, Lord Brabazon, who persevered through many obstacles till success was attained. When Horsemonger Lane was abolished as a prison, and its inmates transferred to Coldbath Fields, Clerkenwell House of Detention, and Westminster, the justices of Surrey, to whom the site belonged, were inclined to sell the place for building purposes, and it was only after long argument and correspondence that sufficient interest was excited in favour of the scheme of making a playground here, to move the hearts of the justices of the peace to lease the ground to the Playground Association at a nominal rental. That the scheme has been a great success the merest glance within the playground will show; the children have adopted it as their own; their charter is emblazoned on the board by the entrance, which bears the lengthy title which we may abridge here and elsewhere to Playground Association—a board which bears the pleasing announcement, (I quote from memory), "No adults are allowed to enter unless accompanied by children." But this need not be taken too literally. The children themselves have no objection to the entrance of a well-conducted stranger, even if fully grown-up, and the caretaker is proud to show the details of his charge, and to descant on the progress his boys have made in athletics—biceps muscles developed and firm, and the calves of the legs with the muscles showing like whipcord, where not long ago all was feeble and flabby.

Now that we are on the playground trail, it may be worth while, taking the little red-bound report of the Playground Association as a guide, to pay a flying visit to some of the other oases in the wilderness of houses which have recently been opened to the public. The Elephant and Castle is within a stone's-throw, and there is no better place as a centre, with its tram-lines radiating in all directions. And so in a few minutes we are in the churchyard of St. Mary, Newington, now pleasantly laid out in flower-beds and green lawns, with a tomb showing here and there, covered with creepers, or a white headstone, where those who sleep below were persons of importance in the parish. There is a tall clock-tower near the roadway which marks the site of the former churches—all of them small, and of no architectural account—which have existed on the site, from the earliest Saxon church which was honoured with a mention in Domesday.

The new, cheerful-looking red-brick mission-room stands farther back, surrounded by the headstones which have been removed to make room for grass and flowers. And surely there is something much more pleasant and congenial in the notion of such things growing overhead, and the patter of children's feet, and the tramp of the cheerful living world always sounding, than in the cold gentility of the most elaborate headstone. Here no games are allowed, although a quiet canter in string-harness is not objected to; and here are elderly people to be met with, taking a turn up and down in the sheltered nooks, while, in addition to the young people driving about or being driven in teams, there are little groups of children, sent, no doubt, by their mothers to be safely out of the way. Little girls, with big babies in their arms, tuck themselves into the corners of seats, and smaller sisters curl themselves about them, getting a little warmth from the intermittent sunshine, and killing the time agreeably enough till mother comes home—from the wash-tub, let us hope, and not from the assemblage of tubs with golden hoops which are marked Old Tom and Cream of the Valley.

Another tramcar takes us to a newly-opened garden on the south-east corner of Blackfriars Bridge, an enclosure so small that everybody had overlooked it till our Association put the Corporation in mind of it. Strictly speaking there are two gardens: one a little bit, as big as a billiard-table,

running down to the river, with a strange view of a lane of water hemmed in between two great bridges, with a cluster of boats and barges clinging to the bank; the other a little strip close to the busy thoroughfare; which you might pass half-a-dozen times without noticing it. But the youngsters have found it out.

Indeed it is charming to see how the smallest space of ground is utilised by the young ones for a game of play; how they descend upon such a place out of space, like a flock of wild geese from the blue heavens, upon some tiny pool; how readily the listless shuffle of the street is exchanged for the hearty scamper of the playground.

There is a nice little nook, too, in the Waterloo Road, near the railway terminus, where, on the hot summer days, rest and shade are to be had as artisans and workwomen cross from one close, narrow street to another; with a corner with swings and such-like for the children, which is always well occupied. And what a pleasant corner that is, too, by St. Paul's, the quiet garden among the city crowds, with the bones of the old cathedral, and fragments of piers and old foundations lying about, where you may sit and muse, or dream with the roar of Cheapside in the ears!

All this is but a small taste or sample of what our active Playground Association is doing, and trying to do, with the small waste-places of the metropolis. Many are the graveyards that have been rescued from the builder's hands and converted into pleasant gardens—open to all the world. And the society looks after all kinds of open spaces, the centres of neglected squares, the gardens of old Inns of Chancery; in any direction where even a little bit of open ground is to be discovered, the Association is ready with plans for appropriating it to the public good. Not always are their suggestions received with gratitude and appreciation. The Dog in the Manger has continued to flourish ever since Æsop's days, and is often now to be found in responsible positions, and is frequently a large owner of property. But, on the whole, now that the movement is fairly started, people join in with alacrity. The report of the Association shows as many as fifty-four churchyards or burial-grounds laid out as public gardens, and many of them in the centre of low and thickly-populated districts. Besides these, a number of patches of waste or common land have

been laid out as playgrounds or recreation-grounds. And, rough as may be the neighbourhood surrounding such a playground, experience has shown that there is no difficulty in maintaining order within it. Thus, in St. Luke's, Whitechapel, parish playground, which is maintained by the vicar of that parish, a woman at seven shillings a week acts as caretaker, "and maintains perfect order, though the neighbourhood is of the roughest."

In another playground the clergy of St. Peter's, London Docks, have instituted a skittle-ground for men, and find it well used on summer evenings. Then there is Poplar Recreation Ground, maintained by the Poplar Board of Works, which is reported to be "a success, used by the old inhabitants, who in fine weather lounge on the seats smoking and reading;" while a children's playground helps to alleviate any "over-pressure" on the brains of the pupils of the board-school, and a gymnasium is much used and appreciated.

Of larger open spaces not rising to the dignity of parks, we have London Fields and Hackney Downs, both well frequented on Sundays and holidays by the inhabitants of the dense and crowded districts about them; and there are sundry other spaces, well known, no doubt, to residents in East London—Well Street Common, with thirty acres of land, and North Mill and South Mill Fields, with, together, nearly sixty acres, which have also been opened to the public by the Metropolitan Board of Works.

As to parks, London is perhaps better off in that respect than any other great town in the kingdom. The three royal parks—St. James's, the Green, and Hyde—throw a continuous band of verdure right across the fashionable part of London, and with more than eight hundred and fifty acres of surface, afford a magnificent breathing-place to the wealthy quarters of the town. This is, perhaps, more than balanced by the grand inheritance secured to the people of the east in Epping Forest, with its five thousand three hundred and forty-eight acres of wild brushwood and forest. Victoria Park, too, with its three hundred acres, is a splendid playground for the thronging crowds of Bethnal Green and Haggerstone, although the tendency of a fine open park is to create a genteel neighbourhood and to bring good middle-class houses into being—not an undesirable result in itself, but which tends still further to compress an already

overcrowded neighbourhood. Then there is Finsbury Park for the people of the north, with its pleasant flowing waters and its modest extent of a hundred and fifteen acres. Pleasantest and most picturesque, perhaps, of all the London parks is Battersea, which has come to a great beauty of foliage and pleasant grouping of wood and water. A glimpse of Southwark Park from the top of a tram-car shows a pleasant green surface of sixty-three acres in extent, well planted with young trees, and with a good cricket ground for the benefit of the dwellers in Rotherhithe and Bermondsey. It is only necessary to mention in this rapid survey those old-established institutions, Regent's Park and Primrose Hill, with their four hundred acres of land and water, while Hampstead Heath, with two hundred and forty acres, consoles itself for the loss of its once wild freedom with its fixity of tenure and security against spoliation under the Board of Works.

Indeed, without taking the outlying parks and commons into consideration London, with its eight thousand acres or thereabouts, including Epping Forest, an open ground, will bear, as has been said, a favourable comparison with the other great cities in England. Liverpool comes next after exceptionally favoured Bristol, with four or five parks of six hundred acres in all. Birmingham has ten parks, but all of small extent, as their whole acreage is hardly a third of that of Liverpool. Manchester is far in the rear with three parks, the largest of only sixty acres, and Salford, with four parks and a recreation-ground, has barely a hundred acres among them. Sheffield, again, with three parks and four recreation-grounds, only shows a hundred acres as full score. Indeed, among the great towns Leeds is well in advance, with its fine Roundhay Park of three hundred and fifty acres, while the rest of its open spaces, including the old historic Woodhouse Moor, amount to a hundred and sixty acres more. If we take the test of population, and assume as the requisite amount of open park and recreation-ground one acre to each thousand of population, we shall find that London, Leeds, and Bristol are the only three great centres of population which exceed that allowance.

Not that it must be understood that London is even yet adequately supplied with open spaces in her densest quarters. The little bit of ground close at hand, where children can resort in play-hours, and

workmen smoke a pipe in peace at the end of a hard day's work; these plots of ground, so precious and so valuable, it is the mission of the Playground Association to seek out and reclaim. It provides seats also for wayside scraps of turf, and tries to plant in wide and roomy roadways. There are great opportunities in the wide thoroughfares of the East End, such as Whitechapel and the Mile End Road, and without interfering with the roadside markets going on there, to plant an avenue of trees along the margin, a deed which should earn the blessing of a future generation, and afford verdure, if not shade, to the present existing race.

For all the good works effected by the Playground Association, its income is still on a very limited scale; but then it spends a mere trifle on costs of management. The offices of the society are at the house of the chairman, Number Eighty-three, Lancaster Gate, W., and the only salary paid is a very modest honorarium to the secretary. With this exception all the funds subscribed go to the playgrounds of London in some form or shape, and surely the assistance of such a beneficent society only requires to be more widely known to bring in a large accession of subscribing members.

COPTIC MONASTERIES IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

So much attention has lately been directed towards Egypt, that most subjects connected with it have been pretty fully discussed. Some extracts from the diary of M. Sonnini (a French naval engineer and naturalist, who, just one hundred years ago, travelled in Upper and Lower Egypt for the sake of scientific research) may, however, prove interesting.

In those days, Egyptian travel was by no means so safe and easy as in our times, and M. Sonnini passed through many unpleasant episodes ere he reached the famous Lakes of Natron. He describes his delight when, wearied by the frightful monotony of the desert across which he had been travelling, he at length reached a chain of hills furrowed by deep gorges, and on reaching their summit (a toilsome ascent, over soft fine sand), he beheld at a distance of about six leagues a parallel range, and in the valley that intervened a vast sheet of water, its banks covered with shrubs, and with a prodigious number of wild-

duck of many different species, while rosy flamingoes stalked to and fro in the shallows among green aquatic plants and tall reeds—reeds which are greatly prized by the peasants for making pipe-stems. The leaves are used for making mats.

The French visitor learnt that the lakes vary greatly in size, according to the season. Sometimes they dry up, so that only two small pools remain, while at other times both overflow, and unite to form one great lake. When the two lakes separate, and their waters subside, the ground which they have inundated, and now leave exposed, is covered with a sediment, which is crystallised and hardened by the sun—this is the natron. There are also thick banks of rock-salt of dazzling whiteness. The thickness of these layers of salt varies according to the longer or shorter continuance of the waters on the ground. Where they have lain but a little while, the natron lies in thin cakes, almost like snow-flakes. Sometimes this substance forms on the surface of the waters so thickly that camels can walk over it, as we might walk over ice. At other times the waters are clear and limpid.

The principal harvest of the natron is gathered in the month of August, when it is raised from the ground by the aid of iron tools, and is packed in camel-loads, and so transported to the Nile, where it is shipped for Cairo.

On the shore of one of the lakes, a small house was pointed out to M. Sonnini, as that wherein St. Maximous, a saint held in much reverence by the Copts, was born.

Leaving the lakes, the traveller proceeded in a south-west direction across sand entirely covered with hardened natron, which rendered the march exceedingly fatiguing both to men and beasts. At length he came in sight of a large building in which, secluded from the wicked world, dwelt a brotherhood of Coptic monks.

Describing this monastery, M. Sonnini says that he cannot believe that a situation more horrible and forbidding could be found on the earth. Built in the middle of the desert, its walls, though very high, cannot in the distance be distinguished from the sands, having the same reddish colour and naked aspect. There is no apparent entrance. Not a tree, not a plant of any size, is to be seen. No road leads to it; no trace of man is to be observed near it; or if, perchance, a human footprint is visible, it is quickly blown over by the

ever-shifting sands, or else effaced by the track of wild boars or other wild animals, the rightful dwellers in such hateful solitudes. Such, he says, is the harsh and repulsive appearance of this retreat, which is inhabited by a most useless race of ascetics.

As he drew near the monastery, his Arab escort went forward to endeavour to obtain admission, a favour which was not always readily granted to strangers. While the tired traveller and his servants with the camels lagged behind, suddenly they became aware of a cloud of dust rapidly approaching them, and in a few moments found themselves surrounded by a troop of wild Bedouins. Resistance being hopeless, they were immediately captured and stripped; clothes, property, and money were all taken, and the luckless traveller deemed that he had indeed fallen on evil days as he saw these lords of the desert begin to quarrel over his goods.

Greatly, however, to his astonishment and satisfaction, the robber-chief presently came up to him and restored his clothes, watch, and various other articles, and he then learnt that Hussein, his own Arab escort, having seen the approach of the Bedouins, had returned with all speed, and happily possessed so much influence as to be able to induce the new comers to give up their spoil, and respect his safeguard. So after a very uncomfortable half-hour, the adventure ended without further damage than the loss of a large sum of money, which was abstracted from a purse, supposed to have been returned intact, and M. Sonnini, thankful to have got off so easily, deemed it well not to call the attention of his Arab guardian to this circumstance.

The Bedouins, thus transformed from foes to the semblance of friends, now did the honours of the desert, and mounting their late prisoners on their own horses, led them to the shadow of the monastery walls, from the summit of which baskets, containing bread, and wooden platters filled with lentils, were let down by ropes. The whole troop, with their guests, formed a group on the sands, and shared the meal thus provided.

Hussein now ascertained that the robber band had been for many hours lying in wait for the travellers, of whose approach they had informed the monks, adding that they purposed concealing themselves behind the walls, and shooting the travellers as they approached. At the entreaty

of the Copts, they had, however, abandoned this murderous intention.

Having escaped this danger, the next difficulty was to obtain admission to the monastery. This was granted with exceeding hesitation, on the plea that the strangers might prove to be Mahomedans. One of the senior monks was let down by a rope to satisfy himself on this score. When convinced that the new arrivals were Christians, the monks agreed to receive them, but insisted on drawing them up by ropes run on pulleys. To this the strangers strongly objected, as the walls were very high, and, perceiving on one side a small door, or iron wicket, they demanded that it should be opened.

This the monks refused, declaring that it was never opened when Arabs were known to be in the neighbourhood. However, they at length yielded to the energetic remonstrances and threats of Hussein, who was resolved to obtain shelter for his camels, and with infinite precaution they opened the gate. But it was low and narrow (the "needle's eye" of Scripture), and truly the camels found it a hard struggle to enter. Hussein made them lie down upon a mat, and to prevent them from rising, tied one of their legs by a cord passed round their back. By the joint exertion of several men, the camels, having their heads held down, were, one after another, dragged in upon the mat by a series of most uncomfortable jerks.

It was quite dark ere this operation was finished. The monks then conducted the whole party, except Hussein, to their chapel, where there was a long service, followed by a scanty supper, consisting only of plain boiled rice.

This monastery had previously been inhabited by Greek monks, who had here sought to emulate the fame of the ancient Anchorites, more especially of St. Macarius, whose name has been bestowed on this part of the Nitrian desert.

Within the high outer walls, there is a sort of small fort surrounded by ditches, over which is built a drawbridge, and here the monks retire when the Arabs succeed in forcing the outer wall. They told M. Sonnini that ten years previously they had been obliged thus to take refuge from Hussein, who was then the most formidable of Bedouins, though he had now for some years led a peaceable and honest life. He had besieged the monastery, and having effected a breach in the great walls, had pillaged and sacked the place. Small

wonder that his presence was not very cordially welcomed on the present occasion.

The little fort was always kept provisioned, so as to resist a long siege. Within it lay the cistern, and the church, a simple building, with no ornament save a few ostrich-eggs pendent from the roof, and some very poor pictures of saints. Here, too, was the monastic library—old books and manuscripts written in Coptic, which is a compound of Greek and of ancient Egyptian. These lay unheeded on the ground, worm-eaten, and covered with the dust of many long years, unread by the monks, who, indeed, appeared quite indifferent to learning in any form, but who nevertheless regarded these works of their predecessors with considerable veneration, and would on no account sell them.

Their own cells were very dirty, vaulted dens, "suited," says M. Sonnini, "to the slothful and ignorant wretches by whom they are inhabited." He certainly was not favourably impressed by this "religious" brotherhood, whom he describes as sunk in vice and laziness. There were in all twenty-three persons in the monastery. Their dress was, to his eyes, as unpleasant as was their coarse food to his palate. It consisted only of a sort of robe, worn day and night over a long shirt of black linen, dirty and unwashed. Its dismal colour, and the dark complexion, short stature, and mean appearance of the wearers, were extremely repulsive. M. Sonnini describes these modern Coptic monks as the most filthy and disgusting of mankind.

Nevertheless, in the pursuit of science, he lodged in this monastery for some time, sharing the coarse fare of the inmates, which consisted only of biscuit made of flour of lentils and rice boiled in salt and water, without any sort of seasoning, detestable cheese, and now and then a little honey, with no beverage save brackish and ill-tasting water. How he must have longed to exchange this hateful food for a comfortable dinner in Paris, and how he must have sympathised with the Israelites, when, weary of desert-fare, they craved a return to the flesh-pots of Egypt!

The monastic food-supplies were all voluntary contributions from the Coptic peasants, who from time to time come to the monasteries in the desert to worship and do penance. Further supplies are sent thrice a year by the wealthier Copts of Cairo, and the caravans which bring these offerings are invariably respected by the Arabs, who consider the monastery as, in

a manner, their own storehouse, where they can always count on claiming food whenever they pass near. In all these monasteries, a cord hangs from the wall, and anyone approaching unperceived, has but to pull the rope, which rings a small bell, and so summon the brethren. Then provisions are let down for the use of the wayfarer.

These monastic retreats must have been very numerous in olden times. Two monasteries, and two other deserted buildings, lay within a radius of two leagues from that of which we speak, which, however, was the most important, being the repository of the sacred bodies of no fewer than seven saints, of whom the most revered were St. Maximeus and St. Domadious. These precious relics were, of course, enshrined in the church; but the Arabs confided to the travellers their belief that the bones thus treasured were those of camels and asses, which had died in the desert and had been carefully collected by the monks.

Four of these great monasteries were specially renowned for their libraries, namely, Deyr Suriana, Deyr Baramoos, Amba Bishoi, and that of St. Macarius. From these many valuable ancient manuscripts in Arabic, Coptic, and Syriac have been rescued, and committed to the care of more intelligent guardians than the modern Coptic monks.

According to M. Sonnini's account, even the religious services in the monastery were not always edifying, as frequent disputes arose among the monks as to what psalms and anthems they should sing, and the squalling of Turkish and Arabic airs, with an accompaniment of noisy, clashing cymbals, made the church re-echo with a medley of jarring sounds.

He made a point, however, of being frequently present at service during the day, though he declined to attend the midnight mass. As a French Catholic, his attention was naturally chiefly attracted by the points of difference in ritual. He was struck by the attitude of devotion. "The monks," he says, "neither kneel, sit, nor stand, but remain on their feet, leaning against the wall, with their bodies bent forward, and supporting themselves on a kind of crutch, in the form of the letter T" (which is the form of the cross commonly accepted by the Coptic Church).

"The chancel is separate, and kept shut, as in the Greek churches. The priest celebrates mass with water. The sacred

vessels are of glass. Common bread is consecrated; the priest cuts it in pieces, and mixes it with consecrated water. Of this, he eats a few spoonfuls, and then administers a spoonful to all present.

"After the communion, the officiating priest washes his hands, places himself at the door of the chancel, with his wet hands extended, and every person goes in procession to present his face to be stroked, so that the faces of the congregation serve instead of a towel.

"During the mass the priest also blesses little round loaves, which are not half-baked; these he distributes at the conclusion of the services, a distribution which is not always made without some quarrels. The priest who celebrates mass is dressed in a kind of white shirt, made with a cowl, and covered with little crosses. During the other prayers he wears only a large fillet of white linen, with similar little crosses, half twisted round his head in the form of a turban, and the two ends hanging down before and behind.

"These Copts are fond of the bustle of rites and ceremonies, which rapidly succeed each other. They are always in motion during the time of the service. The officiating monk, in particular, is in constant exercise; he is every moment scattering incense over the saints, the pictures, the books, etc. At every one of the operations he kisses his left hand. After having made frequent use of his censer, he runs up to each of the persons present, applies his hand to their forehead, and again seizes hold of his censer. When all his rounds are finished, he gives his benediction with a small cross, on the top of which he first sticks a little bit of wax taper. When the whole service is over, everyone of the congregation goes and kisses a little cushion, covered with a greasy cloth, then a cross, and afterwards the shrine of the saints, on which he rubs and rolls his head."

Hussein refused to remain at this spot for more than one night, but for five days did this enquiring Frenchman remain in the dreary monastery of Zaidi el Baramoos, at the end of which time he secured the escort of another friendly Bedouin sheik.

On his departure he purposed making a moderate offering in return for "the disagreeable entertainment" he had received. His purse having been well-nigh emptied by the Arabs, he could not afford to be extraordinarily liberal, but considered that six sequins would be ample payment for

five days' lodging and board on lentil-bread, with lentils boiled in salt and water.

This, however, was by no means the view taken by Father Michael, the Superior, an emaciated, wizened, and avaricious old man, who told him that it was proper that he should make an offering for the convent, which, he observed, required to be entirely whitewashed. He should also give something towards the embellishment of the church; and must make an offering for the poor, and also to himself as Superior. For these various items he modestly demanded six hundred sequins. On learning how widely different were the calculations of the stray lamb whom he had counted on so effectually fleecing, the old man flew into a terrible passion, called on the saints to avenge such ingratitude, and prayed that Heaven would speedily send to the convent some tribe of hostile Arabs, whom he could commission to pursue the ungenerous stranger, and avenge his cause. Finding, however, that his alternative lay in accepting six sequins or nothing, he sent a messenger, at the last moment, to request that they might be bestowed on him, and the traveller went on his way with small respect for the monks of the Nitrian desert.

NINETEEN CENTURIES OF DRINK.

WHAT an appalling title! and when the author quotes from the Paston Letters Sir John's sage warning to William Gogney that Edward the Fourth is coming to Yarmouth on a progress, and "that he purvey them of wine enough; for every man beareth me in hand that the town shall be drunk dry, as York was when the King was there," we begin to think there is some justification for it, and to console ourselves with such poor conceits as:

Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;
The English have always got drunk,
Therefore they've always been a most reasonable nation.

This reminds me of a friend who jokingly maintained that a nation's work in the world is always in direct proportion to the amount it drinks. The Scotch, he would say, drink the most of any people in Europe, the Portuguese the least. The Scotch are the most, the Portuguese the least, energetic of European races. You find Scotchmen everywhere, from the Falkland Islands to Corea; but where do we find a Portuguese? Of course it is not a fair parallel. The Scotch are far less drunken than the vodka-loving Russians, who are as stupidly standstill as

a people can be. The Portuguese did not drink more in the days when they were foremost in the work of maritime discovery; they always held their own in the New World against Spain, and nowadays Brazil stands in very favourable contrast to any Spanish-American colony from Mexico to Buenos Ayres. Portugal, again, is still doing an important work in East Central Africa, and counts for more than even we do in some parts of the Dark Continent.

My friend, however, was joking, and this temperance book, "Nineteen Centuries of Drink," can be nothing but a long and dull joke, if it is meant to prove that we have always been of all nations the most drunken, and that all "our national disasters, from Vortigern's loss of Kent, and Harold's loss of Hastings, to the payment of the Alabama indemnity, were brought about by drink."

In every age, one must admit, there is a deal about drinking in our poets and our prose-writers. I dare say there is as much in those of other countries, if we went to look for it. I am sure there is in the writers of old Rome and modern Italy. But the modern Italian does not treat the subject as the average Englishman does. We are the most didactic of nations, and the fondest of washing our dirty linen in public. Your Tuscan poet rattles on in praise of drinking, and descants on the qualities of Montepulciano and a score of other wines, without one word of blame for toppers who take a glass too much. Your Briton, unless he is in a particularly rollicking mood, gets maudlin, and tells the world how depraved the state of society is, and (more's the pity) that the excesses which offend everybody's eyes show that the nation is fast going to the dogs. That is our way of looking at things. Lord Beaconsfield would probably have laid it to the charge of "the melancholy ocean" that we so often think everything is going to the dogs; and yet England lasts on, and keeps her place and something more among nations that take a more cheerful view of the general outlook.

Premising so much, lest anybody should lose heart through thinking us specially wicked because Dr. French has been able to bring testimony from every age to our drinking powers and convivial habits, I shall just set down a few of the out-of-the-way facts which he has laboriously collected. The names and titles of his authors fill fourteen closely-written pages; and I am certain

that out of fewer pages of French or Chinese writers—not to go to heavy drinkers like the Germans—I could make out quite as strong a case against the French or John Chinaman. Well, Diodorus says that the Britons were habitually water-drinkers, though, on grand occasions, they would get drunk on metheglin, or on what the Welsh nowadays call *cwrw*, "always quarrelling in their cups." The Romans, says Dr. French, corrupted these simple folk by bringing in wine among them, just as we, with our "fire water," corrupt aborigines all the world over. But, unlike our rum and whiskey, the Roman wine did not destroy as well as corrupt.

Who found out distilling? How "natives" of all colours must rise up in the world of spirits and curse him. I have been lately reading Mr. Kerry-Nicholls's King Country, describing how he went through the length and breadth of the Maori reserve; but I was not able to enjoy a page of it after coming, near the beginning, on this saddest of all sad passages: "The men of the Arawa tribe, noted for their giant physique, have, in these degenerate days, a marked predilection for raw rum and strong tobacco. They used to till the soil, but now their harvest is interviewing tourists, whom they coax into their village-hall, and for whom they will either sing hymns or dance the grossly indecent ha-ka, whichever their visitor please."

Anyhow, the Roman made a better hand of the Britons than we have of the Maoris. He may have got them into the way of drinking the Emperor's health and of toasting the British belles in those elegant villas, with their heating-apparatus, and baths, and mosaic pavements, which he taught them to build; but he did not improve them off. The long stand they made against the incoming English was mainly due to their having learnt from him how to build walls and to defend them. Look how long the conquest took. Why London, seemingly so all-important to the conquerors, was not taken till the Mercians came down on it in the rear more than a century and a half after the landing of Hengist. We have not taught the Maoris fortification; quite the contrary, the rifle-pit is a Maori invention; and we have taught them to drink raw spirits.

But after the Romans had gone, Britons and Englishmen vied with one another who should drink deepest. One knows all about Rowena and her fatal "wacht keil," and Gildas and Nennius

give a sad picture of British drinking habits; while an English poem, preserved in the book given to Exeter Cathedral by Bishop Leofric, reads just like an early version of John Barleycorn. Wilfrid, Archbishop of York, who was mainly instrumental in bringing the North of England under Rome, and cutting it off from Aidan and the Scotie Church, was one of the hardest drinkers of his time, and at the dedication of his church at Ripon, where two Kings were present, there was such a disgraceful carouse, that one wonders that the whole land was not put under an interdict.

Dunstan was all for temperance. Though he is said to have insisted on King Edwy not retiring till the coronation-feast was over, he was very hard on drunken clergymen, and would only suffer one alehouse in a village (we sadly want a Dunstan now in some districts), and set pegs* in the drinking-horns that each man might know how far he ought to drink. He set his face too against holding wakes (vigils before the village Saint's day) in churches.

Dunstan did not, however, insist on the clergy being teetotalers; even monks had times of special refreshment called misericords or charities, when each had a cup of wine or beer and a plate of honey. The Danes gave a religious tone to drinking; St. Olave was with them a favourite toast, and so was St. Michael. And drinking brought them little good; "they were drunken with wine from the south," says the Chronicle, when they made St. Elphege of Canterbury a target for their dinner-bones, and then felled him to the ground with the back of their axes.

Harthacnut died in a drunken fit while pledging the company at a marriage feast in Kennington Palace. This feast gave occasion to a hoax which was the original of those in the Antiquary and in Pickwick. Steevens had a grudge against Gough the antiquary; so he got a stone slab, chiselled on it some old English letters about Hardenut cyning gedronke vin, and then had it "discovered" in Kennington Lane. The bait took. Gough showed the slab before the Society of Antiquaries (Archæologists, a much more cautious race, had not yet come into existence), the learned Pegge wrote a paper on it, and you can find it figured in the Gentleman's Magazine, vol. lx., 1790.

* These pegs in Latin were pinne, whence the phrase which his friend the Calendrer uses of John Gilpin, "in merry pin." A peg-tankard held two quarts, and was divided into half-pints by eight

The Danes, Shakespeare learnt from Brompton the Chronicler, by nature were mighty drunkards; but the same Shakespeare makes Iago say that "your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander are nothing to your English." And that (if we are to believe the historian Niebuhr) is how we came to lose Hastings: "England at the time of the Conquest was not only effete with the drunkenness of crime, but with the crime of drunkenness." This is a heavy indictment; but our own Fuller had said long ago: "The English being revelling before had in the morning their brains arrested for the arrears of the indigested fumes of the former night, and were no better than drunk when they came to fight."

But were the Normans so much better? Their soldiers certainly drank deep, as poor Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester, found to his cost. He was obliged to have a large body-guard, because, being the sole remaining English bishop, he had to be watched. Not caring to shut himself up and break the old custom of dining in public, he would keep them company for hours, restraining them as well as he could by his presence, and pledging them in a tiny cup, which he just put to his lips, while, amidst all the din, he was meditating on the Psalms. Waltheof, the one English layman of note whom the Conquest had spared, undoubtedly fell through drink. He was at "that bride-ale which was many men's bale," when, contrary to William's will, Ralph de Wader, Earl of Norfolk, was married to the sister of Roger Fitz Osberne, Earl of Hereford, and having drunk deep, he readily joined the plot against the King, which was arranged at the wedding-feast. Next day, the fumes of the wine having evaporated, he repented, and going off to Lanfranc the Archbishop, made full confession. But it was of no avail. His wife, Judith, the Conqueror's niece, to whom he had also told the secret, hated him, and took means for making her uncle implacable, and the miserable fellow died as he deserved to die, and nothing shows more strikingly what abject creatures the English of that day were than that they actually more than half canonised this double traitor.

Vines were no novelty in England; but of course most of our wine came from abroad. Perhaps the produce of the monastery vineyards was used by the holy men with the view of mortifying the flesh. Anyhow, the getting of Guienne did for

the twelfth century what the Gladstone Treaty did the other day—made claret cheap and plentiful. Every ship trading to Bordeaux had a fixed tank (pipa gards) in its midst, out of which the sailors "sucked the monkey," as they sometimes do in these days. And then, as now, there were Frenchmen who preferred "pell ell" to their national beverage. William Fitz Stephen, in his *Life of Thomas à Becket*, says that when he went as Chancellor to negotiate a royal marriage, he took as presents waggon-loads of iron-bound casks of beer, for the French admire that drink, which is "wholesome, clear, of the colour of wine, and of a better taste."

Drinking went on at such a rate under the Plantagenets (i.e., in the first claret period) that Dr. French uses the fact to show how hopeless it is to keep down one kind of drink by another. "We thought beer would beat gin out of the field, and now, with equal folly, we expect light wines to get the better of both beer and gin."

The Crusaders were great toppers; and to them is due the bringing of spirits. The Arabs had re-invented distilling, but the process is described by Galen and Zosimus, writing in the second and fifth centuries respectively. It is thought to have been known to the old Chaldees, and from them transmitted to the "Scythians"—Tartars, who, like the Koords nowadays, were always making inroads towards the Mediterranean. Alcohol is, of course, an Arabic word—probably the same as the Hebrew "kaâl," Chaldee "cohâl," meaning anything highly subtilised, whether in powder or spirit. In the former shape it is applied to the finely-powdered antimony, the "kohl" with which Eastern women paint their eyelashes. With the article, "al," it is the spirit, or, as Lucifer, in Longfellow's Golden Legend, says:

The elixir of perpetual youth,
Called alcohol in the Arab speech.

This, by-and-by, became a formidable rival to the older liquors, of which Giraldus Cambrensis writes: "Their constant habit of drinking has made the English famous among all nations. Both nature and custom make them drunkards. It is a strife between Ceres and Bacchus; but, in the beer which conquers and domineers over them, Ceres prevails." Spirits, however, were not made or much drunk in England till the sixteenth century. Even abroad, for a long time, brandy was only used as medicine, the efforts of chemists like Raymond Lully being devoted to

rectifying what the Arabian Abucasis had taught them how to produce in a hydrated form. How is it that whiskey (uisge-baugh—water of life) got into use so much sooner in Scotland and Ireland? It cannot be because mountains are unsuited to malt-making, for much of Ireland is plain, and the Welsh have never exchanged their ancestral cwrw (beer), such as it is, for spirits.* Moreover, good ales are still brewed in Scotland and Ireland, notably at Drogheda, and the old song about King Arthur's Court testifies that in early times

The Scot loved ale called blue-cap.

I suppose the habit of spirit-drinking was learnt abroad. Scots of the Dugald Dalgetty class brought over that and other bad customs; and they were a numerous class, and from them the colonists to Ulster were largely recruited. Scot-ale (Low Latin, Scot-allum) had, by the way, in old records, a far different meaning; it is, properly, a gathering where each paid his share, and thence comes to mean a public-house. In King John's reign the council of St. Alban's forbids "viscounts, foresters, and others to hold Scot-ales where they pleased." A King's officer would hold a Scot-ale within one of the royal forests, out of the range, i.e., of the Common Law, and thither he would compel men to repair, just as a publican nowadays is sometimes able to prevent a man from getting work, unless he deals with the "house of call," where workmen assemble and wages are paid.

Beer, under the Plantagenets, was bad—what can you expect when the regulation price was two gallons a penny in cities, and three and four gallons for the same money in the country? A great deal of it was made of wheat, and to take off its mawkishness, it was flavoured with spices and (like the brandy we send to West African chiefs) with pepper. The stomach of that day demanded spicy drinks. Wine was very generally drunk as hypocras—i.e., mixed with ginger, cinnamon, long pepper, and sugar. Chaucer was a wine-merchant's son, had his daily pitcher of wine from the royal table, and was controller of the customs of wine and wool in the port of London. Of his franklin, or country squire, he says:

A better envyned man was no wher non,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke.

The sumpnour (summonser before the

* Whiskey once tried to get a footing in South Wales. In Henry the Eighth's time, numbers of Irish settled in Pembrokeshire, and fell to distilling what is now their national beverage

bishop's court) was fond of "strong win, as rede as blood;" but, when he was well drunk, he still had his wits about him. He would, indeed, "crie as he were wood (mad)," but at the same time, "then wold he speken no word but Latin."

The British sailor behaved in a way which soon taught the French to use double casks.

Full many a draught of win he hadde draw
From Burdeux wood, while that the chapmen slepe;
Of nice conscience toke he no kepe.

Still, in spite of losses, the "chapmen" could afford to sell Bordeaux in London so cheap, that it was retailed in 1342 at fourpence a gallon, Rhenish costing sixpence. Wine grew rapidly dearer; the Hundred Years' war must have thrown a vast breadth of vineyards out of cultivation.

Church-ales were got up to help the poor in days when there was no poor's rate. Their origin goes back to the Love Feasts of the primitive Christians; but in more modern times they were brewings by the churchwardens, during which all other brewing in the parish was forbidden, the profits being devoted to poor's relief, and to keeping up the church fabric. The old saying, that in a village you are sure to find the best ale near the church, probably arose from these ales being held at the "church-house." Such "ales" paid wonderfully well. The parish-books of Kingston-on-Thames show that seven pounds fifteen shillings (near one hundred pounds of our money) were taken at one of them in 1526. Sometimes the church itself was the place, especially at weddings, where a bride-ale was held, with the same object as a Welsh "bidding." The bride sold the ale, and each drinker gave what he pleased towards setting up the young couple in housekeeping. A Canterbury visitation in 1468 forbids such ales, on pain of excommunication; but in that century, "two mazers to remain in the church for to drink it at bride-ales" were part of the ordinary church furniture.

Petruchio had his bride-wine, "and threw the sops all in the sexton's face."

Hops, which were used in the Netherlands in the fourteenth century, were forbidden in England two centuries later, the doctors insisting that they were unwholesome, just as they have so often stigmatised tea and coffee as "poisons."

Drink had to be twice tasted between the cellar and the table, first by the butler under the marshal's eye, next by the cupbearer, who must have had a strong

head, especially if he served an archbishop. In Archbishop Booth's house eighty tons of claret were drunk yearly; and at the installation of George Neville to the see of York in 1464, one hundred tons of wine were drunk, besides three hundred of ale.

It is easy to collect anecdotes of English drinking. The stories of Wolsey, when rector of Lymington, being put in the stocks by Sir Amyas Paulett for being drunk at a fair; of Cromwell dropping the corkscrew just as he was going to open "one bottle more" towards the end of a drinking bout, and laughingly remarking to his generals, who were down on their knees to pick it up: "Should any fool look in at the door, he would think, to see you like that, that you were seeking the Lord, and you are only seeking a corkscrew;" are about as authentic as that of Pitt telling Dunbar, as they rolled into the House together: "Don't tell me you can't see the Speaker; I see two."

They are in good company; every German vouches for the authenticity of the lines:

"Who loves not woman, wine, and song,
Remains a fool his whole life long,"
Says Dr. Martin Luther;

and what Warton calls "our first drinking song of any merit," that which opens the second act of Gammer Gurton's Needle, and begins with:

I cannot eate but lylie meate,
My stomake is not good.
But sure I thinke that I can drinke
With him that wears a hood,

was written in 1550 by a Bishop of Bath and Wells—predecessor, therefore, to the author of the Morning and Evening Hymns—who had been Master both of St. John's and of Trinity, Cambridge.

Amid the many testimonies to English tipping one is thankful for Camden's remark that "We, who of all the Northern nations had shown ourselves the least given to immoderate drinking, first learned in the Netherland wars to swallow a large quantity, and to destroy their own healths in drinking that of others." So sweet Anne Page calls Falstaff "a Flemish drunkard." Tom Nash, the Elizabethan town-wit, reckons up eight kinds of drunkenness; among them, "Ape drunk, when a man leaps, and sings, and hollows; martin-drunk, when he drinks himself sober ere he stirs; and fox-drunk, as many Dutchmen be which will never bargain but when they are drunk." In Hamlet, we remember,

the palm is given to the Danes: "They clepe us drunkards;" and in an authorless Elizabethan play called "Looke to't, for I'll stab ye," we read of "the Dane that would carouse out of his boote;" and the heavy drinking at James the First's court may have been partly due to his Danish marriage, for, as late as 1632, Howel (Letters) saw the King of Denmark carried away in his chair after the thirty-fifth toast from a banquet he had given to the Earl of Leicester, all the officers of the court being drunk likewise. Not long before, Roger Ascham had found pretty heavy drinking at the Imperial court. "The Emperor," he says, "drunk the best that ever I saw, never drinking less than a good quart at once of Rhenish wine."

Under the Stuarts arose a new fashion in drink. Spirits, known as "strong-waters," or "comfortable waters," came into vogue; but, in spite of the excessive drinking, in which he and his court set such a bad example, James's statutes are full of enactments against drunkenness. Fines and the stocks were freely threatened, but, it seems, seldom used. There were still too many public-houses in too many English villages; but Dekker speaks of places "where the whole street is but a continuous ale-house, not a shop to be seen betwixt red lattice and red lattice." "In many places," says Lord Keeper Coventry, "they swarm by default of the justice of the peace;" and this is still too often true.

Charles the First was as temperate as his father was the reverse; but his clergy were not all of his mind. There are, perhaps, still one or two very old-fashioned places where wine is set out in the vestry that the parson may take a glass before preaching; but under Charles, and also under the Parliament, entries like these (from the Darlington parish books) are common enough: "For one quart of sack bestowed on Mr. Gillet when he preached, one shilling and fourpence; for a pint of brandy, when Mr. Ball preached here, two shillings and fourpence; when the Dean of Durham preached here, spent in a treat with him, three shillings and sixpence."

In drinking, the Cavaliers did not have it all to themselves. Against Lord Macaulay's dictum that "in the Puritan camp no drunkenness was seen," may be set Pepys's account of Monk's troops in 1659: "the city is very open-handed to them; they are most of them drunk all day."

Charles the Second drank, of course; one remembers how, when he was going away from dinner at Guildhall, the Lord Mayor ran after him, and overtaking him in the courtyard, swore he should not go "till they had drunk t'other bottle." Charles looked at him over his shoulder, and, humming the old line, "And the man that is drunk is as great as a King," at once turned back and did as he was bid. Yet Charles issued his celebrated Wine Acts reproving "a set of men of whom we are sufficiently ashamed, who spend their time in taverns and tipping-houses, giving no other evidence of their affection to us but in drinking our health." Such Acts could not do much good while men like Rochester and Sedley set the tone of society; and the tone of society may be judged from the fact that the very sober James the Second, very early in his reign, had to give out that he would not allow courtiers to come drunk into the Queen's presence, and that Jeremy Collier, the moralist, could thus satirise the prevailing custom: "Sir, if you please to do me the favour to dine with me, I shall do my best to drink you out of your limbs and senses. And before we part, you shall be well prepared to tumble off your horse, to disoblige your coach, and make your family sick at the sight of you."

Evelyn notes the barbarous custom of making the guests' servants drunk. Defoe—whose Poor Man's Plea deserves reading as much as Robinson Crusoe—says that "no servant was thought proper unless he could bear a quantity of wine," and tells how, after the debate which put William on the throne, a very great lord said to his lackey: "Jack, go home to your lady, and tell her we have got a Protestant King and Queen, and bid the butler make ye all drunk, ye dog."

Even on the stage drink was a terrible reality. In Higden's Wray Widow, the author contrived so much drinking of punch that the actors could not get through with it, and the audience had to be dismissed at the end of the third act.

It was to the spirit trade that the "Glorious Revolution" gave the greatest impetus. In 1689, the import of spirits was forbidden, and anybody was allowed to set up a distillery on giving ten days' notice to the excise. William's example, too, which his wife (despite her doctor's advice) followed only too well, was as bad as it could be; his banqueting-hall in Hampton Court was

nicknamed "The Royal Gin Temple." But it was not till about 1724, that the passion for gin spread like an epidemic. More than three and a half million gallons of spirits were distilled yearly; whereas, before 1689, the average had been considerably less than half a million. The ordinary advertisement: "Drunk for a penny; dead drunk for twopence; and straw for nothing," ushered in a state of things of which Hogarth's *Gin Street* gives us a glimpse. Happily Admiral Vernon saved the navy by insisting that the sailors should mix their spirits with water. They grumbled, and called him "Old Grog" (he wore a grogram coat); but in time they got to like the less pernicious mixture. We can imagine how the universal intemperance disgusted Franklin; he found that his fellow-apprentices drank five pints of porter apiece at their work, besides what they took out of hours. The miserable failure of the Gin Act of 1736, and the excitement caused by it, would alone fill an article. In spite of all legislative attempts, the consumption of spirits in England and Wales rose from thirteen and a half millions of gallons in 1734 to nineteen millions in 1742. A legislator's training hardly tended to make him serious in regard to temperance. Walpole's father—no worse than hundreds of other squires—used to say to his son: "Come, Robert, you shall drink twice to my once; for I will not permit the son in his sober senses to witness the intoxication of his father." What hereditary lawgiver was it who, when George the Third said to him, "They tell me you love a glass of wine," replied: "Those who have so informed your Majesty have done me great injustice; they should have said a bottle." George the Fourth, so drunk at his wedding that he could scarcely be kept upright between two Dukes, was only acting up to his youthful training.

William the Fourth was relatively temperate; and spirit drinking at any rate was on the decrease—about five and three-quarter million gallons yearly in the decade from 1821 to 1830; rising during the following ten years to an average of nearly seven and three-quarter millions. The great question now is whether doctors are right in so freely prescribing stimulants. No doubt sometimes "alcohol is life"; but, if by taking it in illness a habit of excess is formed, it brings death in its train. Defoe—in *Colonel Jack*—gives a sad instance of this, a type of many cases that have happened

in real life. "My wife, who before had never drunk a glass of wine unless she was forced to, during her illness was pressed by doctor and nurse to take this cordial, and that dram, whenever she found herself faint. By-and-by these were no longer her physic but her food, and she would be drunk in her dressing-room by eleven of the forenoon." Doctors are getting wiser; and so is the public. For if Charles Knight could walk round London on the next holiday he would find things far better than "the dismal spectacle of drunkenness everywhere, not shame-faced, creeping in maudlin helplessness home, but rampant, insolent, outrageous, so that no decent woman, even in broad daylight, could at the holiday seasons dare to walk alone in the Strand or Pall Mall." This was only fifty years ago, and Charles Knight did not exaggerate.

LEFT OUTSIDE.

A STORY OF KENSINGTON GARDENS.

CHAPTER V.

IT was lucky for Susie Lane that an opportune toothache on the part of John Thomas caused her to be let in by the housemaid, who had shown herself of an indulgent spirit on a previous occasion, as Mrs. Farquharson was thus prevented from ever hearing of the late hour of her governess's return; and by another fortunate chance the girl was sent off to the Gardens earlier than usual next day, with all three of the children (the boys having begged off from school on account of the heat), and ordered to keep them there, in a shady part under the trees, for the whole morning. Susie obeyed joyously. Anyone taking the trouble to look at her, indeed, must have been startled by the change in the quiet little girl, whose usually pale cheeks were flushed to a deep crimson, and whose grave eyes seemed fairly sparkling with inward happiness. Even her feet betrayed her by refusing to walk as slowly and sedately as usual; and when they were fairly on the grass, and under the shade of the elms, her spirits rose to such a height as to find vent in little ripples of song, breaking out, every now and then, as if from the very overflowings of a heart too full for repression.

She was going to meet Virginia!

Virginia was not there; but, as Susie said to herself, it was really too early to expect her; and so for the first hour her new gladness held full away, and she only started up every five minutes or so in

the thought that she saw her friend coming. During the next hour the little song-snatches died off of themselves, and her eyes, watching eagerly the space between the gate and the fountains, gained a sharpened intensity; while her interest in the children's games and chatter became so languid that, had Mrs. Farquharson been present, she might almost have felt justified in dismissing her nursery-governess on the spot. During the third hour she suggested that the boys should roll their hoops up and down between the fountains and Speke's Monument, where she had once before met her friends, she herself accompanying them; but ever returning more quickly than she went, from an insane dread that Virginia might have arrived at the trysting-place in her absence, and ever with a deepening shadow in her wistful eyes. After that it was the children's dinner-hour, and she took them home. There were tears in the eyes then; but if anyone had told her that all that while the young American was curled up among her sofa-cushions, enjoying the delights of "dolce far niente," and forgetful of everyone else in the world, the tears would have been dried up quickly enough in indignation at the speaker. She would not have believed him.

Next day was the same. She had recovered a little from her disappointment during the afternoon's teaching, and had slept peacefully at night, for might there not have been a thousand and one reasons for Virginia's absence? That she had meant to come, Susie felt quite sure, remembering the earnestness of her manner in making the appointment. Who was to know, indeed, that it was not the hinted at project for her friend's benefit that detained her? Perhaps it was not as yet sufficiently matured; and to-morrow she would hear all about it. So "to-morrow" Susie's step on her way to the Gardens was as light as yesterday, and her eyes as clear. Virginia would be sure to be there to-day—quite sure. There could be no doubt on the subject; only—she was not.

And on the morrow, and the day after, it was still the same. Virginia never came, neither did any letter come from her to account for her absence.

Susie had not thought of that alternative at first; but as soon as she had persuaded herself that her friend must be ill, or prevented by some other equally strong reason from keeping the tryst she had been so urgent in making, she made

sure also that she should have a letter to tell her of the fact; and accordingly took to watching for the postman's knock when at home as eagerly as she watched those green paths in Kensington Gardens when out.

She even went so far as to ask Jane, the housemaid, once if she was certain that no letter had come for her—when she was not at home, perhaps—and had got mislaid; but Jane shook her head.

"A letter, miss? No, not that I know of. John Thomas takes 'em in, you know, an' carries them for the droring-room straight upstairs; but, if there's any others, he just touches the 'all-bell for me to come for them, so I'd be sure to have seen if there had been one for you. Was it anything important, miss, you was expecting?"

"Oh no," said Susie faintly; "it was only a note from a friend, but—but I should be very sorry to miss it." And there was an irrepresible quiver in her voice at the idea, which touched Jane's heart. She said sympathetically:

"Lor, miss, if it's the friend as you was out with the other evening, he may write yet. A week or so ain't nothin' to a man; they do hate letters so, even the lovingest of 'em. I'm sure my young man he don't write to me once a month if he can 'elp it."

Susie's mild eyes opened wide in surprise for an instant; then a deep blush came into her cheek.

"My friend is a lady, Jane," she said with a poor little effort at dignity, which, however, did not impress Jane, who only laughed at it downstairs.

"As if I hadn't seen 'im myself on the doorstep with her, an' kissin' her hand for all the world like the lovers in them Bow Bells or Fam'ly Novelist's pictures. Well, I do hope he ain't going to play her false, for I wouldn't lead the cooped-up life she does up there for anythink; an', as I told you, cook, I thought he looked too fine a gentleman to be for marryin' a nussery governess."

Poor Susie, meanwhile, had hidden herself in her room with a burning face, and a heart beating, faster than it had ever done before, with shame and agitation. Hitherto she had coupled her disappointment with Virginia's name only. Even to her own heart she had never breathed a thought or expectation of hearing from that friend's brother again, and had resolutely tried to put out of her mind that kiss, from whose momentary pressure her hand had seemed to tingle ever since, and the mere thought of which made her pulses throb and her eyes swim. She was no ascetic, poor little

Susie! There was nothing whatever of the man-renouncing nun or male-despising, advanced woman about her. If it had pleased Heaven to send her a lover, even a much more commonplace one than Calton Medicott, she would have looked at him kindly and taken him contentedly. She was one of those women who are made for wifehood, seeing that to love is easier for them than to unlove, even if the object of their affection is utterly unworthy of them; who are faithful through infidelity; tender under ill-treatment; and go broken-hearted to the grave because a bad husband has gone there before them. But, as it happened, no husband, or possible husband, had ever come in Susie's way. She had never had a lover, or been in love in her life; and from having known no other girls since she grew up, and read few novels, she positively knew less of the tender passion at twenty-three than most young ladies do at thirteen. As for Calton Medicott, surrounded as he was with all the ideal excellence which, to her mind, must belong to any brother of Virginia's, he might have kissed her hand every time they parted, and she would not have dared to build a hope on the action. It was from kindness, she told herself; and even kindness from him to her was an infinite condescension. To think of him as a lover! Why, the mere suggestion by a vulgar servant-maid that she could do so, filled her with such a sense of humiliation and self-contempt that if she had seen him coming towards her at that moment, I think she would have run away.

But with regard to friendship and Virginia it was quite different. Virginia had sought her out, had kissed her, and claimed her as a friend—a "real friend," as Susie quoted to herself; not, I grieve to say, understanding that Transatlantic colloquialism in its right sense. Virginia had praised her, confided in her, talked of carrying her off, professed so much—so much more than Susie herself. Where was she? What could have happened to her to bring about this total silence, which seemed stranger and stranger as the days went on. Was she seriously ill? Had Susie offended her or her mother in any way that last evening? But that could not be, for never had any people parted from her more affectionately. But what, then, could be the matter? Might she herself write and ask? But no, that would be too like forwardness and presumption. What should she do if—if she never heard of them again? The poor child fretted and puzzled

over it incessantly. She thought of nothing else, indeed, except when she was too hard at work to think at all, and Jane, bringing in the governess's solitary supper of an evening, would find her sitting doing nothing, with Millet's Angelus on her knees, and her eyes too full of tears to look up.

"Ain't you 'ad that letter yet, miss?" the girl would say sympathetically. "Well, it is a shame;" while Flo often asked:

"Miss Lane, why don't that lady who was always guessing things, and gave me the sweets, come to the Gardens now? Is she gone away, or isn't she a friend of yours any longer?"

"Oh, Flo, I don't know. Don't tease me, dear; I don't know," poor Susie would say in a stifled voice.

These comments were like the rough turning of a knife in a deep-seated wound. And all the while, if she had only known it, there was a copy of the World lying in the drawing-room, containing, among other items of fashionable gossip, a paragraph on the too sudden departure of Mrs. J. Vanderbilt Medicott, U.S., and her charming daughter, for New York, with a full description of the latter's dress at the late fancy fair; but society papers never got up to the schoolroom in Clanricarde Gardens. When Mrs. Farquharson had quite done with them they descended to the basement, and no one there knew the name of Miss Lane's friends. The poor child was breaking her heart for a word, a sign from those whom she was too faithful herself to suspect of fickleness, and all the time the explanation which would at least have laid her hopes and expectations at rest for ever was within her reach, and she did not know it.

"Well, this is a queer thing, anyway," said Calton Medicott, laughing. "See here, Medora, a letter for Jinny!"

The lady he spoke to—she was standing at the window of one of the best private sitting-rooms in the Great Western Hotel—turned round and repeated:

"For Virginia? Where from! And how did it come here?"

"Goodness knows! The clerk below gave it me just now, says it's been lying in the office nearly ever since my mother left last year for home. They kept it owing to something Jin had said about returning, and then forgot all about it till I asked just now if there were any letters for the name of Medicott. What shall I do—mail it to her?"

"I guess that wouldn't be much use at

this date. You'd better open it and see who it's from. It's a woman's hand, and Virginia hadn't any friends here but what you introduced her to."

"That's true. Most likely it's only an invitation. What a joke to answer it now!"

He had opened the letter—it covered three sides of a sheet of note-paper—as he spoke, and glanced at the signature with a slightly puzzled expression, muttering to himself:

"Lane? Lane? I don't recollect——"

But next moment a flash of remembrance came over him, and it was with a graver expression that he read the contents:

"DEAR MISS MEDLICOTT,—I have not liked to write to you before, lest I should tease you; and I know how many other things you have to do and see without being troubled by me to whom you have been so kind already; but Mrs. Farquharson has just told me that they leave town next week, and I cannot bear to go away without bidding you good-bye, and thanking you once more for all you have done for me. I did hope to have seen you again before now. When we last parted you told me to be sure to be in the Gardens next day to meet you; and I have been every day, but you have not come, and it seems such a long time since you did, and since that happy evening—the happiest in my whole life—that I spent with you, that I cannot help feeling as if something had happened, or that you are ill. But I know it is not long in reality, and, perhaps, you have only been too busy to come to the Gardens as you intended. Dear Virginia, I do hope it is so. Pray, if you have time, write me one line on a card to say you are well, and then I shall go away without the heartache I have now. I would not ask this, but that you told me we were to be real friends for ever, and you would only have said that if you meant it. My life was all dull grey till I met you, and you filled it with sunshine; but I think it would be black, not grey—as black as a dark night—if I were never to see you again. Think what it is to have only one friend in the world, and then you will know how I think of you, and thank you, and long to see you.—Your loving and grateful friend,
SUSAN LANE."

And beneath, was written in a little corner:

"Please remember me to your mother and Mr. Medicott. I did not half thank them for their kindness that night; but I have got my flowers still, and I mean to keep them always in remembrance of it."

A curious little flush came into Calton Medicott's face. He had forgotten Susie Lane altogether since he came into his uncle's property, and married the lady whom Mrs. Medicott had called "that minx." He did not believe that even Virginia had ever given the girl a thought during the year that had elapsed since their last meeting; and yet, in reading this little, badly-worded, school-girlish epistle, how it came back to him that evening, Faust, Lucca's voice thrilling upward in those divine arias, and the little girl in the corner, the girl with the soft, pure face and liquid eyes, and the quaint old muslin gown. He seemed to see her again as they stood on the doorstep of the house, where she trod her daily treadmill, and earned her scanty wage, with her wistful eyes uplifted to his, telling their tender story all unconsciously in the nervous grip of the cold little hand. Even the scent of those roses—his roses—came back to him, and with it his own sensations of the moment: the sudden impulse of tenderness and desire, the half-formulated thought that a man might do worse things than take this pure, gentle-natured young creature away from all the hardships of her present life, and devote his own to making it as happy as it ought to be. He had spoken of her once to Virginia shortly after their return to the States—he was glad to remember it now—and Virginia had answered, clasping her hands:

"Miss Lane! Why, I do believe she never crossed my mind till this moment. Poor Susan! I guess she's sitting in those Gardens now, wondering wherever I have got to. Well now, if I've time some day I must make out to write to her;" but of course the letter never had been written. Calton knew his sister, knew the whole race of his fair compatriots too well to have the slightest doubt as to that for a moment. He could have laughed at the whole idea if it had not been for the letter in his hands, the pitiful cry, "Don't forsake me quite!" breaking through all the more pitiful efforts at commonplace gratitude and contentment. "Only one friend in the world," and that Virginia! "You filled my life with sunshine when you came into it; but it would be black as night if I were never to see you again." "You told me we were to be real friends for ever, and you would only have said that if you meant it."

But why had Virginia said it, or why did this girl assume that she meant what she said? People in society never did, but, of

course, she was out of all that kind of thing, and if her life was so dull and colourless—

It came into his head all of a sudden that he would go to Clanricarde Gardens and see her. She might have left that situation; but, after all, it was only a year ago, and she had not seemed a person likely to change. It was a lovely June morning, and perhaps if he went by the Park and Gardens he might even meet her, as he had done once before, when he thought how pretty she looked in her skimpy pink frock, with that wonderful light and illumination flushing her face and eyes when she saw him. Was it possible—he hoped not, being a married man—that the poor little thing had cared for him as well as for Virginia?

There was no such meeting to-day, however, and when he did get to Clanricarde Gardens he nearly turned round and walked away again; for the windows were shuttered up, the flowers in the balconies dead, and the steps covered with dirt and dust as though the family had left or were out of town.

There was someone in the house, however, for a boy with a flat parcel ran up and rang at the bell while he stood hesitating, and an old woman came out into the area and looked up at them. Seeing a gentleman she came up the steps, and then Calton asked for Miss Lane.

"Was she still—?"

"Yes, sir; oh yes," the woman interrupted briskly; "she's still here. It's not going to be till to-morrow. The reverend gentleman—her step-pa, I think—come up to make arrangements for it yesterday. You're a relation, too, I suppose, sir?"

"Not a relation; only an old friend," said Calton, smiling. So there was a wedding in question, and his remorse on Virginia's behalf might end very prettily in a wedding-present. "Will you ask if she will see me?" he added with an odd little feeling of mortification which he could hardly have defined.

The woman stared.

"She! Oh, of course, sir, you can see her; leastways as an old friend, I don't suppose there could be any objection. We've laid her out in her own room, but she ain't in her coffin yet; the reverend gentleman only ordered— Why, goodness gracious me, sir! didn't you know she was dead?"

Calton could hardly speak, the shock was so great.

"Dead!" he muttered helplessly,

"Why, yes, sir, three days ago. Well,

I do beg your pardon; but I made sure you knew; though, to be sure, it was sudden at the end. What from? Why, I don't eggsackly know. The children had all had scarlet-fever in the spring, and she helped to nurse 'em, and just as they was better an' goin' away to the seaside for change, she took ill. No, not o' the same thing; only a sort o' break-down, the doctor said. She never was over strong, you know; but when the family was ready to leave she wasn't fit to sit up, let alone go home to her own people, as had been fixed for her to do. It was a great bother to Mrs. Farquharson, for she couldn't have her plans upset, of course, as wasn't to be expected from a lady in her position; but she said, at last, Miss Lane might stop here till she was strong enough to go home, and she left Jane, the housemaid, to look arter her."

"Stop here!" repeated Calton, his eyes wandering to the dreary, papered windows. "That young girl—alone!"

The old charwoman nodded.

"Well, sir, Jane did say as she thought 'twouldn't have hurt the missus's pocket to ha' took the pore thing to the sea along wi' her own children; an', as you says, a gurl is a gurl even if she's only a guv'ness; but Miss Lane, she didn't complain. She told Jane she'd just as soon stay here, for her mother had only lately been confined, and her stepfather seemed nervous lest she should bring the fever with her to the house. She seemed to be gettin' better, too, at first; an' even went out a few times, leanin' on Jane's arm, as far as the Gardings, where she used to crawl up an' down in the sunshine atween the pond and that monument there. But 'twas too much for her. She come back each time more feverish an' exhausted; and the last time she fainted when she was puttin' on her bonnet, an' had to give it up. Arter that she kep' her room, an' one day Jane found her cryin' over some bits o' things she was fond o' looking at an' playing with—a string o' blue beads, an' a photygraft o' two people sayin' their prayers in a potater-field, they was, an' I think some friend had give 'em to her; and says she: 'Jane, if I wasn't ever to get well would you do something for me?' Jane said in course she would, an' says she: 'There's a white dress an' a pair of mittens in that drawer that I wore one evening when I was very happy; so happy that I thought heaven couldn't be much better. I hope it wasn't a wrong thought; but it was only once—only once in all my life; and if I were to die now,

Jane, I should like you to put them on me, and tie these beads round my neck, and lay the picture in my coffin with me; and there are some dead flowers, Jane, in the drawer. I should like to have them in my hand when I am dead, for they are all I have to remind me of my happy time—such a little, little time, only a few days, in all the years since my father died. I couldn't leave them behind.'

"Jane, she cheered her up an' told her she wasn't going to die, an' wouldn't she like to have some friend sent for; but Miss Lane said no, she had no one to send to; her mother was ill and her sister at school; and she had never had but one friend—only one! She was crying again, an' seemed so weak that Jane made her go to bed, an' offered to go for the doctor; but Miss Lane couldn't bear giving trouble, an' said no, he was comin' next day, and she wasn't really worse, an' didn't want anythin' but to be left quiet. I went up to her myself, an hour or two later, with a cup o' tea an' some toast; but she was sleepin' then; so I just put 'em down aside of her, and come away; and that's the last I saw of 'er alive. She was gone next morning."

"Gone! But how? In Heaven's name, not—alone!"

"Well, sir, it was Jane's evenin' out, an' Miss Lane 'erself told her not to think o' stayin' in; an' I was sittin' below the whole time with the door open in case she called or rang; but she never did. Onst I did think I heard 'er coughin' (she'd an awful cough), an' I went upstairs arter a bit an' knocked at her door, but there wasn't a sound, so I looked in an' said: 'Miss Lane, my dear, are you asleep, or wouldn't you like a light?' but she didn't answer, so I come away as soft as I could; an' when Jane come home, I said: 'Don't you make a noise. That poor thing's sleepin' beautiful, which the doctor said was just what he wanted her to.' So we crep' up to our own beds like mice; but, lor, sir! when we went in in the mornin', there she was lyin' dead with her head fallen a little off the pillow as if she'd been tryin' to get to the tea and couldn't; an' two tears on her poor cheeks; an' them beads I told you of cuddled in one hand, an' held tight to the last. Won't you come up an' see her, sir, instead o' standin' there? She's quite a pretty sight, tho' I says it as shouldn't, seein' that I helped Jane to lay her out just as she wanted; an' there she lies now, wi' the

beads roun' her throat, an' the bunch o' flowers—dead an' brown they are, pore things!—in her hand, more like an innocent girl goin' to a party than a corpse. I'm free to own I didn't think it was the correct thing myself; though Jane, she would have it; an' when the reverend gentleman come, I covered it all over with the shroud, as it should be, fearin' he'd be vexed; but lor! he never gave more than one squint at her face, and then walked out o' the room. I'm thinkin' she didn't get much love or kindness in her life, pore gurl! an' yet she was the gentlest creature. You are coming up, aren't you, sir?"

But Calton said "No, no," shudderingly, and, giving the woman some money, went hastily away. He was sorry for it afterwards. Something told him that to Susie's tender nature it would have been an unspeakable comfort to think that even one face she had loved should look down on her in death. But that comfort, too, was denied to her; and at the moment he felt it to be impossible. Why, only a few moments back he had been thinking of her in that very frock, with his roses in her soft, slim hands and that lovely flush and light on her face; and now she lay there cold and dead, alone as she had lived, robed by hireling hands, with all the wistful sweetness gone out of those tender grey eyes for evermore.

He went back to his hotel like a man in a dream. Poor Susie! Were there many such lives as hers, such mistresses, such endings?

Only those few happy days in all her life; and then—"the darkness!" If only she hadn't said that about the darkness! For it seemed as if he and his had really brought it upon her by nothing but caprice and forgetfulness—awakened her heart only to break it.

At least she had been content before. She had known of nothing better. Now! He almost felt as if Virginia, in her folly and thoughtlessness, had crushed out a life, and he had helped her.

But that was absurd, and an exaggeration. There had been excuse enough for forgetting her at the time. If she had been of their social world, in any society at all, she would have known all about it and understood.

Did she understand now? But no, no; it was some comfort for him to think that there was no fear of that. She was outside of all these things still. They could never touch her more.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WINNE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.

PHIL, however, when he heard of the projected ball, was far more inclined to hasten his journey than to retard it.

"Where was the use," he growled to himself, "of going out of his way to hunt for disagreeables when he had only to sit still and think for five minutes and up they came, like mushrooms after rain? Why should he take the trouble to go all the way down to Stanham to this wretched ball, unless he had the privilege of saying beforehand to Edie, with a fine air of command, 'Edie, I intend to have at least every other valse with you,' or, 'Edie, I object to that inane-looking individual you've just been dancing with, and I shall feel greatly obliged if you will snub him next time he comes up to speak to you.'"

It must be confessed that Phil Wickham, just then, was not in his usually serene frame of mind. He was—for him, that is—oddly irritable at times; was conscious—a new experience for him—that he had nerves; resented the consciousness, tried to laugh it off; tried to convince himself that he was developing imaginative powers of a high order; failed in both attempts; was forced to confess that, after all, it was his suspended engagement that was pressing upon him and worrying him, now on this side, now on that; said to himself he would be heartily glad of a good toss on the Atlantic, a spin through the States, and that, meantime, having nothing better to do, he would throw himself, heart and soul, into Miss Lucy Selwyn's affairs, which, just then, were presenting a series of complications.

In the short, murky November days that

were setting in, Phil might very often have been seen making his way to Grafton Street, and, it must be admitted, he never failed to receive the warmest of welcomes at Miss Selwyn's hands.

How Lucy came to be located there is easily explained.

Ellinor Yorke, true to her promise to Phil, on the day after her interview with him, called upon Miss Selwyn in her dreary boarding-school lodgings, introducing herself simply and easily enough.

"I knew Mr. Thorne," she said, in the softest and most mournful voice she had at command. "I also know Mr. Wickham intimately; he, in fact, told me how sad and lonely you were here, and asked me to call on you. Now, will you let me sit here and chat with you for half an hour?"

And Lucy, with wonder-opened eyes at the lady's beauty and sweetness of manner, her distinguished appearance, her costly dress—although all of sombre black, the Empress Eugénie might have worn it in the palmiest days of the Empire—could only murmur the humblest of thanks, the most gracious of assurances that Miss Yorke's great kindness was appreciated as it ought to be by her friendless, lonely little self.

The half-hour's chat, however, prolonged itself into a close and earnest talk for at least three times that period.

Long before it came to an end, Lucy had found her way to a footstool at Ellinor's feet, and with clasped hands and swimming eyes was reiterating incoherent thanks for Ellinor's generous and unconditional offer of a home for life, or for at least so long as she liked to accept it.

"I am very lonely at times," said Miss Yorke; "my mother and sister are out of England the greater part of the year.

For reasons best known to himself, my uncle, the only other near relative I have, declines my society; if you will come and share my loneliness, I shall be very much obliged to you. Just now I am staying with the funniest old couple in the world, but as they do not interfere with my movements in the slightest degree, it suits me very well for a time. If you can put up with a small room, and the occasional attendance of one of my maids, I shall be only too delighted if you will come to me at once—to-day, to-morrow, when you will."

So as Lucy on her part was "only too delighted" to accept Miss Yorke's offer, her small possessions were speedily packed, and on the next day, with their owner, were deposited safely at Lady Moulsey's door, much to that worthy lady's astonishment.

Ellinor certainly did not go out of her way to make the matter clear to the old lady, who from an upper window had beheld the arrival of Miss Selwyn and her boxes.

"It is a friend of mine," she said, not troubling herself to raise her voice to meet the exigencies of Lady Moulsey's dull hearing. "Don't you know you said the other day how dull I must be here, and didn't I know any young people who would come on a visit?"

Lady Moulsey put her least deaf ear forward as one who asked to have a question repeated. She was an old-fashioned, countrified-looking person of about sixty years of age. Her face was very much wrinkled; as though time's plough had gone over it frontways, corner-ways, backways, allways, till not an unfurrowed quarter of an inch remained; her eyes were small and sunken, as was her mouth also. She was much given to stiff, rustling silk dresses, which were Ellinor's detestation, and owned to a perennial harsh, loud cough, equally disliked by that fastidious young person.

Ellinor did not bend her head one hair's-breadth nearer to the old lady's ear. Her lips moved, it is true, slowly, as though she were saying something emphatically and distinctly.

Lady Moulsey shook her head.

"I must be getting deaf with my right ear as well as my left," she said with a sigh, and visions of an ear-trumpet, an instrument against which she had an altogether unaccountable prejudice, began to rise up in her mind. "My dear, I haven't heard one word you have said."

And no wonder! for the simple reason that Ellinor's lips had not uttered one word save in appearance.

"For where was the use," the young lady said to herself, "of straining one's voice for a deaf old lady of sixty, when a make-believe answer did equally well?"

She had fallen into this habit of make-believe answering on the second day of her arrival at Lady Moulsey's. She endeavoured to initiate Lucy into the practice on the second day of her coming to the house.

Lucy looked pained and perplexed. She shook her head:

"Don't ask me to do it," she said; "I would far sooner strain my voice till it cracked."

Tenderness to and consideration for old people and children were noticeable traits in Lucy's character. When Lady Moulsey came into a room, she would fetch her a footstool, an elbow-cushion, or anything she might seem to need.

"Fido," Ellinor would say with a little smile, "if I dropped my pocket-handkerchief, I'm sure you would run from the other corner of the room to pick it up for me!"

But for all that, Lucy's soft, unassuming ways were not displeasing to the self-engrossed beauty. They made a charming and effective contrast to her own haughty and semi-contemptuous treatment of the world around her; were, so to speak, a tender little bit of neutral tint and shadow which threw into yet more bold relief her own pronounced and vivid colouring.

The chances are that had Lucy Selwyn possessed one tithe of little Edie's spirit; her aptness for retort; her tempestuous temper; life with Ellinor would have been an impossibility to her, or, if not an impossibility, a very hard matter indeed. As it was, far from being a hard matter, it was easy, pleasant, and, next to the early days of Rodney's love-making, by far the brightest portion of the three-and-twenty years she had already lived. Hers was a grateful, tender little heart; Ellinor's ready, and, to her way of thinking, magnificent bounty had won her body, soul, and spirit at one throw. To the end of her life her gratitude would be due to this Lady Bountiful, she felt, and do what she would, she could never do enough.

She was never weary of admiring Ellinor's beauty, her grace, her artistic instincts, her exquisitely designed and well-arranged dresses. All that she needed of companionship, of society, it seemed to her in those early days of their acquaintanceship, Ellinor Yorke could supply; and when, as occasionally it chanced, Ellinor sat a mute and apparently a sympathetic

listener while Lucy descanted softly on the dead Rodney's virtues and altogether superior excellences, it seemed to the tender-hearted girl that Providence had indeed dealt bountifully with her in giving her so blessed a home, so gracious a friend.

As for Ellinor, the arrangement, temporarily at any rate, suited her remarkably well, and she accorded to Lucy the magnificent sort of patronage she would have accorded to a beggar-girl had it suited her convenience to consort with such a one. Lucy, in her heart, occupied a place somewhere midway between her two maids; possibly she stood a step higher than the light-fingered, somewhat loquacious French maiden who manipulated her laces so delicately; possibly a step lower than the sedate, thoughtful Gretchen, who answered her mistress's troublesome letters and arranged her equally troublesome accounts. It may, however, be doubted whether Lucy would have outweighed the beautiful roan Uncle Hugh had presented his niece with at the commencement of the year, and which had been sent to ducal stables to ensure his proper treatment during the winter months. Most assuredly she would not, had the scales been taken in hand at the commencement of the London season, when Ellinor stood equipped and ready to outshine every other fair equestrienne in the Row.

On the whole, then, to Ellinor's mind the arrangement was satisfactory. It forwarded sundry matters on which she was specially bent just then; in fact, without this arrangement she did not quite see how they could have been forwarded at all. Why a young woman of her temperament, who could have secured a coronet for herself with a little less trouble than it takes most women to purchase a new bonnet, should so unreservedly have sacrificed her ambition at love's shrine and have counted Phil Wickham's heart worthy the diplomacy and finesse of a Machiavelli, adds yet another to the mountain of "nuts to crack" which are piled in readiness for the psychological philosopher of the future. The fact remained, and Ellinor did not spend her brains questioning the why and wherefore of it. She only said to her heart: "There he stands with his heart of ice while you are beating, burning, tortured, as you never have been before for living man. Very good. Before he is many days older his heart shall beat, and burn, and agonise, and then perhaps you, poor thing, will get a little rest. We shall see."

A clever diplomatist prefers to work with unconscious instruments. One brain guides a game better than two or three.

Lucy proved herself the most unconscious and willing of tools in Ellinor's hands.

A few days after her arrival in Grafton Street, she made her way up to Ellinor's dressing-room with an open letter in her hand, about which she earnestly besought Miss Yorke's counsel. The letter was from the solicitors who were named as executors to Rodney's will, and stated that they were awaiting her instructions as to the payment of the legacy (one thousand pounds) bequeathed to her by the late Mr. Rodney Thorne. Also they were instructed to make her an offer, on behalf of their client, Mrs. Thorne, of Thorne Hall, of full money value for the furniture, jewellery, and personal property, likewise bequeathed to her by the aforesaid deceased gentleman. The said value to be assessed by Miss Selwyn, or any person or persons she might choose to appoint.

Lucy was ready to cry over this letter. It brought before her mind only too vividly the possible footing on which she might have stood towards Rodney's mother, and the actual hard, formal relation which subsisted between them.

"What shall I do? Please advise me," she besought Ellinor when she saw that the latter's eye had reached the last word on the page.

Ellinor shook her head.

"My advice would not be worth having," she answered slowly. "Whatever I advised you in such a matter would be sure to be wrong. Have you no sensible, clear-headed friend—a lawyer, or some man accustomed to being consulted about difficulties?"

Lucy brightened considerably. Her thoughts naturally turned to the only man in her life—save Rodney—she had ever consulted on any matter small or great.

"There is Mr. Wickham," she said, "but really I don't know whether I ought to trouble him so much with my affairs. I know him so slightly after all, although somehow I seem to have known him for years."

"I know him not slightly but intimately," said Ellinor, intently scrutinising meantime the pretty lace-drapery her maid was exhibiting for her inspection, "and I know that he is the last man in the world to make a trouble of so small a matter as the giving advice upon a lawyer's letter."

Lucy brightened still more.

"I will write to him this very morning, and ask him to tell me what I ought to do. Perhaps he will come round and talk the letter over with me. There is something I should very much like to say to him about—about——" "Rodney's will," she was going to say, but the words would not come, so she said: "About this letter."

So before night Phil received a note in Lucy's pretty feminine hand, enclosing the letter, and saying how glad and grateful she would be if, when he was passing Grafton Street, he would call in and give her a word of advice.

CHAPTER XXII

As might be imagined, Phil's answer to Lucy's note was to call on her immediately after breakfast on the following day. He had not been to Grafton Street since the night of his stormy interview with Ellinor about ten days previously. As he lifted the knocker, he wondered not a little whether Miss Yorke would choose to be present while he discussed business matters with Lucy, and, if so, how she would receive him.

He was shown into the same little morning-room as before, and there he found the two girls seated side by side on the sofa:

As he had felt confident would be the case, Ellinor neither by word nor look evinced the slightest embarrassment.

"Is it business—shall I go?" she asked, after shaking hands with Phil, and exchanging remarks about the frost that had set in, and what the hunting men in Berkshire would have to say to it.

"Oh, please—please, stay," implored Lucy; "you know everything so much better than I do. I am sure to say something silly and make myself ridiculous somehow, and you can tell me of it ever so much better than Mr. Wickham."

So Ellinor sat down again; the lawyer's letter was spread out before them, and the three went into committee upon it.

"Of course," said Phil with all the gravity and decision of his six-and-twenty years, "the first thing to be ascertained is your own wishes on the matter. No doubt you have already made up your mind what you would like done, Miss Selwyn."

"What I should like! Yes. But whether it is sensible and what ought to be done is another thing," answered Lucy hesitatingly, growing red and embarrassed as she spoke.

Then there followed a momentary pause.

Lucy evidently had something to say, and as evidently, not a little difficulty in saying it. She began and broke off, and began again, and stopped again.

"How would it be to let the thousand pounds remain as at present invested?" suggested Phil, anxious to help her out of her difficulty.

"Oh, it isn't the thousand pounds I'm thinking of; I don't care much what is done with that, one way or another," said Lucy vehemently, hurrying over her words as though afraid even to stop and take breath lest she might never get heart again to speak them. "It's just this, Mr. Wickham, that troubles me—that Rodney's mother should offer me money value for Rodney's things, which she knows must be beyond all price to me—all price in gold or silver, I mean—and yet, which I would give up to her in one minute if she would only come to me and hold out her hand in love and kindness."

Her words seemed to end almost in a sob.

Phil looked up at her with a little wonder and not a little admiration.

"I see—I begin to see; I didn't look at the matter in that light at first," he murmured.

"And why shouldn't Mrs. Thorne come to you and hold out her hand?" said Ellinor.

She asked the question honestly, wishing for a straightforward answer. It is true she had surmised possible reasons—she was too quick-witted not to have done so—for Mrs. Thorne's enmity to Lucy, but no one had told her whether or not her surmises were correct, and it had seemed to her, as she had thought over the matter, that Mrs. Thorne was showing an altogether unreasonable amount of personal dislike towards one whom circumstances had effectually prevented from inflicting any permanent injury upon her.

Phil echoed Ellinor's words, though not the tone in which she had uttered them.

"Why, indeed, should she not?" he said, darting a sudden angry look beneath his bent brows at Ellinor.

He felt it hard to keep his temper. All his old angry indignation against her rushed back upon him in full force. How dared she, beyond everyone else, sit there and ask such a question—she who, of right, should halve with Rodney the onus of his mad, desperate career? Why should justice be allowed to miscarry in this way, and this girl, so gentle and defenceless, have to bear the burthen of a deed the

had not done, while that other, the real culprit, went scot-free!

Ellinor caught his glance, read its meaning in a moment, and flung it back on him the next, with eyes that flashed and glowed by turns.

"Mrs. Thorne must surely be labouring under some mistake," she said, speaking slowly and distinctly, as though she were on a public platform. "Nothing but a mistake of some sort can account for her extraordinary conduct. You, who know her so intimately, Mr. Wickham, should make it a matter of duty to remove these misconceptions from her mind."

Phil felt bewildered. Was this a challenge, or did Miss Yorke's words mean something he was too stupid to understand?

"If Miss Selwyn commissioned me to such a duty, I would do it, although it might be with reluctance," he answered after a moment's pause.

Ellinor turned to Lucy.

"Lucy, don't you think Mr. Wickham would manage this matter admirably for you—far better than a paid lawyer, or any number of paid lawyers?" she asked, and now there was no mistaking the ring of defiance in her tone.

Lucy looked as she felt, thoroughly perplexed.

"I don't think I quite understand," she faltered. "If Mr. Wickham would go to Mrs. Thorne for me, and tell her exactly what I feel on the matter, I should be very, very grateful to him. You see, it is a thing I could not explain in a letter to a lawyer. How could I make him understand that the least of—of Rodney's things would be beyond price to me—a fishing-rod—a broken lead-pencil, even—but that—that I would give them every one to one who loved Rodney as I did, if—if only she would give me one little word of kindness."

Her voice grew weaker and weaker; there came a blinding rush of tears; she rose suddenly from her chair, and left the room.

Ellinor turned round and faced Phil as the door closed.

"Now that we are alone," she said, and her eyes flashed and burned once more, "you can say every word you have in your heart to say. Don't spare me, I beg of you."

"What I had to say I have said once and for all; there can be no need to repeat it," said Phil quietly.

"Then why do your eyes repeat what your lips see no occasion to utter?" queried Ellinor, her head thrown back, her face aglow. "Why do your eyes say to me, as they did a minute ago, 'This is your crime, not hers?' Do you suppose I am insensate and stupid, as well as heartless and cruel? Do you suppose, because I do not melt into tears every time Rodney's name is mentioned, and run out of the room, as that poor child did a minute ago, therefore I have forgotten the past, and the part I played in it?"

"I beg your pardon if I have wronged you, even in a look," was Phil's answer.

He was looking up wonderingly at her now. This was the woman he had declared had been sent into the world without a soul. Well, there was a something shining out of her eyes, curving her lips, colouring her cheeks, which, if not a soul, was an amazingly good imitation of one.

"I thank you for begging my pardon; you had wronged me. I told you I was penitent for the part I had played, and I was penitent—then. I am penitent now, in a different way, every hour of every day I live. I am sorry when I get up in the morning, sorry when I lie down to rest at night, sorry all the day long. Shall I tell you why—what for?"

She had risen now from the sofa on which she had been seated. Phil rose also, thinking it would possibly be better to bring the interview to a close. Ellinor's eyes, nearly on a level with his, seemed to search to their depths, and question, and doubt, and scorn him, all in a look.

She went on, her rich, full tones uttering as much scorn as her eyes.

"I am sorry—deeply, heartily, truly sorry every hour of every day I live, I say, because when I first met Rodney Thorne I did not put him out of my path as I would put any weak, troublesome, irritating animal—a barking dog, a mischievous kitten, a buzzing wasp. You pitied him, and laid his death to my charge. I bowed to your verdict, and you cut my heart and stabbed it, and made me think what a vile, heartless thing I must be. Now that you persist in casting my sin in my teeth, now that you would have it always before me, and have me for ever in the dust at your feet, I rebel against your verdict, I feel that you have wronged me far more than ever I wronged your weak, false friend. Let him be. No one could be his champion but one whose manhood was even less than his."

She gave Phil no chance for reply; as she finished speaking, with a slight bow to him, she left the room.

He stood for a few moments, silent and bewildered. Her words had seemed to amite him here, there, everywhere, like so many little winged darts of living flame. Somehow, as he had stood there listening to her, he had felt himself little more than a sounding-board to throw back her sentences as she uttered them, so sharp, so strong, so true they had seemed to him. He felt his friendship for Rodney dwindling, going, gone, his sympathy for Lucy growing less and less, under some new, strange undefinable feeling that appeared to have taken full possession of him.

What that feeling was he did not stop to ask himself. He shook himself together with an effort, found his hat, and made his way slowly out of the house.

Surely the genius of transformations must have been roaming free that morning. The Phil Wickham who came out of the house in Grafton Street, was not the Phil Wickham who had, so very shortly before, gone in.

COPTIC MONASTERIES IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

M. SONNINI's experience of Egyptian monasteries was not such as render a further residence among the Coptic monks particularly desirable.

He decided, however, to visit another monastery, namely, that of Zaidi Suriana, which proved less objectionable than that of Zaidi el Baramoos, both as regards situation and cleanliness. His praise of the latter quality, is, however, decidedly faint, as he can only say that the monks here were less filthy than those he had previously seen. This monastery had been previously occupied by Syrian monks, whose ancient church was still standing, and rather handsome, being adorned with sculptures and paintings in fresco. It was, however, not used by the Copts, who had built for themselves a cruciform church in their own style. Here the monks had managed to make and cultivate a small garden—an oasis in the desert, wherein flourished some date-palms, olive-trees, and one almond-tree.

In one of the courts was an immense tamarind-tree, which the Copts regarded as of miraculous growth. They told how a certain St. Ephraim left his staff at the

gate of a brother hermit, whom he had come to visit. Apparently the holy men must have become so much absorbed in their devout converse, as to forget the lapse of time, for the staff not only took root, but threw out branches, and in the course of time became a stately tree, providing a feathery canopy of verdure, and cooling fruits for these saints of the desert.

Having spent a night in this monastery, and lightened his purse of its few remaining pieces of silver, M. Sonnini resolved to steer clear of any other desert convents, and kept his resolution; though, in passing by one called Amba Bishoi, he found the monks waiting for him at the gate, to importune him to enter and see the miraculous body of their saint, which was still as fresh and florid as on the day of his death. They expressed great astonishment and regret at his lack of interest in so wonderful a sight, but he attributed their discontent solely to disappointment at the loss of prospective alms.

A fourth monastery, that of Amba Monguar, especially dedicated to the very holy St. Macarius, lay about a league to the right. Fortunate was it for the traveller that he had resolved to avoid its shelter, for on the following day he received positive information that the identical Bedouin tribe which had previously robbed him, and had restored their booty with so much regret, were lying in wait for him near its walls, with about a hundred men, who were fully determined not to let their prey escape on this occasion. Happily, by changing his route he threw out their calculations, and moreover learnt a lesson in the true hospitality of the desert, for his new escort (aware of all that had befallen him, and that he could not even pay for the hire of their camels till he should return to Cairo to replenish his purse) brought him to their own camp, there loaded him with kindness, and the sheik took from a chest in his own tent a small bag of money, and pressed its acceptance upon him. With some hesitation Sonnini agreed to the loan of a few coins, which his generous host would not even suffer him to reckon, and when, a few days later, he was in a position to repay the loan, he found that, unknown to him, a sheep and various provisions had, by order of this generous Bedouin, been placed on board of his boat.

He was also greatly touched, on his return to Cairo, by the cordial joy displayed by Hussein at his safe return from an expedi-

tion which he declared to have been one of considerable danger; indeed, a report had been circulated to the effect that all the party had been murdered. Having happily escaped this untoward fate, Sonnini soon afterwards started on extended travels in Egypt, of which he has left voluminous records, including interesting notes on the natural history of a country which, a hundred years ago, could not be explored without much risk.

To us, the most interesting details of his travels are the glimpses of life in the desert monasteries, where the letter has so strangely and pitifully survived the spirit which gave them birth. At the time when monasticism was most flourishing in this land—i.e., in the time of St. Pachomius—the Coptic monasteries of the natron region numbered about five thousand brethren. They are now reduced to about three hundred.

The Copts of the present day number about one hundred and fifty thousand—i.e., about one fourteenth of the population of Egypt. They are said to derive their name from the ancient city of Coptos, in Upper Egypt, which seems to have been a centre of the innumerable Christians who sought refuge in the wilderness from the wickedness which reigned triumphant in the great city of Alexandria, so that the dreary Lybian Desert was literally honey-combed with the cells of such anchorites as St. Anthony, while more sociable spirits banded themselves together to form monastic communities, such as that in which St. Athanasius sought refuge during the troublous times of the Arian heresy. Again and again, in the course of the forty-six years during which he held the high office of Primate of Alexandria, was the good archbishop driven from his diocese, and compelled to seek protection with the saints of the desert, ere the triumph of his party enabled him to return and end his days in peace, in the midst of his devoted flock.

Certainly, of all remarkable phases in the spread of the new faith, none has been more extraordinary than the sudden fever for the life monastic which at that time possessed all ranks and conditions of men in Egypt, and which then, for the first time, appeared in Christian history. Buddhism had long possessed great monasteries, where hundreds of thousands, both of men and women, devoted themselves to striving after religious perfection, and in Egypt itself, the sect of the

Therapeutæ had formed a monastic colony near Alexandria, on a hill overlooking Lake Mareotis, where they lived most rigorously ascetic lives, only allowing themselves three meals a week of bread and water, and on high festivals luxuriating on the addition of a moderate allowance of salt and water-cresses. It is not known whether this strange sect was composed of heathen philosophers or very corrupt Jews, but they met for public worship every seventh day, and observed holy days, or rather nights, when they danced solemnly to an accompaniment of sacred music till morning, when they worshipped with their faces turned to the rising sun, and then dispersed, each to his solitary hut.

Even among Egypt's heathen priests there were certain who had adopted a solitary life of self-denial. As an outward symbol they shaved their beards and the crown of the head, and it was doubtless for fear of too closely assimilating to these that St. Athanasius forbade his monks to adopt the tonsure, or shave their beards.

To which of these examples the Christian monks owe their origin remains unknown; but once the idea was started, it found favour with a vast multitude, in the sudden reaction of first awakening from a life of unspeakable corruption, such as reigned in Alexandria. So we find that in Memphis and Babylon (on the Nile) the whole population seem to have taken monastic vows, while they continued diligently to follow their agricultural pursuits. One great city, formerly sacred to the fish Oxyrinchus, became wholly monastic, and the great temples of heathendom were transformed into monasteries wherein twenty thousand nuns and ten thousand monks sought a refuge from the world's wickedness. Twelve new churches were built for Christian worship, but in many cases the old temples were adapted to Christian use by very slight transformation of the heathen decorations; as, for instance, at the temple of Assebona in Nubia, where the figure of St. Peter, with his keys, was painted over that of one of the gods, so that Rameses the Second was shown bringing offerings to the Christian apostle! In like manner were Isis and Horus, the "mother and son" of Egyptian mythology, recognised as meet images for Christian reverence—in fact, the figure of Isis standing on the crescent-moon is supposed to have first suggested this representation of the Virgin mother as Queen of Heaven.

One island near Thebes was occupied by

a monastic sect, rigorous as the Trappists of later days. Here lived three thousand silent monks, who had vowed never to open their lips, save in prayer. Each community had its own distinctive rules, allowing wide room for difference. Some borrowed customs from heathenism, and thus gave birth to sects of Gnostics, who combined the old magic rites and study of astrology with some Christian practice, while strangest of all so-called Christian sects were the Ophites, who, borrowing from the mysteries of Isis and Osiris, Bacchus and Ceres, actually combined the old worship of the serpent with Christian rites, keeping a live serpent in a covered chest on the altar, in order that at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist the serpent might come forth and pass over the consecrated loaves, in token that the sacrifice was accepted!

Such was the strangely fermenting mass of religious thought and energy seething both within and without the fold of the Coptic Church within a comparatively short period of those early days when St. Mark himself ministered at a Christian shrine in Alexandria, and was thence dragged to the great Temple of Serapis, and offered life and pardon if he would but burn one little handful of incense to the gods. When his persecutors found that they could nowise shake the loyalty of the brave follower of Christ, they dragged him to the Bucelus, the State prison by the sea, and there left him till morning, when they returned to drag him about the city till merciful death ended his sufferings. But in the night, One had appeared to him in a glorious vision, bidding him be of good cheer, because his name was written in the Book of Life. When his foes had finished their work, faithful friends came to reclaim the loved body of their master, which they burnt with all honour, and of which they sent the ashes to be safely treasured at Venice.

Then followed times of trial and times of peace—days when the pagans persecuted the Christians, and more grievous times of retaliation, when the Christians in their turn became persecutors, as when Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, besieged and pillaged the Temple of Serapis, and proved so avaricious that the people would no longer call him "Lover of God," but Chrysolater, "the Worshipper of Gold." More evil still were the days when the bigotry and intolerance of Bishop Cyril made the name of Christian hateful to the heathen, and when bands of cruel and ignorant

monks, establishing themselves in the Temple of Serapis, sallied forth thence to plunder the wealthy Jews, and to disgrace the name they bore by such scenes of riot and bloodshed as that which resulted in the murder of the beautiful heathen maiden Hypatia.

Happily, on the other hand, from time to time, such men appeared as St. Anthony, who now and again travelled from his cell in Upper Egypt to cheer and comfort his brethren, when these were compelled to conceal themselves in the mines and caves round Alexandria, or to cheer the captives in their dungeons, and stand by the martyrs even in their last agonies. Even the heathen venerated a man of such renowned sanctity—so meek and humble, and withal so learned. So when he came to confound the teaching of the Arians, the pagans of Alexandria flocked to hear his eloquence.

Many a saintly name gleams, gem-like, from these pages of Church history. Nevertheless, gross darkness gradually overshadowed the scene, till at length, torn by violent disputes between the Arians and the Athanasians, and broken up into innumerable sects and parties, the Christians waxed weaker and weaker, till, in 1354, the conquering Arabs overran the land, and the persuasive influence of the sword won multitudinous followers for the green flag of Islam. Thus the Crescent triumphed over the Cross, Mahomedanism became the professed creed of the majority, and the Copts sank lower and lower in the scale, till they reached a condition of extreme degradation.

For a long period, both Copts and Jews were subject to various social disabilities. They were forbidden to ride either horse or mule, and if they chose to ride an ass, they might do so only on condition of facing the tail! They were subject to exorbitant taxation, and, as marks of their degradation, were compelled to wear black turbans, a cross weighing five pounds suspended from the neck, and, if they entered a public bath, must carry a bell, to give notice of their obnoxious presence.

Nowadays their social position is very much like that of their neighbours, and their singular talent for calculation leads to their being very generally employed in houses of business. In Cairo we noticed a voluntary mark of distinction on most of the Coptic houses, namely, an aloë-plant suspended above the door, and in some cases a small stuffed crocodile. These,

we were told, were charms to guard against the evil eye.

The supreme head of the Coptic Church is the Patriarch of Alexandria, who, however, lives at Cairo. He claims direct apostolic succession from St. Mark, the founder of the Egyptian Church, who is claimed as having been the first patriarch, and who is held in the same reverence as is accorded by the Western Church to St. Peter.

The other Coptic ecclesiastical orders are bishops, arch-priests, priests, deacons, and monks. The priests are all expected to marry, but the patriarch must be a celibate. He is invariably chosen, either by his predecessor, or else by lot, from among the monks of the convent of St. Anthony. There are twelve Coptic bishops, and the patriarch nominates the metropolitan of Abyssinia.

Though the Copts are remarkable for their general detestation of all other Christian sects, their principal tenets assimilate with those of the Latin Church. They acknowledge seven sacraments, enjoy auricular confession, and extreme unction. The latter is administered not only to persons at the point of death, but to penitents who have done meet penance after the commission of grievous sin. Evil spirits are exorcised "with candle, with book, and with bell." In celebrating the Holy Eucharist leavened bread is used, which has previously been dipped in wine. The Copts are most rigorous in their observance of fast days. Besides every Wednesday and Friday in the year, the Lenten fast is prolonged to fifty-five days, during which no manner of animal food is allowed—not even eggs, milk, or cheese. Some rites, however, appear to be borrowed either from their Moslem or Jewish neighbours. Thus, circumcision is deemed essential, in addition to baptism by immersion.

The frequent services of the Coptic Church are conducted in modern Coptic, that is to say, in Greek Coptic, which, although not spoken by the monks, is understood by them all. But the true Coptic, the language of the Pharaohs, is literally a dead tongue. Father Vansteb, who visited Siout in 1763, states that he there had the privilege of seeing the last Copt who understood his own language, and with whom it was to die. Being eighty years old, and very deaf, he was not able to give his visitor much useful information. Some portions of the service, such as the

Gospel, are first read in Coptic and then explained in Arabic, in order that it may be understood by the people.

Naturally, the lives of the saints occupy a large place in Coptic literature, and the place of highest honour next to the Blessed Virgin and St. Mark, is accorded to St. George—whether to the real St. George, England's patron saint, or to that evil George, also born in Cappadocia, who headed the Arian heresy in Alexandria, and from time to time succeeded St. Athanasius in the archbishopric, is not clear. As others, besides Gibbon the historian, have confused these two, it may not be out of place to glance at their respective histories, and as England's St. George was the first martyr in the persecution of Diocletian, and canonised sixty years before him who should rather be known as "the ex-contractor of Cappadocia," we will glance first at his history.

When only twenty years of age, he was summoned as a military tribune to a Council called by the Emperor to decide how most effectually to crush the Christians. Already the young noble had secretly joined the despised sect of the Nazarenes, and now, in the very presence of the cruel Emperor, he acknowledged his faith, and pleaded for the persecuted people. Wonder filled all present, as they looked on the inspired beauty of that young face, but no pity could stay the cruel tortures to which he was subjected. Nevertheless, he was miraculously preserved through all, and there followed signs and wonders which led to the conversion of many.

Finally, he was beheaded; but even after death, he reappeared to encourage warriors, as when, during the Crusades, he appeared to Cœur de Lion and Godfrey de Bouillon, and so acquired his immortal fame as the patron of chivalry. So, very quickly, the legend took form which materialised his conflicts with spiritual foes, and transformed them into the Dragon of the Lybian Desert—so quickly, indeed, that the Emperor Constantine had a painting of St. George and the Dragon on the porch of his palace at Constantinople, within a very short period of his death, and also dedicated a church, near the sea, to his honour.

About the time of his martyrdom, there was born that other George, whom Gibbon has identified with England's patron saint, and who, he states, was employed on the commissariat, where he contrived to enrich

himself considerably at the expense of the army. On his becoming a convert to Arianism, he seems to have tried "feeding the flock" in another sense, but with equal advantage to himself, for, having been raised to the archiepiscopate by Constantius, he speedily became noted for the frightful cruelty with which he persecuted the Athanasians—pillaging their houses, burning their churches, torturing and killing without mercy. Men were scourged to death, and women who refused to communicate at the Arian altar were also stripped and scourged; the consecrated elements were forced into their mouths, and they were beaten on the face till none could recognise them. Such was the gentle shepherd of the flock who, happily, was at last deposed and imprisoned by the Emperor Julian, and the people—Christians and pagans alike thirsting for vengeance—broke open the prison doors and murdered the vile Archbishop, whose body they dragged triumphantly through the city, and cast into the sea. The Arians, of course, pronounced this righteous retribution to be a "martyrdom"; so they canonised their bad patriarch, and he has ever since contrived to absorb much of the reverence due to the true saint.

Which of the two is revered by the Copts I cannot say. But I know that we were much interested when visiting a very ancient Greek church in Cairo, dedicated to St. George, by watching a sisterhood of Latin nuns, who, like ourselves, were doing a little sight-seeing. They were of very varied nationality, ranging from pure negro to very fair Maltese, and the kind old priests did the honours of the saint with charming courtesy, even producing his veritable head for inspection. Most of the sisters kissed it reverently; but one quietly whispered to me that it could not possibly be his head, as the head of the true saint—decapitated by order of Diocletian—was hopelessly lost, and no one could tell where it was.

So we left the very interesting old church, with the precious though dubious head, and drove through old Cairo till we reached a Coptic church, more than a thousand years old, built over a cave where the Holy Family rested on their flight into Egypt. It was indescribably dirty and dreary, and the old priest and his wife and little daughter were all in harmony with the church, and seemed to us strangely typical of the decaying Coptic Church of Egypt.

TURNING AIR INTO WATER.

It has not yet been done; but the following telegrams, received on the 9th and 16th of April, 1883, from Cracow, by the Paris Academy of Sciences, show that chemists have come very near doing it. "Oxygen completely liquefied; the liquid colourless like carbonic acid." "Nitrogen liquefied by explosion; liquid colourless." Thus the two elements that make up atmospheric air have actually been liquefied, the successful operator being a Pole, Wroblewski, who had worked in the laboratory of the French chemist, Cailletet, learnt his processes, copied his apparatus, and then, while Cailletet, who owns a great iron-foundry down in Burgundy, was looking after his furnaces, went off to Poland, and quietly finished what his master had for years been trying after. Hence heart-burnings, of which more anon, when we have followed the chase up to the point where Cailletet took it up. I use this hunting metaphor, for the liquefaction of gases has been for modern chemists a continual chase, as exciting as the search for the philosopher's stone was to the old alchemists.

Less than two hundred and fifty years ago, no one knew anything about gas of any kind. Pascal was among the first who guessed that air was "matter" like other things, and therefore pressed on the earth's surface with a weight proportioned to its height. Torricelli had made a similar guess two years before, in 1645. But Pascal proved that these guesses were true by carrying a barometer to the top of the Puy de Dôme near Clermont. Three years after, Otto von Guericke invented the air-pump, and showed at Magdeburg his grand experiment—eight horses pulling each way, unable to detach the two hemispheres of a big globe out of which the air had been pumped. Then Mariotte in France, and Boyle in England, formulated the "Law," which the French call Mariotte's, the English Boyle's, that gases are compressible, and that their bulk diminishes in proportion to the pressure. But electricity with its wonders threw pneumatics into the background; and, till Faraday, nothing was done in the way of verifying Boyle's Law except by Van Marum, a Haarlem chemist, who, happening to try whether the Law applied to gaseous ammonia, was astonished to find that under a pressure of six atmospheres that gas was suddenly changed into a colourless liquid. On Van

Marum's experiment Lavoisier based his famous generalisation that all bodies will take any of the three forms, solid, fluid, gaseous, according to the temperature to which they are subjected—i.e., that the densest rock is only a solidified vapour, and the lightest gas only a vaporised solid. Nothing came of it, however, till that wonderful bookbinder's apprentice, Faraday, happened to read Mrs. Marcet's Conversations while he was stitching it for binding, and thereby had his mind opened; and, managing to hear some of Sir H. Davy's lectures, wrote such a good digest of them, accompanied by such a touching letter—"Do free me from a trade that I hate, and let me be your bottle-washer"—that the good-hearted Cornishman took the poor blacksmith's son, then twenty-one years old, after eight years of book-stitching, and made him his assistant, "keeping him in his place," nevertheless, which, for an assistant in those days, meant feeding with the servants, except by special invitation.

This was in 1823, and next year Faraday had liquefied chlorine, and soon did the same for a dozen more gases, among them protoxide of nitrogen, to liquefy which, at a temperature of fifty degrees Fahrenheit, was needed a pressure of sixty atmospheres—sixty times the pressure of the air—i.e., nine hundred pounds on every square inch. Why, the strongest boilers, with all their thickness of iron, their rivets, their careful hammering of every plate to guard against weak places, are only calculated to stand about ten atmospheres; no wonder then that Faraday, with nothing but thick glass tubes, had thirteen explosions, and that a fellow-experimenter was killed while repeating one of his experiments. However, he gave out his "Law," that any gas may be liquefied if you put pressure enough on it. That "if" would have left matters much where they were had not Bussy, in 1824, argued: "Liquid is the middle state between gaseous and solid. Cold turns liquids into solids; therefore, probably cold will turn gases into liquids." He proved this for sulphurous acid, by simply plunging a bottle of it in salt and ice; and it is by combining the two, cold and pressure, that all subsequent results have been attained. How to produce cold, then, became the problem; and one way is by making steam. You cannot get steam without borrowing heat from something. Water boils at two hundred and twelve degrees Fahrenheit, and then you may go on heating and heating till one thousand

degrees more heat have been absorbed before steam is formed. The thermometer, meanwhile, never rises above two hundred and twelve degrees, all this extra heat becoming what is called latent, and is probably employed in keeping asunder the particles which when closer together form water. The greater the expansive force, the more heat becomes latent or used up in this way. This explains the paradox that, while the steam from a kettle-spout scalds you, you may put your hand with impunity into the jet discharged from a high-pressure engine. The high-pressure steam, expanding rapidly when it gets out of confinement, uses up all its heat (makes it all "latent") in keeping its particles distinct. It is the same with all other vapours: in expanding they absorb heat, and, therefore, produce cold; and, therefore, as many substances turn into steam at far lower temperatures than water does, this principle of "latent heat," invented by Black, and, after long rejection, accepted by chemists, has been very helpful in the liquefying of gases by producing cold.

The simplest ice-machine is a hermetically-sealed bottle connected with an air-pump. Exhaust the air, and the water begins to boil and to grow cold. As the air is drawn off, the water begins to freeze; and if—by an ingenious device—the steam that it generates is absorbed into a reservoir of sulphuric acid, or any other substance which has a great affinity for watery vapour, a good quantity of ice is obtained. This is the practical use of liquefying gases; naturally, they all boil at temperatures much below that of the air, in which they exist in the vaporised state that follows after boiling. Take, therefore, your liquefied gas; let it boil and give off its steam. This steam, absorbing by its expansion all the surrounding heat, may be used to make ice, to cool beer-cellars, to keep meat fresh all the way from New Zealand, or—as has been largely done at Suez—to cool the air in tropical countries. Put pressure enough on your gas to turn it into a liquid state, at the same time carrying away by a stream of water the heat that it gives off in liquefying. Let this liquid gas into a "refrigerator," where it boils and steams, and draws out the heat; and then by a sucking-pump drive it again into the compressor, and let the same process go on ad infinitum, no fresh material being needed, nothing, in fact, but the working of the pump. Sulphurous acid is

a favourite gas, ammonia is another ; and—besides the above practical uses—they have been employed in a number of startling experiments.

Perhaps the strangest of these is getting a bar of ice out of a red-hot platinum crucible. The object of using platinum is simply to resist the intense heat of the furnace in which the crucible is placed. Pour in sulphurous acid and then fill up with water. The cold raised by vaporising the acid is so intense that the water will freeze into a solid mass. Indeed, the temperature sometimes goes down to more than eighty degrees below freezing. A still more striking experiment is that resulting from the liquefying of nitrous oxide—protoxide of nitrogen, or laughing-gas. This gas needs, as was said, great pressure to liquefy it at an ordinary temperature. At freezing-point only a pressure of thirty atmospheres is needed to liquefy it. It then boils if exposed to the air, radiating cold—or, rather, absorbing heat—till it falls to a temperature low enough to freeze mercury. But it still, wonderful to say, retains the property which, alone of all the gases, it shares with oxygen—of increasing combustion. A match that is almost extinguished burns up again quite brightly when thrust into a bag of ordinary laughing-gas ; while a bit of charcoal, with scarcely a spark left in it, glows to the intensest white heat when brought in contact with this same gas in its liquid form, so that you have the charcoal at, say, two thousand degrees Fahrenheit, and the gas at some one hundred and fifty degrees below zero. Carbonic acid gas is just the opposite of nitrous oxide, in that it quenches fire and destroys life ; but, when liquefied, it develops a like intense cold. Liquefy it and collect it under pressure, in strong cast-iron vessels, and then suddenly open a tap and allow the vapour to escape. In expanding, it grows so cold—or, strictly speaking, absorbs, makes latent, so much heat—that it produces a temperature low enough to turn it into fog and then into frozen fog, or snow. This snow can be gathered in iron vessels, and mixed with ether it forms the strongest freezing mixture known, turning mercury into something like lead, so that you can beat the frozen metal with wooden mallets and can mould it into medals and such-like.

Amid these and such-like curious experiments, we must not forget the "Law," that the state of a substance depends on its temperature—solid when it is frozen hard

enough, liquid under sufficient pressure, gaseous when free from pressure and at a sufficiently high temperature. But though first Faraday, and then the various inventors of refrigerating-machines—Carré, Tellier, Natterer, Thilorier—succeeded in liquefying so many gases, hydrogen and the two elements of the atmosphere resisted all efforts. By plunging oxygen in the sea, to the depth of a league, it was subjected to a pressure of four hundred atmospheres, but there was no sign of liquefaction. Again, Berthelot fastened a tube, strong and very narrow, and full of air, to a bulb filled with mercury. The mercury was heated until its expansion subjected the air to a pressure of seven hundred and eighty atmospheres—all that the glass could stand—but the air remained unchanged. Cailletet managed to get one thousand pressures by pumping mercury down a long, flexible steel tube upon a very strong vessel, full of air ; but nothing came of it, except the bursting of the vessel, nor was there any more satisfactory result in the case of hydrogen.

One result, at any rate, was established—that there is no law of compression like that named after Boyle or Mariotte, but that every gas behaves in a way of its own, without reference to any of the others, each having its own "critical point" of temperature, at which, under a certain pressure, it is neither liquid nor gaseous, but on the border-land between the two, and will remain in this condition so long as the temperature remains the same. Hence, air being just in this state of gaseo-liquid, the first step towards liquefying it must be to lower its temperature, and so get rid of its vapour by increasing its density. The plan adopted, both by Cailletet in Paris, and by Raoul Pictet (heir of a great scientific name) in Geneva, was to lower the temperature by letting off high-pressure steam. This had been so successful in the case of carbonic acid gas as to turn the vapour into snow ; and in 1877 Cailletet pumped oxygen into a glass tube, until the pressure was equal to three hundred atmospheres. He then cooled it to four degrees Fahrenheit below zero, and, opening a valve, let out a jet of gaseous vapour, which, while expanding, caused intense cold, lowering the temperature some three hundred degrees, and turning the jet of vapour into fog. Here, then, was a partial liquefaction, and the same was effected in the case of nitrogen. Pictet

did much the same thing. Having set up at Geneva a great ice-works (his refrigerating agency being sulphurous acid in a boiling state), he had all the necessary apparatus, and was able to subject oxygen to a pressure of three hundred and twenty atmospheres, and by means of carbonic acid boiling in vacuo, to cool the vessel containing it down to more than two hundred degrees Fahrenheit below zero. He could not watch the condition in which the gas was; but it was probably liquefied, for, when a valve was suddenly opened, it began to bubble furiously, and rushed out in the form of steam. Pictet thought he had also succeeded in liquefying hydrogen, the foggy vapour of the jet being of a steely grey colour; for hydrogen has long been suspected to be a metal, of which water is an oxide, and hydrochloric acid a chloride. Nay, some solid fragments came out with the jet of vapour, and fell like small shot on the floor, and at first the sanguine experimenter thought he had actually solidified the lightest of all known substances. This, however, was a mistake; it was some portion of his apparatus which had got melted. Neither had the liquefaction of oxygen or nitrogen been actually witnessed, though the result had been seen in the jet of foggy vapour.

Cailletet was on the point of trying his experiment over again in vacuo, so as to get a lower temperature, when the telegrams from Wroblewski showed that the Pole had got the start of him. Along with a colleague, Obazewski, Cailletet's disloyal pupil set ethylene boiling in vacuo, and so brought the temperature down to two hundred and seventy degrees Fahrenheit below zero. This was the lowest point yet reached, and it was enough to turn oxygen into a liquid a little less dense than water, having its "critical point" at about one hundred and sixty-eight degrees Fahrenheit below zero. A few days after, nitrogen was liquefied by the same pair of experimenters, under greater atmospheric pressure at a somewhat higher temperature.

The next thing is to naturally ask: What is the use of all this? That remains to be proved. The most unlikely chemical truths have often brought about immense practical results. All that we can as yet say is, that there is now no exception to the law that matter of all kinds is capable of taking the three forms, solid, aqueous, gaseous.

The French savans are not content with saying this. They are very indignant at

Wroblewski stealing Cailletet's crown just as it was going to be placed on the Frenchman's head. It was sharp practice, for all that a scientific discoverer has to look to is the fame which he wins among men. The Academy took no notice of the interloping Poles, but awarded to Cailletet the Lacaze Prize, their secretary, M. Dumas, then lying sick at Cannes, expressing their opinion in the last letter he ever wrote. "It is Cailletet's apparatus," says M. Dumas, "which enabled the others to do what he was on the point of accomplishing. He, therefore, deserves the credit of invention; the others are merely clever and successful manipulators. What has been done is a great fact in the history of science, and it will link the name of Cailletet with those of Lavoisier and Faraday." So far M. Dumas, who might, one fancies, have said something for Pictet, only a fortnight behind Cailletet in the experiment which practically liquefied oxygen. His case is quite different from Wroblewski's, for he and Cailletet had been working quite independently, just as Leverrier and Adams had been when both discovered the new planet Neptune. Such coincidences so often happen when the minds of men are turned to the same subject. Well, the scientific world is satisfied now that the elements of air can be liquefied; but I want to see the air itself liquefied, as what it is—a mechanical, not a chemical compound. For from such liquefaction one foresees a great many useful results. You might carry your air about with you to the bottom of mines or up in balloons; you might even, perhaps, store up enough by-and-by to last for a voyage to the moon.

GIVING IN MARRIAGE.

COME, let us sit together for a space,
In this still room remote from friendly mirth,
Afar from light and music, face to face,
Each unto each the dearest thing on earth.
Love, they have left us, our two bonny brides,
Our tall grave girl, our winsome laughing pet;
Ah me! How wide the chasm that divides
Our life from theirs; how far their feet are set
From the calm path they trod with us so long.
How we shall miss them, we who loved them so,
On winter nights when winds are blowing strong,
On summer mornings, when the roses blow.
But—happy but—we still clasp hand in hand,
Eye still meets eye, and true hearts understand.

Love, they have left us empty of the mirth
That cheered our homestead while they sojourned
here;
Yea, they have left us lonely on the earth,
Lone, but together, solitude most dear;
Ah, God, go with them to the stranger-nests,
That love has built for them and theirs to come,
God keep all warm and living in their breasts
Love's holy flame, the altar-fire of home.

Dear, they have left us ; we no longer hold
 The first, best place, however leal each heart,
 Yet have we treasure left, refined gold,
 Love's starling ore, without its baser part.
 The wide old house has lost its nestling birds,
 But we are left. Ah, love, what need of words !

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

NORFOLK.

IN Norfolk nothing is strongly accentuated. No striking features present themselves in its scenery or in its history. At first sight what is more dull and uninteresting than this wide, flat country with its margin of low, sandy coast ? And its records, dozens of volumes full of the chronicles of manors, with a notice here and there how some Brown, of Topthorpe, assumed an augmentation of his coat in the year of grace one thousand odd !

And yet a small acquaintance with the country will disclose a certain charm and attraction peculiar to itself. The coast—with its low, sandy bluffs, protecting little fishing-villages that crouch beneath ; with its wide-stretching dunes, or denes, according to local parlance ; with its lonely lighthouses looking over the less lonely sea—has a fine sea-salt flavour about it even where most dreary and bare. There is no hard and fast line between land and water. Broad rivers with placid even flow and bordered by reeds and bulrushes ; sippy lands and marshy pastures, that a high spring-tide will turn into a lake again ; the broad, with its shivering margin of feathery growths and its placid, mirror-like surface within—everything seems of the water, watery. The sky has a gleam in it as of water, with strange plays of colour from the scudding sea-drift ; white sails dart and gleam among the dank marshes, and we feel that the wild northern sea has still a hold of us, far away as it may lurk beyond the low, watery horizon. But there is a shore to this watery land, lines of low hills, with trees scattered along the ridge, and yellow cornstacks that glisten in the tempered sunshine. Then we come upon snatches of river scenes of more inland aspect, bits of " Old Crome " in quiet reaches, with mills and homesteads clustered under the shelter of fine old trees. And then, perhaps, we come to a deep, loamy country shut up among trees and hedgerows, with damp, shaded highways running between long park-palings, where innumerable wood-pigeons whirr among the trees, and half-eaten turnips lie unconsidered by the road-

side, denoting that this is a land of plenty for all kinds of beasts and fowls. Here the free-spoken hardy sea and river folk are no longer seen, and instead we have the old huckster-woman with her cart and donkey, and her red handkerchief tied round her bonnet ; or the pig-jobber rattling by in his market cart, or the half-gipsy horse-dealer with a string of young colts.

Then there is the little town with its open space, half market-place and half village-green ; the church looking on from its thickly peopled graveyard—a church with a quaint old Tudor porch, and within the stiff effigies of long-forgotten worthies in ruffs and scarlet gowns ; and standing back among trees and shrubs are the comfortable red-brick houses of the ruling society of the place, while the town finally dies away into the country again in rows of mud and plaster cottages, with here and there some fantastic abode in which the eccentric genius of its proud proprietor has found vent.

The eccentricity and character which mark the inland-dwelling people of Norfolk, with a humour shy and evanescent that can hardly be rendered in words, are very much due, no doubt, to the isolated nature of the East Anglian land, which seems never to have forgotten its once independent existence, and has preserved its feudal constitution and ancient usages with faithful tenacity.

It is strange outside the gateway of some half-feudal castle to hear the boys crying out " Larges, larges ! " as they importune the passing stranger, exactly as if they were part of the crowd that had just broken up from some tournament. And there is a certain magniloquence of diction often to be noticed among the people. A thunder-storm they call a tempest, and the smallest patch of level ground is dubbed a plain. The birds, too, have their own peculiar names in Norfolk. The barley-bird is the nightingale, because it comes, or used to come, at the time of barley-sowing. The bloodolph is the bullfinch, the caddaw the jackdaw. The bittern is known as the bottlebump, and the thrush bears the more poetic name of mavish. The goldfinch, again, is known as King Harry redcap ; and the blackcap bears the same royal title with its characteristic difference. The chaffinch, too, is known as the spink, while the March-bird is not the sea-blue bird of the poet, but the common frog, whose most emphatic notes are heard during that month.

Then, in addition to his local phrases, the Norfolk peasant has a certain thickness of utterance, as if the tongue were too large for the mouth, so that his speech is often difficult of comprehension by a stranger. But he is generally kind and courteous, with a natural unstudied politeness which makes a stranger an object of interest and good-will. Ethnologically, our Norfolk man is rather puzzling. He ought to be an example of pure Scandinavian blood—a mixture, that is, of Anglian and Danish—blue-eyed, light-haired, tall, and lithe; like the Angles, who were called Angels in the Roman market-place. And, no doubt, here and there you may find such a type; but a more prevailing one, in many parts, is that of a dark-complexioned people, rather small in stature, dark and hairy, with black locks naturally curled and wavy.

Likely enough the wide seaboard and exposed coast of East Anglia, which seemed to invite invasion, have been the means of preserving the ancient settlers on the land through the stress of subsequent invasions and conquests. Hardy colonists from the north had settled upon the sandy shores of the inlets and fiords, scarcely yet abandoned by the waves, uninviting to any but the true children of the sea; had settled there in friendly guise, while still the stern rule of Rome kept order through the land. The amicable relations that existed between the cultivators of the soil and the seafaring settlers on the coast, seem to have softened the horrors of the subsequent Anglo-Saxon invasion, seeing that these came rather among kinsmen than among foes. There is strong reason, too, for believing that, as the Roman rulers found the village system, such as it existed among all the settled races in the land, an excellent fiscal organisation, and left it untouched, so also the Angles and Saxons were often satisfied with becoming the lords and masters of the village communities, and left the actual cultivators of the soil to labour for the benefit of their conquerors. And the Norman, coming after, with his manorial system and its belongings, changed the name of the community without vitally altering its constitution.

Thus, perhaps, it happened that East Anglia was never very strong under the rule of its petty kings; it had more cultivators than fighting-men, and became successively the prey to stronger powers. Then came the Danes and wrought their will over the whole country, so says the

Saxon chronicle. But here again it is not quite certain that the Danes did not find many kinsmen and adherents among the actual inhabitants of the land. The whole coast population seems cheerfully to have joined with the Danes in an attack by sea upon Exeter, and the East Anglian may have considered the Western man—and the prejudice has continued to quite recent times—more of a foe than the Dane.

The isolation of East Anglia appears also in its religious history. It was not from Canterbury that Christianity came to it, but from Burgundy, whence came Felix with his band of missionary monks, or earlier still, perhaps, from Ireland and the primitive Celtic Church. It was these Irish missionaries, perhaps, who brought with them the way of building the strange round towers which are scattered here and there along the coast. Others again ascribe the round towers to the Danes, and point to the fact that the towers are generally in the vicinity of old Danish settlements.

In churches of all the different eras of Gothic architecture, Norfolk is particularly rich, and, before the Reformation, the county was thickly studded with priories. Almost equal in popular estimation to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket at Canterbury, was that of Our Lady of Walsingham. And the devout pilgrim could hardly boast himself an accomplished palmer, unless he had visited these two great English shrines, as well as the tomb of St. James, at Campostella, in Spain.

"I have heard of Saynt Iames," says Erasmus, in an old English translation of his *Peregrinations*, "but I pray you describe to me the Kyngdome of Walsyngham." "At the uttermost part of all England," is the reply. And the description is not far from accurate at the present day, for Walsingham is a long way from everywhere, and a pilgrimage there involves a considerable sacrifice of time. But in the old days when pilgrims travelled mostly afoot, there was a continual stream of them. From the south they came through Newmarket, Brandon, and Fakenham, by a track still known as the *Palmer's Way*. From the north and the fen country the track crossed the Wash by Long Sutton, and passed through Lynn, where a beautiful lady chapel, with elaborate groined roof, is said to have been built of the benefactions of pilgrims. Another great road led through Norwich and Attlebridge, by *Bec Hospital*, where lodging for thirteen poor pilgrims was ready every night.

There is little to show of the once famous temple of Walsingham. A ruined chancel arch, a gateway, and some fragmentary cloisters are all that remain of the grand church which fell into ruin ere it was completely finished. Erasmus, just before the Reformation, found the church still in progress, the windows yet unglazed and the cold wind sweeping through the newly-built aisles. But the grand church was the outer casket only; the original shrine was contained in a little wooden chapel within the church, "on eyther syde a lyttle door where the pilgrims goe through," and within was the image of Our Lady, and the shrine all blazing with gold and jewels of richness most marvellous; and everything sparkling to the bewildered gaze in the light of innumerable twinkling tapers, while the fumes of fragrant incense added to the half-intoxication of the scene. Outside was another little chapel full of marvels, and, before the chapel, a little house, where there was a couple of pits, both full of water to the brim. The wells still remain pure and cold through all these changes, and these are the famous wishing-wells of Walsingham, that probably were the first objects of pilgrimage long before even the faith of Christ was known in the land.

But while Walsingham is far to seek, it lies within the richest, pleasantest part of Norfolk, the little river Stiffkey—how can we give a river such a barbarous name!—running through a pleasant wooded vale; and there is the ruined hall of Stiffkey, built by Sir Nicholas Bacon, to bound the vista. Holkham, too, is close by, the proud desmeane of the Cokes, clever lawyers, mighty cattle-breeders, great farmers; and Burnham Thorpe, in whose rectory-house was born the great English sea-captain, Horatio Nelson. All this coast, indeed, is redolent with memories of great sea-captains. Sir John Narford, Sir Christopher Mynnes, Sir Cloudeley Shovel, Lord Hawke—all these, and many others, were Norfolk men.

Then there is Cley, once a haven on the coast, but now some little distance inland, for the sea is receding on this northern shore of Norfolk. Cley was a haven of refuge in the year 1406, when a storm-tossed galley put in there—a galley filled with people of quality, whom the stout fisherfolk of Cley would not suffer to depart when the storm abated. The young prince of Scotland proved to be one of the captives—the poet prince, whose muse had surely never found

expression but for the seclusion of the long captivity that he owed to these men of Cley. A sturdy, somewhat combative race are the fishermen all along this dangerous coast, as at Sherringham, a fishing-village, whose men have a time-honoured feud with the fishermen of Yarmouth.

More to the west, where the coast takes a deep indent, and where the people of Hunstanton, from their red cliffs, can watch the setting sun sinking into the waves, the sea has retreated still farther, partly moved thereto by the dykes and banks that have been raised by acquisitive humanity. Thus there is Castle Rising, under whose walls once the royal navy of a remote period might have been moored, while now the great lonely Norman keep looks out over marshes and pastures to the long, high sea-line. As the old rhyme says:

Rising was a market town
When Lynn was but a barren down.

But Lynn, for a parvenu town, has an air of very respectable antiquity, rather Dutch in its quaint mixture of ships and houses, and with the stir of modern progress in the midst of much that has an antique flavour, such as the fine old priory church of St. Margaret's, with its twin towers. As the key of East Anglia on the north, and guarding the passes to the fens, Lynn has always had a certain importance, and acquired the royal patronage and its royal title in consequence. From Lynn King John set out on his perilous and disastrous march across the Wash, and the stern-faced men who set out from Lynn with Eugene Aram, in Hood's poem, had all the mists and floods of the fen country before them on their melancholy march to the north country.

And here we are not far from the Walpole country, that stiff and stately Houghton, which the great minister—notorious, perhaps, rather than great—raised in his pride, to worthy house the race he had raised to distinction.

The Walpoles, indeed, are racy of the soil, and take their name from the pair of villages which, in their turn, were called after the old Roman bank, or wall, that protected the adjacent lands. Some black little tarn among the bogs gave the hamlets their distinctive title, the Wall-pool, while other villages, Walton and Walsoken, on the same line of embankment, perpetuate the memory of the work of the Roman engineers. It is recorded that Walpole was once the passage over the sands to the Lincolnshire coast, two

miles away, but now a broad tract of reclaimed land stretches between the village and the sea. But with Houghton the Walpoles had been connected for many generations. And there, towards the close of the seventeenth century, might young Robert Walpole be met with, daily riding his pony to and from Massingham village, where he was taught by the village pedant, in a room over the porch of the village church. When his political career had closed, Sir Robert gladly threw himself into the life of the country squire. He might have been seen driving about his estate in a gig of ponderous appearance, with the family arms and the Insignia of the Bath emblazoned on either side. Building and hunting occupied his time till he was summoned to join his ancestors in the family vault. A son and grandson succeeded him, the latter soon dissipating what his ancestor had accumulated with so much pains. Racing, hawking, bull-baiting—every expensive amusement was pursued by the young Earl with feverish, restless eagerness. The Houghton Meeting at Newmarket is a solitary memorial of his devotion to horse-racing, and he is credited in local annals with introducing the present breed of greyhounds and the practice of coursing among the sporting men of Norfolk and Newmarket.

The premature death of his grandson, without lawful progeny, brought Horace Walpole the title of Earl, for which he had no particular relish, in his old age, and an encumbered estate, which brought him more trouble than profit. He had little sympathy with the race of country squires, of which the Walpoles had been the embodiment—perhaps he was not even of their blood—and Horace never even visited Houghton after it came into his possession till, in the year 1797, his body was taken to the damp and chilly mausoleum of the Walpoles in St. Martin's Church, at Houghton. A resting-place in St. James's, Piccadilly, with a marble urn to mark the spot, and an angel of quality weeping at the side, would have been more appropriate to the career of such a thorough lover of the town and the fashion.

It would be an endless task to enter into the family history of the people of distinction in Norfolk. Nowhere is the ground more thickly studded with parks and halls; nowhere has the manorial system taken deeper root, or been more universally applied. But one family deserves mention, though long extinct, not for its own

importance, but as having preserved to posterity through a series of lucky accidents a vivid, lifelike chronicle of the events of the dark and dubious years of the Wars of the Roses and the subsequent period.

The Pastons were small country gentry in origin, taking their name from a village near the coast of Norfolk. Close to Paston are the remains of Broomholm Priory, situate by the seashore, with a flat, unbroken coast around, conspicuous afar from sea and land, the only building of importance for miles round about, and used by the fishermen as a sea-mark. The holy rood of Broomholm was noted as a wonder-working relic, and many of the pilgrims to Walsingham turned aside to visit its shrine. With the monks of Broomholm the Pastons were always on good terms, and by acting as stewards and agents for their worldly possessions, acquired some little money, as well as some influence outside their own small local circle. The first Paston of note was a judge of the earlier part of the reign of Henry the Sixth. One of his sons was a law-student at Clifford's Inn; another lived upon the family acres, and married the daughter of a neighbouring squire, who became the chief letter-writer of the family. At times her husband would be busy with his court leet, at others he would don his harness and sally forth to the rendezvous of an army. Wherever he might be, gentle Margaret was continually keeping him informed of the doings of the neighbourhood. John being in London ill, his mother, the judge's wife, vowed an image of wax of his own weight, and that Margaret, the wife, should go on pilgrimage to Walsingham, and to St. Leonard's, Norwich. One of the Pastons got wounded with an arrow at the Battle of Barnet, and messages and letters passed to and fro all as commonplace and matter-of-fact as you please.

The most romantic part of the Paston history is the account of how Sir John Paston became executor to the noted Sir John Fastolf, the builder of Caistor Castle, which, on Sir John's death, was claimed by the Duke of Norfolk on some feudal pretext. The Pastons held the castle against the Duke, and this siege of Caistor Castle was a little bit of private war, mixed up with a fight of writs and processes at law. Finally the Duke prevailed and gained the castle, and Paston was put to his trial for the death of those slain in the siege, but managed to slip through the meshes of the law, and making his peace with the Duke, all became

smooth again. To Fighting Pastons succeeded Lawyer Pastons, and then a famous naval captain, one Clement, who captured the French admiral, Baron de St. Blankheare, and kept him prisoner at his castle of Caistor; which reads like a bit out of a comic opera, but seems to be sober fact nevertheless. Equally solid were the seven thousand crowns of ransom that were squeezed out of the baron, and the silver flagon he left behind him.

And thus the Pastons went on and prospered from generation to generation, till in an evil hour one of them was made Earl of Yarmouth by King Charles the Second, and his son then married one of that King's natural daughters. The modest acres of the Paston estates could not sustain all this splendour and dignity, and the second Earl of Yarmouth came to something like want, and had to dispose of all his family papers, among them the hoarded letters of the stirring times before alluded to.

Now, Norfolk has always abounded in painstaking antiquaries—that is, ever since the study of antiquity came into fashion, and one of the most industrious and acquisitive of these antiquarians and collectors was Peter le Neve, Norroy king-at-arms, who was also a landowner in Norfolk, at Witchenham and elsewhere. It was, by the way, the father, or, perhaps, the uncle of this Peter who was herald-at-arms to Charles the First in his civil war, and who was dispatched by that monarch to the rival host at Edgehill to summon the traitors to disband and disperse, with an offer of the King's gracious pardon for instant compliance. All was begun with due form and ceremony, when the Earl of Manchester, the commander of the Parliament forces, rode angrily up, and uncourteously addressing the herald—so unlike those mirrors of courtesy and preux chevaliers of old!—bade him cease that tomfoolery or he would have him knocked on the head. Sad to say, the herald did not rise to the occasion. He ought to have denounced the uncourteous knight and delivered his message spite of all; but the words stuck in his throat, and he could only ride away, pursued by the derisive laughter of his foes. To return from this digression, Peter le Neve, having become the possessor of the Paston letters, kept them till his death; when his collections were sold by greedy heirs-at-law, who cared for none of these things. But another zealous antiquary was lying in wait—honest Tom Martin, of

Palgrave, who bought such of the MSS. as were sold, and, finding that Le Neve's widow had retained some of the most valuable in her own possession, he gallantly married the widow, and acquired the MSS. But Martin's collections also came to the hammer, or would have done, had not a speculative chemist, at Diss, one John Worth, made a bid for the whole. The general bulk of Martin's collections were scattered to the four winds, but Worth retained the Paston letters, and at his death they were purchased by one Fenn, who gave them to the world by printing and publishing them, to the great delight of Horace Walpole and the cognoscenti of that period. Fenn thereupon gave the letters to the King, and received the honour of knighthood in reward. But, strange to say, from that moment the originals disappeared. Now that after all their vicissitudes, it might have been expected that here was full security and honour in the very library of the King, these unique documents were spirited away.

There are still many diligent archæologists in Norfolk whose researches in various directions, were there time and space, might afford a good deal of interest. We might discourse of Yarmouth and its curious relations with the Cinque Ports; and there is much to be said of the herring-fishing, and the Dutch who resorted to Yarmouth long after the Cinque Ports men had deserted it.

There is Norwich, too, with its strange countrified appearance, like some enlarged village.

When shall the muses by fair Norwich dwell? asks Michael Drayton, evidently not expecting such a conjunction; but the historian of the city might have a good deal to say as to those who cultivated the muses, not as at Edinburgh upon a little oatmeal, but upon solid Norfolk beef and dumplings. The literary history of Norwich is a good deal connected with its commercial history; with the Protestant immigration from France, and the manufactures that were founded here and there, always somewhat exotic and forced in their growth, and latterly tending rather to decay than growth. Others again might enlarge upon the Cathedral and recall the memory of the first Bishop of Norwich, Losinga, that stirring builder and worker in all directions whose handiwork is visible in these massive foundations. There are two grand old massive columns entwined grotesquely with spiral

mouldings in the nave of that cathedral which strike one with the sense of a rude, overpowering force, while the grouping of the tower and treble apse, allowing for the degradations of subsequent builders, gives the impression of having realised for once the ordered and insolent strength of the Norman race.

It was just outside Norwich, too, that the great rebellion of Norfolk annals came to its cruel end. It was at Wymondham the rebellion began, some miles to the south of Norwich,—a true peasants' war, waged not only against the great nobles, whose claims were more generally acquiesced in, but also against the swarm of newly-enriched commercial as well as agricultural settlers, who were gradually buying up the land and turning their acquisitions to the best advantage. A general sense of grinding wrong and oppression drove the poor fellows to arms, and they made one Kett, a tanner of Wymondham, their leader. Kett seems to have set up his camp on Mousehold Heath, and to have ruled his motley army with a good deal of skill and resolution. But his levies broke before the more disciplined order and infinitely superior weapons of knights and men-at-arms, led by the proud and fated John Dudley.

But Wymondham recalls other more recent and sinister memories than that of the patriotic tanner. It was in this neighbourhood that the pre-eminently great murder of Norfolk, and indeed of the century generally, was committed.

At Hethel-on-Potash Farm lived James Blomefield Rush, farmer, agent, appraiser, auctioneer, a man who had meddled with many things, and in general with fair success; but who had entangled himself with leases, mortgages, and bad speculations; while the constant drain of an irregular establishment—if not more than one—in London had brought him to hopeless ruin. One of the direct agents of this ruin, enacting his bond with ruthless, if justifiable, persistence, was a certain Mr. Isaac Jermy, of Stanfield Hall, Recorder of Norwich, chairman of the quarter sessions, and a man of position and influence. Rush's business relations with Mr. Jermy had been of long standing, and were complicated with lawsuits and bankruptcy proceedings; but the general result was that, in spite of all his wiles and devices, Rush was now driven into a corner, and would soon be compelled to vacate his farm, and begin the world again, without means, and hampered by connections that were without

legal sanction. Thus it was in a spirit of determined revenge, rather than from a hope of saving himself, that Rush issued out, night after night, armed to the teeth, determined on the destruction of the Jermy family, and stalking his foes with savage and terrible persistence.

Stanfield Hall was a handsome, but not extensive, Tudor mansion, with some sinister memories even then clinging to it as the birthplace—so tradition has it—of Amy Robsart, from whence the brilliant Lord Dudley had lured her to become his half-acknowledged bride. It was occupied at this date by Isaac Jermy, who was a widower, his son and his son's wife, and a small establishment of servants. On the fatal night, between seven and eight o'clock, there was heard a knocking at the hall-door, to ascertain the cause of which—if it had not been a preconcerted arrangement made with Rush—Mr. Jermy left his dining-room and went out into the porch. Here Rush shot him down, and stalked into the hall a masked figure, putting the terrified butler to flight by a gesture; and on the way meeting young Jermy, despatched him with a second shot. Then coolly loading his weapon—a double-barrelled blunderbuss—Rush made for the last of the family—young Mrs. Jermy. A maid-servant interfering, received the contents of one barrel, and Mrs. Jermy fell before the second; but these last were not mortal wounds, and eventually the two women recovered, and were able to give evidence.

Still, the evidence of identification was but slender, and Rush might have escaped the gallows but for the evidence of his ill-used paramour, Emily Sandford, who, fired by her own wrongs and her horror of the crime, gave every detail of his movements—of his behaviour—of his words—implying long-cherished plans of vengeance; in fact, fastened the rope firmly about his neck with her weak, childish hands.

A CORAL WORKER.

A STORY.

THE very ground was ruddy with the dust of the coral; yes, all along the highway from Naples out to the arid slopes of Vesuvius and to Pompeii.

How a trade monopolises one's very instincts! To live in Torre del Greco means that as soon as one's fingers have grown sure, as soon as one's mind can grasp the difference between the right and the wrong

way of drilling a hole in the hard coral, one becomes a coral-worker.

All the world gets a living out of coral in some way or other. At least, all the world may do this; but do not the men and the boys know the pleasure of doing nothing? How they lie there on the stones about the old quays! All along the big open ways of Santa Lucia, one may see them. No matter if they be half-clad, they are so warm in the sun and the dear dirt they love! They must love the dirt, or they would not have existed in it for so many generations. The wonder is that fever and her hideous companions do not burst rampant and fully armed from out of the masses and dens of dirt! It lurks there, of course, and it kills some; but, one day—one day soon, perhaps—Naples will be decimated of her populous, noisy hordes, and one day, the sunny, laughing, gay city will mourn and will cry in terror.

You may say that the coral-workers do not live in Naples, that Torre del Greco, where they do live, is not Naples; but that is only making a distinction that is worth nothing.

When did you leave the last street of Naples, and when were you in the first one of Torre del Greco? You are only a stranger, looking at the picturesque scenes of Naples, and you go driving luxuriously along—along—along till you come to Pompeii—you cannot say we are wrong!

The high, white-plastered houses were massed closely together; there was a Magazzino for one thing, and a Magazzino for another, if one were to believe what was painted up on the upper floors; down below on the ground-floor, were always dark, cavernous openings—rooms. A door might stand open, and one might see within a bedstead or a rolled-up mattress making a lighter form of something in the dim darkness, a wooden chair might be set within the doorway, but certainly wooden chairs would be set outside it.

Such hundreds of dwellings there are alike, we must pick-out one from the many.

Every doorway has its pink cloud, colouring the white dust of the ground about it. Do not venture to ask how many call such a dim room home!

It was early morning, an early spring morning, to be exact, with a clear, cool breeze from off the sunny bay.

By a doorway in Torre del Greco there was a wooden table set, and two girls sat by it at work with bits of coral about

them. Beyond them were more chairs—in fact, a whole household seemed to be established under the shadow of the big white house. Indoor domestic work evidently did not exist, or, we will say was done; a hideous old crone was squatting on a three-legged stool. Down at her feet was a child nearly naked. At one moment he rolled in the dust, and the next he was clambering up to his mother's knee; she—the mother—sat composedly knitting. A girl stood, leaning her shoulder against the wall, beside the old crone, spinning flax. Another girl was sitting on a chair rather forward, in luxurious enjoyment, for was not her young aunt dressing her hair for the day? One does a deal of decoration out in the streets of Torre del Greco, and it was 'Cinta's day to be made beautiful. So the long black tresses were plaited and coiled round and round the dainty head. Stop! a touch here, and a touch there, and the soft toss of fringe above the low, dark forehead was lovely.

"Now you'll do!"

Of course this was said in Italian; but what the gay aunt said meant something like these words. She gave 'Cinta a little push, and she threw out her arms, as much as to say she had done a good day's work.

"Are we to do your share as well as our own?" called one of the coral-workers.

"Ah, but I should like that!" 'Cinta replied, rising, and shaking her skirt.

The said skirt was of some green stuff, and bore three bands of yellow upon its hem. Above was a white garment, loose and full, that rose nearly to her throat, and had loose sleeves to the elbow.

"Come—e subito, subito!" (quickly, quickly!) cried one of the busy girls.

She wore a pink cotton skirt, with a dingy brown bodice, but the brown was relieved by a bright orange kerchief. She shook out a string of threaded coral.

The girl facing her was drilling holes. 'Cinta, too, should have been drilling holes, for 'Mena—or Filomena—had threaded almost all the bits there were to thread. If you have been to Naples, you will know of the cheap strings of coral the men and boys hawk about the Chiaja for so little. So little! They ask you plenty, but they will take just anything. Only, do not show you are ignorant; tell them you know they are only the broken pieces left from finer work, then a few soldi will buy a string.

"Yes, it is easy for you to work!"

'Cinta cried, still holding aloof. "Your work is no work! Just change with me, or with Mariana there. Will you do that?"

"One day—not to-day. Ah, look! there are some more strangers driving along. How good to be a rich Inglese, and only to take one's pleasure!"

"What do you know?" Mariana looked up from her drilling of holes. "Would I be an Inglese? No! They say, where they live there is no sun, and there is snow all day—all day and all night, too, in the winter."

"I don't believe it."

'Cinta was still gazing outwards. Many little carriages, and some big ones, were rolling along the road. Of course, all their occupants were going out to Pompeii. The drivers cracked their long whips, and screamed "Yah! yah!" and they lauded or abused their horses, and they flung their jokes at other drivers, all at the highest pitch of their voices, and always with gesticulations violent enough to exhaust the energy of any but a Samson or a Neapolitan.

"Well, I'll work now; but—I am going to Pompeii."

She nodded her pretty dark head as she pushed 'Mena a bit aside, stealing a corner of her chair for her own behoof.

"You! And how will you go?" Mariana asked incredulously. "When, too?"

"Domenica" (Sunday) was the one word.

"Ah!" and 'Mena clapped her brown hands, "then I know. What I said was truth. Listen, you Mariana!"

She ceased threading her bits of coral.

"Have I not heard you once?" the other girl answered. "Once is enough. Pasquale Stingo is not my brother; what is he to me?" She waved her hand with a haughty gesture. "He is a gran' signor, far too great for me to know anything about."

"Chè, chè, chè!" the gay aunt broke in. "What do I hear, and what do I see? Mariana pretends to be scornful, and her face— Beware, my little one, or it will be said that when a girl shows anger it shows that she has a wound."

"You are wise, tanta mia," the girl retorted, "but you may make a mistake."

"Tchah, tchah! Pasquale will not need long ears to hear what you say." And the woman laughingly turned from the girls, and bowed low, waving her hands at the same time.

A carriage was passing, and a man on the box bowed likewise, taking off his hat and waving it below his feet, almost. He

was a handsome Neapolitan; his head was closely cropped, and he wore the trimmest of trim moustaches. A crimson necktie was tied loosely at his throat. For all else his dress was simply that which any young man might wear in any European capital in summer-time. It was simply a light suit. Also, he wore faultless gloves of the proper tan-colour. Certainly he looked a gentleman, and no first gentleman of any land could have bowed with more finished grace than he had done.

He was just a Neapolitan—Pasquale Stingo, the first cicerone of the city. He was out day after day with strangers; day after day, day after day, was he easily taking his ten or twenty lire. Surely he was rich—a "gran' signor," as Mariana had said.

'Cinta was rosy, and she alone of the three girls had not bowed. She was shy.

After that she worked away harder than either of her companions. They chattered, and more than once they nodded gaily to some of their friends passing by. 'Cinta, generally the most talkative, said scarcely a word.

All that morning she had been feeling a very grand personage—what girl of her sort would not be justly elated to have such a man as Pasquale select her for his betrothed? Yes, she was that, and the notice of the betrothal would be posted up at the proper office in a few days. Then Sunday would come, and he would take her out to Pompeii; she would see the wonderful place. Yes, though one would scarcely believe it, 'Cinta had never gone farther from home than Torre Annunziata on the one hand and Naples on the other.

And then, with all her greatness upon her, she had been a little fool, and had been ashamed to nod and smile at Pasquale. Whatever had possessed her? So she worked and worked, and was in a fiery little passion of anger with herself all the time.

Of course, her companions did not leave her alone, but said sharp things to her, and teased her. Each girl had her own way. 'Mena was good-natured, but we cannot say as much for Mariana; this was, perhaps, because 'Mena was rich in a lover of her own, young Donato Fusco, who worked at the great macaroni factory, while Mariana had no one who admired her in that way.

"You were cruel," 'Mena was saying—

"Cruel!" Mariana was scornful and satirical in her little way. "Cruel! You

do not know what the word means. Is she not rather a wise woman? Ah, 'Cinta sees far, she knows the vanity and the conceit of the men; she will drag Pasquale to her feet, if only she can be haughty long enough! Keep it up, 'Cinta—keep it up!"

"And you say—you, Mariana, say that Pasquale has vanity and has conceit?" 'Cinta cried hotly, with eyes aflame, and her brown hand working angrily. "What do you know? You do not dare to say that twice! I will—I will——"

What a little tigress she was!

"Basta, basta!" Mariana answered with scornful quietness. "Pasquale is a man—is he not?"

"He is not what you say!" was the retort. "You are jealous, but—would he ever think of you? You that are——"

"Come, 'Cinta," 'Mena began.

For the moment the girl was quieted; as to Mariana she had been quiet, too quiet, all along. Now, at this point, her eyes flashed, though she spoke even more unconcernedly:

"You take too much trouble, 'Mena mia! Is it not all a play? It is amusing to see the anger of the little one. Ha, ha! But, 'Cinta, I speak sense for all that. Snub Pasquale and he will worship you. Now you worship him—yes," she nodded, "I know. Does he not hold you in his fingers to do as he likes?"

Here she held up her hand, squeezing thumb and finger tips all together with the Neapolitan gesture that can be made to point every sharp meaning under the sun. Then all at once she fell to work again.

"It is false, you—you—you——"

"She only teases——" 'Mena began consolingly.

"Then let her tease you. Would you bear it?" 'Cinta was very angry.

'Mena only shrugged her shoulders and laughed. Mariana could not help one more word.

"But how can I tease 'Mena? Is not her Donato just one of us? He works; he is no gran' signor like your Pasquale. No."

"He is as good, you tongue of a serpent!" and 'Mena was suddenly standing upright, and her good-temper had turned to a flash of fire. "Would such a man as either Pasquale or Donato look at the face of Mariana? Ah, but I am your enemy if you say that word again."

"Dear, dear, and you laughed just now at the thought of my teasing! Shall I dare to speak? No." She fell silent a moment.

"No, no, I wonder what would happen if I told you I had found a gran' signor for myself. Ha, ha! Do you think I would take either Pasquale or Donato?"

"I do not believe——" 'Mena said.

Pasquale had gone driving along with his strangers. Ah, he was a proud man, he knew he was the best guide in Naples; if he had not been that, would the manager of the new hotel have taken him up and have ensured to him such a good season? No, certainly he would not. He would have been standing about at street-corners, or he would have been living on his wits at Pompeii, or at San Martino, or at Camaldoli, just trying to get what custom might be thrown in, his way by strangers happening to come out without a guide.

Now he was settled—yes, well settled, and with so good a wife as 'Cinta Cavelli would be, he would soon be as prosperous as any man in Naples. These had been his sentiments as, in the early fresh morning, he had rolled luxuriously through Torre del Greco, and had looked out for 'Cinta.

Such a number of bows he got, he heard some quick laughter and some merry English words from the ladies and gentlemen in the carriage. Pasquale did not quite understand English, but he knew he was, or rather his friends were, amusing these people.

Then someone said a gay word to him, and he proudly answered that his "promessa sposa" was amongst the girls.

And as he spoke he suddenly remembered that 'Cinta had made him no sign. It was nothing—nothing; he would scold her when he saw her in the evening.

But all day his foreigners would stay at Pompeii; they were too devoted. They would not fear the heavy, fiery air; they would explore and would read their red books, and would measure, and would see places a second time. What folly! he groaned to himself; what would they learn which had not been learnt hundreds of years ago?

The truth was that he kept continually thinking of the strangeness of 'Cinta. Why had she not looked up and nodded to him?

But at last the strangers were ready. They were tired, and they asked him no more questions; almost silently they drove along from the burning, dry, grey, dusty country into the old streets. The tall houses were in shadow; the air was almost

chilly from off the sea; the people were no longer busy hanging out the macaroni to dry; work was over—even the women and girls had done coral work for the day.

But the children were rolling about and playing, and the girls could stand and talk.

There were all the Cavelli girls out, and the grandmother, and the mother, and the aunt. Men, too, mostly young men. Pasquale, looking from a little distance, stroked his trim moustache, and set his new hat more firmly on his brow; should he not, in the shortest of time, burst upon them like a prince among peasants?

The carriage rolled past. 'Mena was standing on one side with Donato—a good fellow that!—but why should 'Cinta laugh with Donato's brother? Diavolo! why should she laugh with any man? and Pasquale ground his white teeth. He would pay her out.

There was Mariana, with her hands on her hips, standing forward, nearly under the horses' feet. One does many things that are foolish under an angry impulse. Pasquale made a great fuss of taking off his hat to Mariana. The others were too busy to see him.

By-and-by, Pasquale did swoop down upon the party. He forgot that he was to be as a prince amongst them, all by reason of his good luck and his good clothes; he showed them that he was most unprincely in temper. He was angry, he was jealous, and he was rude to 'Cinta, and he started a wild flirtation with Mariana.

She was not a nice girl; she took him in his wild humour, and she, being strong of will, fanned the evil that was in him.

He was not bad at heart—nay, he had been very good at heart, but, for the time, he had lost the rule over himself, and his fiery Neapolitan blood was ready for anything.

The end was that Pasquale never went to the grave official about his betrothal to 'Cinta, but let Mariana think that it would be her name, and not her sister's, which would very soon be posted up with that of Pasquale Stingo.

There was nothing for 'Cinta to do but just to work on at her coral-work—one must have bread, however little else one may exist on.

Time went on, and things were as they always were, when the hot weather came the strangers who bought the coral and who needed the guides all went away, and Naples had just its own people and their squalor and dirt. And the sun scorched

and the fever took away some—one never knew who was likely to go; young or old, one never knew.

But it was always so—one could not change one's life because there was the fever. When it came, one would naturally go to church a little more often, and one would try to give more candles to Madonna; and where they had left the shrines and pictures of the saints on the walls of the streets, one would be sure to kneel for a moment, as the padre said they should do.

Mariana was tiresome; she had no faith, she had no respect for anything.

"Yes!" she one day cried; "we are to do that. What is the use?"

"Silence!" And the grandmother's old voice was like a pipe out of tune.

Mariana only shrugged her shoulders, and set her fingers to knot anew her crimson kerchief.

"Will you?" the old hag cried, and stopped. "Yes, it is you and the like of you who will bring the evil sickness upon us. Ah, it came once before, and do I not know? Hundreds, thousands will die in the streets! You have no faith; you think no more of the holy saints than you do of—of—of me!"

"Nonna mia!" (my grandmother) "you are unkind to say it so! Do I not think much—all the world of you?" And Mariana made a show of being hurt. "But can I make so much faith? I do more than many; every week I carry a new white candle to Madonna."

"Yes, and you jeer at the blessed saints as you pass them!" The old woman shook her withered finger at the girl.

"Well, can they mind much?" And Mariana was very lofty. "Can they mind much," she repeated, "when they let themselves be painted out with one splash of the brush?"—and a gesture showed the action she meant. "If a saint has a great power, why does he let an infidel like Tomaso dash a lot of nasty whitewash over him and hide him for ever and ever?"

"The blessed angels save us!" the grandmother cried in undisguised horror. "What must be coming when these things are done, and the very children look on and are allowed to say, like her, 'It is right! it is right!'"

"You groan too much," her daughter put in—the girl's mother. "The fever has not been nearly so bad this year."

"The fever! There is a worse thing than the fever!" and the old woman shook

out her hands in impotent fear and terror.

"Bah! the ships bring that sickness! Let the ships and the sailors keep away!"

The woman moved away with her knitting.

"They will not see—no one sees. But I have known it, and it will come," the grandmother went on to herself. "When they are all dead, and only one looks on, what then?"

Again time ran on.

If there had been much illness in Naples, the people forgot it; they are so volatile, so light-hearted. The winter came, and it was a flourishing time. Strangers came and brought their wealth, and there was no more talk amongst the people about the dreadful sickness—it had shown itself and had gone.

The girls plied their trade as coral workers; then, when winter was over, 'Mena went away to be Donato Fusco's wife. He took her to live out at the far distant opposite end of Naples, and one rarely saw her.

'Cinta worked on, but she was not gay. Mariana grew less and less fond of work; she was wild with gaiety, and flirted with Pasquale whenever he gave her a chance, and if not with him, then with any other who came in her way.

Then came a day when Pasquale came purposely amongst them all.

He had to tell them of a good offer he had had to become courier to an English family. Naples was emptying, visitors were going, though it was only spring.

"Yes!" Mariana screamed. "They are all cowards, those foreigners—do I not know? They hear of the sickness—miles and miles away—that la nonna trembles at, and they will fly. You would fly with them!" and she pointed her finger at him and laughed.

Naturally he flushed with anger.

"I am a coward, am I?"

"Chè, chè, chè! you are easily offended! And did I ever say so rude a word to you, my gran' signor?"

She danced round before him.

"You meant it!" 'Cinta put in with a warm decision.

How glad she would be if Pasquale would go; it would carry him to safety, to a cool, fresh land, and—and the weariness of life would be over for her. Surely it would be better to have Pasquale always out of her

reach than to see him as she did now. Seeing him and hearing him as she did now, listening so often to Mariana's stinging words, were simply too much torture for her. Life was a weariness. 'Cinta was every day envying her old grandmother, who must die one day soon. So she spoke warmly, and for the moment threw off the control she had learnt to put upon herself.

"Take it, Pasquale," she cried in her impulsive way; "take the offer. It will be good for you!"

"You think as Mariana thinks!" he cried. "You—'Cinta?"

"No; no, no!" and pressing her hands together she extended them imploringly. Her eyes were aflame, and for a moment her brown face was crimson. Then, as her hot words poured from her, a grey paleness came in place of the fiery colour. "No, no; what I think is the very opposite. Do I not know you, Pasquale Stingo? If she says you are a coward, I say you are brave; if she says you fly, I say—I say that—"

"'Cinta, you are absurd!" The other girl spoke scornfully.

"But she is true—I would fly." The young man was very quiet.

Mariana laughed again.

"It is not true!" 'Cinta said these words under her breath.

"But it is true—quite true," Pasquale repeated. "Listen. I go as courier to England, and I tell my signor that if I go with him my wife will also need to go with me."

"Ah, your wife? Do we know her, Signor Pasquale?" Mariana asked freezingly.

He waved her off.

"When I reach England I make myself independent. I have a shop, a business; my wife cooks the dinner—we live well. Ah, if my wife will fly with me, then I fly. 'Cinta, anima mia, you know you will be my wife!"

Yes, 'Cinta did know; how could she help but know, when Pasquale, before she had time to think a moment, had her tightly in his arms?

As she did not try to free herself, he must have taken her silence for consent. Mariana heard no more, but fled away; her temper never was one of the best.

Before the summer was there, Pasquale and his wife were away from Naples. It was well; the old grandmother's fears were verified—more than verified.

The gay, laughing city mourned in consternation. The direful sickness had come.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIII.

They who 'gainst stiff gales laveering go,
Must be at once resolved and skilful too.

THE fates seemed all to be blowing one way just then, and Phil was most certainly neither skilful nor resolved enough to "laveer" against them. They blew him straight into Hyde Park, after he left Grafton Street. "Surely," he said to himself, "a stretch over the frosty grass will be the best thing to bring my wits back again!" And they sent whirling right across his path a brougham, in which was seated a lady in deep mourning.

Phil knew in a moment this was Mrs. Thorne, before even the brougham pulled up alongside of him, and the lady beckoned to him with her card-case. He wished her, to say the least, in another hemisphere, so indisposed did he feel to discuss with her Rodney and Rodney's affairs—a subject which he felt sure would come uppermost—that morning.

Her first words proved to him his conjecture was correct.

"I was going to call on you this afternoon, Mr. Wickham, to ask your assistance on a matter connected with my son's will. Perhaps you can spare me three minutes now, while I explain it to you."

She might have been saying "my son's marriage-settlement," for the calm, unemotional manner in which she uttered the words. Yet Phil, as he looked closely at her, thought he had never seen a woman more changed by grief in so short a time as Rodney's mother. She had aged by at least ten years; her hair was white as the snow which lay on the untrodden grass; her fine, arched brows were drawn into a

close, lowering frown; her face looked sunken, withered, yet withal stern and hard as iron.

She interpreted Phil's bow to be one of acquiescence, and proceeded to explain her wishes.

"I am just returning from my solicitor's. I heard my son's will was placed in their hands by you, so I need not repeat to you its contents. I need not also, I suppose, tell you how repugnant to my feelings would be the carrying out of such a will. That fact must be patent to all."

Possibly Phil's raised eyebrows expressed that the fact, at any rate, was not patent to him, for Mrs. Thorne's manner visibly increased in frostiness as she went on:

"I think it due to you, as executor to my son's will, Mr. Wickham, to be perfectly candid on this matter with you, and I tell you plainly that sooner than hand over one splinter of my son's possessions to—to this young person he mentions in his will, I would contest the matter in a court of law."

"I do not think Miss Selwyn would be likely to contest the matter with you in a court of law," said Phil, wishing to show unmistakably on which side his sympathies were enlisted.

"I am very glad to hear it. In that case I imagine she will be likely to accept the offer I have made to her through my lawyers of full money-value for my son's property in lieu of the property itself."

Phil made his face a blank.

"I really have no authority to say whether she will or will not, Mrs. Thorne. I only know that she has received such an offer."

"But you seem to me—or it is possible, I should say, that you may have some influence with this young person, and if you would exert it to induce her to accept

my offer, I should be very much obliged to you."

Phil kept his eyes obstinately fixed on the crape trimming of the lady's bonnet, and made no reply. The repetition of the words, "This young person," grated on his ears.

Mrs. Thorne went on once more, the slightest possible shade of annoyance showing in her tone :

"Money, I should imagine, must be of very great importance to her. If you would kindly make her understand she may fix her own price on these things, without limit—I repeat, without limit—I shall be exceedingly obliged to you."

Phil was obliged to say something now.

"Miss Selwyn is not one to whom money would be of first importance. I know for a certainty there are things she would value far more," he said, bringing his words out very slowly, very distinctly.

"And those things are?" queried Mrs. Thorne, as she racked her brains to discover what a girl in Lucy's position would value more than pounds, shillings, and pence, and could only think of rubies and diamonds.

"Kindness, sympathy, love," answered Phil sturdily; "due recognition of her position as Rodney's affianced wife."

Mrs. Thorne's eyes flashed like carbuncles in the sun's rays.

"Stop, Mr. Wickham! Such words are not to be addressed to me. You forget I am in full possession of every fact connected with my son's intimacy with this—this young person."

But Phil was not to be silenced now. The time had come, he felt, when Lucy's name and reputation must be championed.

"You are under a thoroughly wrong impression, Mrs. Thorne, regarding this young lady. Her intimacy with Rodney was of the truest and purest kind. An angel from heaven—my own sister—might have formed it without disgrace. Miss Selwyn is at the present moment staying at a house in Grafton Street you know something of—Lady Moulsey's. Would this be so, do you think, if what you imagine were true?"

He had it in his heart to say a great deal more. He never felt more inclined in his life to lay the burthen of Rodney's misdoings on his own weak, incapable shoulders; but time and place were not exactly appropriate or convenient.

Mrs. Thorne simply raised her eyebrows.

"I would prefer not to discuss the ques-

tion," she said icily. "I have asked your intervention in this matter as one of Rodney's earliest and best-loved friends. It seemed to me, if you had any regard for his memory, you could not fail to see how unfit it was that these possessions of his should pass into the hands of strangers. Do you know—are you—can you be aware that there are in his rooms at Jermyn Street things that have been in our family for generations, and, more than that, there is his writing-table, filled, no doubt, with his private papers? Would you have such things as these tossed and turned over by strangers' hands?"

"By strangers' hands? No——" began Phil.

But Mrs. Thorne interrupted him.

"I see you decline to act for me in this matter. I must do what I can without your aid," she said, as she gave him a cold little bow of dismissal, and signalled to her coachman to drive on.

Phil stood still for about three minutes, looking after the carriage as it disappeared at the farther end of the road. Had he done the best he could for Lucy Selwyn, after all? Was there not another word he ought to have spoken on her behalf, which somehow his lips had failed to utter? Ought he not to have said: "Not this young girl, but another, dazzled and turned your son's brain till he forgot alike duty and honour?"

These were the questions that rose up in his mind, and which, somehow, his counter-questions, "Where would have been the use? What good would it have done?" failed to answer satisfactorily.

"I must just let things take their course. Evidently I can't do much one way or the other," he said to himself as he made his way briskly over the frosty ground. "I sincerely hope they will adjust themselves in a day or two, so that I may be off to America with a clear conscience."

But alas! with or without a clear conscience, the trip to America was not to be undertaken. When Phil got back to his hotel there was a note waiting for him from his friend Arthur Kenrick, which stated that the shooting-party it had taken so long to collect together had come to a sudden collapse, on account of the death of "some old fellow in the shires, who happens," so Kenrick wrote, "to be a near relative of two of the fellows who were going, and who has left them a lot of money, and some property somewhere or other. It's a confounded nuisance, but I've promised

them now to put off our trip till the spring, so I suppose there is nothing for it, old fellow, but to grin and bear it."

CHAPTER XXIV.

To Lucy Selwyn, that day, it seemed as though the face of heaven itself were clouded over. Neither at luncheon nor at dinner did Miss Yorke make her appearance. The latter meal, eaten in sole company with Lady Moulsey, was an altogether dismal affair, enlivened only by the worthy old lady's random answers to every question Lucy addressed to her. As when, for instance, Miss Selwyn, remarking the frequent ringing of Sir Peter's bell upstairs, hoped that another attack of gout was not pending, received for answer :

"My dear, I hope he'll be punished this time. He richly deserves hanging, if ever a man did."

Poor lady! she had just laid down her newspaper, relating the capture of one of the Irish "invincibles," who had many times eluded the vigilance of the police, and she thought Lucy must be alluding to that event.

Lucy crept upstairs to Ellinor's room when the dreary meal was at last ended.

"May I come in?" she said, softly tapping.

And to her great surprise, for she fully expected a denial, she received answer that she might.

Ellinor was seated on a low chair close to the fire; the remains of her dinner were still on a small table not far distant, beside which stood the patient Gretchen waiting for the signal for her dismissal.

"You may go," said Ellinor, as Lucy entered.

Then Gretchen and the table of provisions disappeared together.

How like some Eastern queen of poetry or romance Ellinor looked in the soft light of the candle-lamp which hung near! She had on her afternoon tea-gown of some soft dark brocade; her magnificent dead-leaf hair hung en masse to her waist; her attitude was that of languor, repose, meditation, for her hands lay limply on her lap; her head, with face upturned to catch the light of the lamp, reclined on the cushions of the chair.

Now and again a tongue of flame would leap up in the low-burning fire, and would throw an extra gleam on the pure, pale face, the darkly glowing eyes, the deliciously curved and full lips. To a poet, seen thus, she might have suggested the idea of Day

dying in the arms of Night. Harry Effingham, A.R.A., had seen her once in much such an attitude, in much such a garment, and it had suggested to him an opposite idea—a coming back to life, not a sinking into death. He had asked and obtained permission to paint her thus, in half-reclining attitude, as Alcestes given back from the grave. He had spent six months of valuable working time over it; then, Pygmalion-like, had fallen in love with his own creation, refused to exhibit it, and had hung it in his studio instead.

It would be difficult to say by what vagary of inspiration the face and form of the most selfish woman nature possibly ever turned out of her workshop should have suggested to the artist mind the ideal incarnation of feminine devotion. Yet so it was.

Lucy gave her one long, steady glance, full of humble, honest admiration. Then she drew a footstool and sat down at Miss Yorke's feet.

"In all the world," she said softly, "I do not believe there is another woman as beautiful as you!"

There came a look of pain into the beautiful face, a sudden contraction of the brows, a drooping of the eyelids.

"Everyone does not think so," she answered slowly.

The answer startled Lucy. The words and the look combined puzzled her and set her thinking.

"Something or someone has pained you to-day?" she queried, with salves and balsams ready to hand, would only the sufferer tell her where lay the wounds.

"Yes"—a simple, hard, unsuggestive "yes;" nothing more.

"You do not wish to tell me what has grieved you?"

"Where would be the use? I have no wish to set you against the only friend you have in the world."

"The only friend I have—Mr. Wickham! Oh, what can he have done?" cried the astonished Lucy all in a breath.

"Only this: he charges me with a deed, a sin, a crime which I have not committed—which I will not be charged with. I have defended myself once to him—I will do it again no more."

"He charges you with a crime! What crime?" and Lucy's eyes grew round with the surprise she felt.

"The crime of coquetry, of winning a man's heart for the sake of breaking it.

He thinks this is easy work for me, having no heart of my own."

"You—you no heart! Oh, my darling, where should I be now if you had had no heart?" and Lucy buried her face in Ellinor's dress, and burst into tears.

"Hush!" said Ellinor, smoothing the young girl's soft, dark hair caressingly; "you silly, silly child; why do you trouble yourself in this way simply because people do not understand me? Hush, hush! your eyes will get red and swollen again as they were a week ago."

It was full three minutes before Lucy could calm herself. During the three minutes that her face was hidden in Ellinor's dress there arose in her mind, and rested there for many a long day afterwards, a very fair and pleasant picture of these her two benefactors, all misunderstandings between them cleared away, joining hands in that perfect, highest form of friendship which we dignify with the name of love. A form of friendship so suitable between a handsome, generous-hearted young fellow of six-and-twenty, and a beautiful, unselfish young woman some two or three years his junior.

When at length her voice grew calm enough to be trusted, she hazarded a conjecture.

"This—this suspicion, this wicked, wicked thought, cannot come out of Mr. Wickham's own heart; it is too good and true to have such thoughts in it. Some one must have whispered it to him."

Ellinor gave a real honest start.

"I did not once think of such a thing as that; perhaps you are right," she answered, as though a new vein of thought had been suddenly struck and laid bare to her.

Lucy did not notice the start, but went on following out her own train of thought.

"He has no sisters, no mother, no cousins even to put such things into his head. Is there no one else? Ah, I remember——" She broke off suddenly as the recollection flashed into her mind of a certain afternoon when Rodney had shown her Phil's photograph as that of his earliest, dearest friend, and on her exclaiming, "What a great, strong, handsome giant he looks!" had replied: "For all that, there is a little girl down at Stanham who can wind him round her little finger."

"What do you recollect?" queried Ellinor, and she asked the question as though it had a great deal of interest for her.

"I recollect Rodney saying one day there was someone at Stanham who loved Mr. Wickham—at least, I supposed that was what he meant."

"There is a little country-girl at Stanham—a sort of cousin of mine—who is playing fast and loose with him, I believe."

"Playing fast and loose with a man like Mr. Wickham! Oh, how wicked!" cried Lucy. "Why, if she went from one end of England to the other she wouldn't find a man to compare with him."

"Take care, Lucy, or I shall begin to fancy——"

But what she would begin to fancy under certain circumstances was not to be uttered. A look of such real pain passed over Lucy's face that even she, Ellinor, the self-engrossed, the self-centred, could not fail to remark it.

"You forget," Lucy said gravely—nay, solemnly, "such thoughts as those can never again come to me. I am as much widowed as though I wore a wedding-ring."

"Forgive me, dear, for forgetting—yes, I know," said Ellinor, rising from her chair to end the talk. "Now will you say good-night; there are two or three things I want to think over before I go to bed."

Lucy also had two or three things she wished to think over before she went to bed that night, and it is just possible that her subject for thought might have been identical with Ellinor's. At any rate, they most assuredly had nothing whatever to do with her own affairs; for it was not until nearly two days after this that she had sufficiently made up her mind on the matter of Mrs. Thorne's offer through her lawyers to be able to write Phil a brief, decisive letter.

CHAPTER XXV.

PHIL, when he received Lucy's letter, thought at first his senses must be leaving him, so utterly amazed and bewildered did he feel. He had passed a miserable, restless, ill-at-ease two days himself, doing his best to kill time, and wondering all the while why he was so anxious to slay the old conqueror. He had called upon every friend he had in London—save Mrs. Thorne—far and near. He had visited six theatres and two concert-rooms on the two consecutive evenings, and had come away with as rooted a distaste for modern amusements as any "habitual playgoer" of forty years ago could have had. Then there had

come this letter still further to worry him. What did it mean? Was he mad, or was Miss Selwyn mad—or was the postman mad, and had brought him someone else's letter by mistake? It was ridiculous, inconceivable, unheard-of! It would have been all very well for a young fellow in the heyday of life, and with a fine fortune at command, to write such a quixotic letter, but for a young girl with nothing but a pittance of fifty pounds a year to depend on, it was simply monstrous! And Phil took up the offending missive and read it through once more.

Thus it ran :

“—, Grafton Street.

“DEAR MR. WICKHAM,—I have at last made up my mind what answer to send to Mrs. Thorne's proposal, made to me through her lawyers. I most positively and distinctly refuse to receive one penny from her in lieu of Rodney's property, to which I am entitled by his will. I will waive all right to this property, and make her a free-will offering of it in its entirety—just as it stands, I mean. And this I do, not because the things are not unspeakably precious to me, but because she is Rodney's mother, and she loved him.—I remain, very sincerely yours,
LUCY SELWYN.

“P.S.—Will you kindly communicate with the lawyers, or shall I?”

“It is madness—sheer madness, and must not be permitted,” Phil said to himself, and there and then took his hat and set off for Grafton Street to prove to Miss Selwyn that it was “sheer madness,” and to talk her out of it.

Lucy, however, was not to be so easily talked out of her scheme. She was very sweet, very gentle that morning, but showed a firmer front than he had thought it was in her to show.

He reasoned with her briskly and he reasoned with her slowly; he reasoned with her on the unreasonableness of Mrs. Thorne's offer, and he reasoned with her on its injustice and impropriety.

All in vain. Lucy listened to every word he had to say, did not once interrupt him, nor show the faintest sign of impatience, and then very quietly expressed her intention of adhering to her resolution. Rodney's mother should have Rodney's things intact; so far as she was concerned, there should not be one word of contention on the matter.

And then Phil gave up reasoning—she was evidently one of those sweet, good

women who were born utterly destitute of the logical faculty—and walked up and down the room haranguing and addressing her with a vehemence that was new to and rare with him.

Just as much in vain. The haranguing and addressing fell as flat as the reasoning. Lucy waited till he had finished, and then said simply and quietly, without even rising from her chair :

“Will you write to the lawyers, or will you call on Mrs. Thorne for me? I would rather you called on her if you didn't mind; it would be pleasanter to me if the lawyers had nothing whatever to do with the matter.”

And then Phil stood still in front of her and asked another question in reply :

“Does Miss Yorke know of your intention, and what does she say to it?”

It was only by making a huge effort—bringing himself to the point, as it were—that he could mention Ellinor's name at all. Why this was so he could not account for even to himself, for all the time he had been arguing and reasoning, haranguing and addressing, he had kept his eye upon the door, and had been wondering in his own mind: “Will she come in this morning? Shall I see her? How will she meet me?”

Lucy shook her head in reply.

“I have not spoken to her on the matter. I did not like to worry her with my affairs—she has troubles enough of her own.”

“Troubles of her own!” echoed Phil, who had somehow always taken it for granted that when Ellinor Yorke was born Fortune was merry, and in a mood to give anything except troubles. “Has anything happened—is her sister worse, or her mother taken ill?”

“Oh no, no; I was not thinking of troubles of that sort—downright heavy sorrows. I meant she was worried, sad, just as kind, noble-hearted people often are when they are not understood by those about them.”

She was looking steadily at Phil as she said this. Evidently she was speaking with a purpose.

Phil caught her meaning and felt a little guilty, a little bewildered. It was strange to his ears this advocacy—warm, generous sincere—from Lucy's lips. Would she—could she have spoken thus had she known all?

He was still standing in front of Lucy he would rather have held his tongue

but could see that she expected him to speak.

Well, it should be in generalities then.

"I suppose we are every one of us more or less of an enigma to those about us," he began.

"Oh no, no," interrupted Lucy; "don't say every one of us. Only one here and there, and that one possibly nobler and better than the rest of the world. Ah, if I could but make you understand what a grand, true, good woman Ellinor Yorke is! And that without any fussiness of goodness about her."

"Grand, true, good!" Was it possible those were the right adjectives wherewith to qualify the womanhood of Ellinor Yorke? Great Heavens! if this were so, how he had wronged her by thought and word. But yet—

Lucy interrupted his thoughts again. She was far more ready to speak than he was.

"But I ought not perhaps to have spoken in this way; I can see I distress you. I know Ellinor would be very angry if she could hear me. But I owe her so much, I love her so, I would lay down my life for her!"

"Would lay down her life for her!" thought Phil. Heaven and earth! and if it had not been for this woman Lucy might at that very moment have been in Rodney's arms and held to his heart.

His silence became oppressive.

"Do—do forgive me," pleaded Lucy, "but I love her so."

Phil spoke with a great effort at last.

"Anyone you love must be worth loving, Miss Selwyn," and he meant his words as he said them. Then he paused, and with a still greater effort added: "Will you mind the trouble of charging yourself with a message from me to Miss Yorke. I owe her an apology for some—something that passed between us the other day. Will you kindly tell her I own myself to have been utterly in the wrong, and I beg her pardon most sincerely?"

Lucy's face brightened, and her heart seemed to give one great glad bound. Somehow, when she said good-bye to Phil about five minutes afterwards, she could not help feeling that she had done a very good morning's work indeed. She had given up property to about the amount of ten or fifteen thousand pounds without the chance of a sixpence in return,

and, still better, she had possibly sown the seeds of a lasting amity—if nothing more—between her two dearly-loved benefactors.

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

OUR AGITATOR.

IN an earlier paper I described how, once upon a time, the tranquil current of our corporate life at Shillingbury was rudely disturbed by the advent of a certain Abel Whitlocke, and how he set to work to upset various comfortable institutions—abuses, Abel called them—which had existed for more years than the oldest inhabitant could remember—institutions which might have gone on as they were to the end of time, according to the verdict of all right-thinking people, without anybody being one penny the worse.

It may be remembered, perhaps, that Abel Whitlocke's great stroke in his career of destructive activity was the transformation of our ancient grammar-school from what it had been since the days of Master Christopher Sendall, its worthy founder, into something like a modern classical and commercial academy. Soon after this great work was brought to pass, Abel Whitlocke vanished just as suddenly from our firmament as he had come into it. Perhaps he was satisfied with his achievement; perhaps, after so great a success, he feared to run the risk of marring his reputation by a failure in another attempt; or perhaps, like the Macedonian, he found nothing else worthy of his assault in Shillingbury, and sighed for new worlds to conquer.

But Whitlocke, when he removed his presence from our midst, had lingered long enough amongst us to found a school; his words and his deeds had not fallen to the ground unfruitful, but we did not know the full extent of the spread of his influence so long as he remained in Shillingbury. Perhaps his disciples were daunted into silence by his somewhat aggressive speech and manner. Perhaps it was part of his teaching that they were to sit at his feet quiescent until he should be translated to another sphere, and his mantle should have descended upon the shoulders of the most worthy of them.

Just at the corner of Church Lane stood The Duke's Head Inn, a cosy little place, and eminently respectable withal. Of course it had no pretensions to vie with houses like The Black Bull, or even with

The White Horse, but bagmen of the humbler sort would often stay the night there, for Mrs. Lightfoot, the landlady, was a capital cook, and a tidy woman all round. In the little parlour a few of the smaller tradesmen and mechanics, who were not eligible on the score of their social position for admission to the more exalted circle which met, under Mr. Walter Tafnell's presidency, at The White Horse, could generally be found every night, discussing in a sleepy sort of fashion the stirring events of the last six weeks, and now and again, when some traveller might be there on his round, listening with open-mouthed attention to his wonderful stories of London or "The Shires," and to his not very complimentary remarks as to the state of affairs in Shillingbury and other similar places.

Up to the time of Abel Whitlocke's arrival in Shillingbury, the gentleman of the road who might happen to be present in The Duke's Head parlour would have it all his own way in the conversation. No one of our home-dwelling youths would have had sufficient confidence in his homely wits to set up anything like a show of opposition; but there came a time, dating from a certain evening when Abel looked into The Duke's Head for a glass of beer, when the errant knight of commerce found that he could no longer walk over the course as heretofore. Whitlocke was a steady man, and a sober one, and had no idea of going to the public-house to drink away his brains and his wages, but he liked above everything the sound of his own voice and the sight of a circle of appreciative listeners, so he took to going to The Duke's Head every Saturday night, and this fact being noised about, there was always on these evenings a parlourful of the advanced thinkers of Shillingbury ready to listen to the strange doctrines he might put forth. Whitlocke spoke well; for a man of his station he spoke very well indeed. He had a wide range of experience, full of interest to his hearers, and thus the school was formed. Amongst the most regular attendants and faithful disciples of the new teaching was a young blacksmith named Abraham Docken. He was a shrewd, clever fellow, with a mind of that cast in which the minds of analytical philosophers are made. He was a man who always wanted to know the why and the wherefore of a matter, disinclined to take anything on faith. With him it seemed to be a sacred duty to pull down and turn

inside out, rather than to let be. A hurried and imperfect education had just stimulated his mind to action without calling up any inclination to enquire whether the action in itself was legitimate or serviceable, or whether the consequences would not bring a hurricane about his head; and with a nature thus inclined, Whitlocke's teaching fell upon his ears as pleasantly as rain upon a thirsty garden. Abraham was a steady, sober lad; indeed, all Whitlocke's disciples were of that sort which is not in the habit, to use a landlord's expression, of doing much for the good of the house. Mrs. Lightfoot was heard to say more than once that, though she would never harbour a drunken man in her house, she did not see how she was to get a living and pay her rent, if all her customers were to sit the whole evening through without calling for anything more than a pint of twopenny ale. Docken worked just as well and deftly in his father's blacksmith's shop, after as before he took to spending his Saturday evenings at The Duke's Head, though the old man, as time went on, and rumours as to the sort of topics which were discussed in Mrs. Lightfoot's kitchen got abroad, would look rather askance at Abraham as the latter would put on his hat after supper on Saturdays, preparatory to starting to spend the evening in Abel Whitlocke's society; and would all through the week let drop sarcastic speeches about some people, just out of short jackets, who thought they knew more about everything than their betters, and warnings as to the danger of fore-gathering with strange folk who came from nobody knew where, and might be nobody knew what; but of all these hints, gentle and otherwise, Abraham took little heed. If he happened to be shoeing a horse at the time, he would use the rasp with extra vigour, and bend down so low, and double himself up in such a manner, that one would fancy he would hardly ever be able to straighten himself out again; or if he was at the forge he would bang and clang with his heavy hammer in double time, so as to drown altogether the monitory remarks of his parent.

In addition to the contempt of whipper-snappers, and the general conservatism which are almost inseparable accidents in parents blessed with rather clever and very bumptious sons, Mr. Docken, senior, was a steady disbeliever in progress of all kinds. So far, he was an undoubted pillar of the state; but this was not all. He was

one of the most regular church-goers in Shillingbury, and had sung bass in the choir ever since he had possessed a bass voice to sing with. Now they who remember aught of Abel Whitlocke's early exploits will understand that any opinions he might put forth would not be of the sort to command Mr. Docken's approval, and so it was. He let his son have plentiful notice of his disapprobation—first in the form of sarcastic hints; then of personal and definite objurgation; and finally of muttered reflections that many a man had ended his days on the gallows who had begun by treading in the same path as that into which Abraham had turned his steps.

But Whitlocke, as I have already remarked, did not tarry long in Shillingbury. After his disappearance Mr. Docken drew his breath more freely, and exhibited a less stern and uncompromising attitude towards his son; by way, perhaps, of showing to the lost sheep that the door of the sheep-fold of steady respectability was still open, and that all would be well again if Abel Whitlocke and his sayings were forgotten; but the metal of which Abraham was made would not bend so easily as this. The lad went less to The Duke's Head, it is true; but, as if to console himself for the loss of his mentor, he began to take in a weekly London newspaper, and the literal food he gathered from its pages was certainly quite as strong meat as any of the verbal nourishment he had picked up from Abel Whitlocke's utterances. He was as steady a young man and as good a workman as ever, but he refused to listen to his father's hints about going to church at least once on Sunday. Surely and almost imperceptibly he became the leader amongst his associates by reason of his keen wit and strong will; and, as the memory of the founder of the school grew dimmer when regarded across the lapse of years, it was often remarked that Abraham Docken could talk as well as ever Abel Whitlocke could.

In all communities, by the friction of the separate atoms of society, a sort of electric force is generated, and this force gathers itself into negative and positive poles, just as surely as does the fluid of the physicist's battery. There will be one force which makes for the preservation of law and order—for the support of whatever is, for the maintenance of the reins of power in the hands which already hold them; and another force which, completely divested of all reverence for existing facts, would pull

down right and left, postponing anything like reconstruction till the plain should be cleared, and heedless of the fact that society cannot get on without institutions of some sort or other. It is almost unnecessary to mention which of these forces controlled the thoughts and actions of Abraham Docken.

When Abraham had reached the age of twenty-four, he married, and took flight from the paternal nest. By his marriage also he added to his stock of offences in his father's eyes, for he chose the daughter of a Primitive Methodist local preacher, instead of mating with a decent church-going woman, as all the Dockens before him had done. He hired a small house with a few acres of land attached to it, and started farming in a small way; but he still worked pretty regularly in his father's shop. There was less cordiality than ever between the two men, for the father never mentioned his daughter-in-law's name. One crowning sorrow, at least, Mr. Docken was spared. Abraham kept away from the meeting-house as persistently as he had absented himself from the parish church hitherto.

Just outside the town, on the Bletherton road, was a waste piece of turf, upon which were generally lying a lot of felled oak and ash trees. Here, on fine Sunday mornings, Abraham would betake himself with his newspaper in his pocket; and, before long, half-a-dozen or more of his comrades would join him, and, sitting upon the tree-trunks, would listen eagerly to anything that he might read to them from the journal of progress.

In England a man may read a great deal of subversive literature, and indulge in a tolerable amount of treasonable talk, without feeling the strong hand of the law, or the cold shoulder of his neighbours; but let him once lift his hand, let him attempt, ever so slightly, to transmute his doctrines into action, and he will find that he is treading on altogether different ground. And so it was with Abraham Docken. His father growled at the young man's perverseness, it is true, but then fathers are often given to growling at the goings-on of their sons, particularly if the sons show any tendency to follow a line of their own. Still, his mother was kind and tender as ever, as mothers often are over real black sheep—and Abraham, with all his failings, was not of that colour. His employers, finding that his work was as good as ever, did not trouble themselves

that he sat on a fallen tree and read the National Reformer on Sunday mornings, instead of going to church or chapel, and take their custom away from him to give it to a blacksmith with proper beliefs as to the relations of Church and State. Our rector, Mr. Northborough, would often stop at the forge to have a chat with Abraham, and once lent him an elementary treatise on mechanics. He also showed some interest in a contrivance which Abraham had rigged up for saving labour in blowing the bellows. Mr. Northborough recognised a keen intelligence whenever he might find one—it was not an everyday occurrence in Shillingbury—and Abraham interested him. Perhaps, when he saw that Abraham was trusted to shoe horses and make bolts, in spite of his reputed Chartism and Freethinking, he may have reflected that Shillingbury on this question was more liberal than a great seat of learning had proved itself on a certain occasion when it decided that one of its most distinguished mathematicians was unfit to teach recurring decimals on account of some long-ago formulated objections to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Mr. Winsor, of Skitfield, was pleased to express his high satisfaction at some repairs which Abraham had done to the ornamental iron gates of the park; but this was while the young blacksmith was reading and thinking, while the fire was burning within him, and giving no manifest token of its existence.

There was in Shillingbury a worthless vagabond named Ned Howell, poacher, petty larcener, drunkard, and general prey of the rural police. One Monday Howell was brought before the bench, charged with killing a pheasant in the Skitfield Woods. Mr. Winsor, of course, retired while the charge was being heard; but his colleagues were soon convinced of Howell's guilt, and fined him a sovereign and costs, with the usual option of spending the appointed time in Martlebury Gaol, should the money not be forthcoming. The game-keeper's heart grew light as he listened to the term which the chairman pronounced, for it would keep Mr. Howell safe in hold till the shooting would be over, and considerably lighten the task of night-watching. No suspicion crossed his mind that the ragged ruffian in the dock would be able to pay the sum demanded; but in this case he reckoned without his host, or, more correctly speaking, without Abraham Docken.

Abraham happened to be in court that morning, and was by no means so clearly convinced of the value of the evidence upon which Howell was to be sent to prison, as was the worshipful bench. He knew, too, that if Howell went to gaol, the home must be broken up, and the wife and children sent to the workhouse; and Mrs. Howell was a tidy, respectable woman, who managed to bring up her children fairly well, in spite of the dead-weight of her husband's rascality. So, just as the clerk had made out the commitment, Abraham elbowed his way into the little pen where the minor officers of the law congregated, and paid all that was required to let Mr. Howell walk out of court a free man—to make fresh inroads upon Mr. Winsor's pheasants, and probably to be brought up again at the very next sitting.

And with the move above recorded Abraham passed from the region of precept to that of practice. Figuratively speaking, he drew his sword and flung away the scabbard thereof. Nor was it long before he was reminded that his challenge had been accepted. The head-keeper, on his return from the petty sessions, gave a full account of the proceedings there to the agent, illustrated by divers comments on Abraham Docken's doings. All this, in a gathering flood, was poured into the ears of Mr. Winsor himself by the agent; and the upshot was that the latter went one morning to the blacksmith's shop and asked Mr. Docken the pertinent question whether he thought it was likely that Mr. Winsor would go on sending his estate work to be done in a shop where the chief workman was one who took upon himself to back up all the bad characters of the place in their ill-doing?

Abraham was at work at the inner forge, and as soon as he heard the agent's voice he came forward and answered on his own behalf; and his answer was not one calculated to make matters run more smoothly. He gave good work, he affirmed, in return for his pay, and having done so, there was no further question between Mr. Winsor and himself. What he might do outside his workshop was no affair of anybody's. He himself disapproved entirely of many of the so-called charitable associations which Mr. Winsor supported, but he did not think it his duty to run over to Skitfield and say that, if the subscriptions were not dropped at once, he would refuse to do the estate work. The agent might take that as a message back to Mr. Winsor

if he liked. Abraham meant no disrespect, it was a plain statement of fact and nothing else.

The old man looked on in hopeless despair while Abraham was thus breathing defiance to a foe whom few in Shillingbury would dare to tackle. He reproached his son bitterly when they were left alone; but Abraham was wise enough to keep silence. The work from Skitfield continued to come in, however, so Mr. Docken began to recover hope that the storm might blow over.

But the preparations for war were going on. Ned Howell lived in one of a row of dilapidated cottages on the road to Brooksbank End. They were copyhold, out of repair, and about as undesirable a parcel of real property as anyone could imagine; but in spite of this, within a fortnight, they passed into the possession of Mr. Winsor, and Ned Howell, who was a weekly tenant, was turned out to find a home elsewhere. But that was no easy matter. Under any circumstances no one would have accepted him as a tenant, except as a last resource, and now he might apply in vain, even to the most embarrassed landlord, since anyone letting him in would certainly incur Mr. Winsor's high displeasure by giving house-room to such a rascal. For two nights he and his family slept in a barn; but on the third they were installed in a half-ruined cottage, which stood upon one corner of Abraham Docken's plot of land. Anyone, however, who knows anything of the far-reaching power of landed wealth in a country place, or of the implacable animosity of a good man whose coat has been rubbed the wrong way, will be prepared to hear that Howell did not long inhabit undisturbed the ramshackle ruin into which Abraham had allowed him to creep. Very soon there was an interview between Mr. Ribstone, from whom Abraham hired his bit of land, and the Skitfield agent. Mr. Ribstone sent many a hundred-weight of meat every year into Mr. Winsor's larder, and from time immemorial his prime Christmas oxen had been grazed on the Skitfield home-farm. To a novice it may be hard to see what all this has to do with the further eviction of Ned Howell—ashard as to define the connection between Tenterden Steeple and the Goodwin Sands, but those who knew the ways of Mr. Winsor and his agent were not surprised when, two days before the legal date, Abraham Docken received notice to quit and yield up his holding with all its

appurtenances at the end of the next half-year.

Nobody knew better than Abraham himself what a worthless scamp Howell was; it was equally plain to him, likewise, that his own character must justly suffer by his association and persistent patronage of this black sheep; but men as obstinate as our friend Abraham was, take little heed of consequences. He saw plainly that it was a struggle between Squire Winsor and himself over Howell's unclean body, and he resolved that he would fight it out to the end, come what might. Though he was no longer able to find a home for his protégé, he kept him in funds, and in the parish. The wife and children he succeeded in housing in a village some miles distant, but for the head of the family he procured a lodging at a low public-house in Shillingbury, which neither enjoyed Mr. Winsor's patronage nor drew his beer.

And then, for a space, there was a truce—a truce, that is to say, from the great battle, but Abraham Docken was not the sort of man to be happy unless he had a fight of some kind or another going on. He carried on a bitter war with the vaccination authorities, rather than allow his youngest baby to be operated upon, and fought and routed the churchwardens over the collection of a church-rate. There was a bye-election for the county division, and Sir Foxall Matlock, a nephew of Mr. Winsor's, came forward to win the seat for the Liberal party. When he came to make a personal canvass of Shillingbury, his smooth, smug Whiggism was rudely shocked by certain awkward questions and pertinent comments from Abraham, who ended by working his best for the Tory candidate, saying that he preferred an open foe to a false friend. At the election, Sir Foxall was badly beaten, and a band of choice spirits—Ned Howell amongst them—went over to Martlebury, under Abraham's guidance, to help to groan down the defeated candidate at the declaration of the poll. But the great catastrophe had yet to come.

Some three years before, Mr. Winsor had lost his wife—a lady who had, probably, during the course of her life, listened to more sermons and figured in more subscription-lists than any other person of her time. After her death, her husband determined to perpetuate her memory by adorning the parish church with a stained-glass window. The window Mr. Winsor chose was not one of the sort now in vogue,

made up of ladies who would seemingly be more at home on the wall of the Grosvenor Gallery, or of the angular saints and angels of the mediæval school. The severe evangelical turn of Mr. Winsor's opinions naturally made the latter impossible. The late Mrs. Winsor, who had been a great patroness of missions to the heathen, and had likewise erected some almshouses for decayed draymen in Mile End, was represented in a red robe and a blue gown, with a trowel in her right hand, as if in the act of laying a first stone, while her left showered tracts and testaments to a crowd of imperfectly-dressed heathens of all shade of colour. Bishop Chicham came over to preach in honour of the inauguration of the memorial, and the prevailing opinion of the district was that there was not such a handsome window to be found anywhere else in all the country, not even in the cathedral at Martlebury. One night, as Ben Gibbons, a game-watcher in Mr. Winsor's employ, was coming down a lane which ran round by the churchyard, he was surprised by the shining of a sudden glare of light through the new west window. The vivid colours shone out for a moment, then all was dark again, and then there sounded in his ears the crash of an explosion. Ben, who was a quick-witted, plucky fellow, ran at once to the side-gate of the churchyard, which was nearest to him; but before he reached it he cannoned violently against another man who was going in the opposite direction. Ben seized him, and found that he had captured, down by the churchyard, Mr. Ned Howell, the very man he had been looking for in the preserve. He dragged his prisoner round to the keeper's lodge, where he left him while he went in search of the rural police. Arrived upon the scene, the intelligent constable at once decided on paying a visit to Howell's lodgings, and, on repairing thither, they found, sitting on the bed, and apparently awaiting the occupant's return, no less a person than Abraham Docken.

When they returned to the church they discovered that Mr. Winsor's new window had been completely ruined by an explosion of gunpowder. The prisoner's hands were stained with powder, and a box of matches was found upon him. Taken thus black-handed, he was sent for trial at the next assizes.

This was the supreme crisis in the fate of our agitator. After this ill-starred coincidence his fastest friends fell away from

him. Mr. Winsor himself called at Docken's workshop and told the old man that, much as he liked and respected the master, he could not continue to send the estate work to his shop, so long as he harboured a man who seemed to take a pride in abetting and protecting the most atrocious offences. Docken was now getting an old man, and the blow was a very heavy one. He recognised the reason and justice of Mr. Winsor's remarks, but he felt rather sore at hearing such hard words spoken against his son by another, though he had often said things much more severe himself. He answered the great man respectfully, remarking that he was grateful for all past favours, but that he did not exactly see how he could turn his son, with his wife and children, adrift at a moment's notice. Mr. Winsor rode away with something else than charity in his heart, and the old man set to work to consider how he might best repair the ugly gap in his business, which the loss of the Skitfield work would make.

But before the evening of that day, Abraham himself had cut the knot of the situation. He went to his father and told him that he had made up his mind to go to Australia, since every man's hand seemed to be against him in the old country. He sailed the next month for Melbourne, so Mr. Winsor was saved the trouble of looking out for a new black-smith.

Of Abraham in his new home tidings came in course of time. He went up country to a township in process of formation, where he soon got together a large and thriving business. Later on we heard that he had opened a general store, and was an extensive landowner, and in a recent journal I saw his name mentioned as a candidate for his district in the approaching elections to the Legislative Assembly of the Colony of Victoria.

BY THE RIVER.

ONLY the low wind wailing
Among the leafless trees;
Only the sunset paling;
Only the grey clouds sailing
Before the western breeze.

The girl beside the river,
With strained ear and tired eye,
Nor saw the crimson quiver,
Nor heard the willows shiver,
As the low wind swept by.

For sight and sense were roaming
Across the barren moor;
Oh, was he never coming,
Through the dull autumn gloaming,
As in the days of yore?

Oh, bright blue eyes that glistened,
 Oh, happy blush that rose,
 Oh, foolish heart that listened,
 To the faithless lips that christened
 His love the "wife he chose!"

How oft he turned in leaving
 For yet another kiss!
 How he soothed the girlish grieving,
 And swore that no deceiving
 Should ever cloud their bliss!

He left when summer sunlight
 Was full upon the stream.
 He made his truth her one light,
 And in the autumn dim light,
 She faced her broken dream.

She knew her idol shaken,
 She knew her trust was gone.
 What hope dead faith can waken?
 Betrayed, forgot, forsaken,
 The woman stood—alone.

Hushed was the bitter weeping,
 As o'er her closed the night;
 When dawn on dark was creeping,
 The morning breeze was sweeping,
 Where broad, and pure, and white,

The lilies swayed to cover
 The fair pale face beneath;
 Where, pain and passion over,
 Freed from a faithless lover,
 Sorrow lay hushed in death.

COLDBATH FIELDS.

IN making a short cut from King's Cross towards the City, people sometimes come across a gloomy parallelogram of high blank walls, with a clock-tower showing above, which they may learn is Coldbath Fields Prison. These walls enclose a considerable space of ground—nine acres, or thereabouts—and cast a gloom over a neighbourhood that must have been once pleasant enough. Mount Pleasant, indeed, runs before the very gate of the prison, and with a gleam of sunshine lighting up the old-fashioned red-brick houses, that have the air of comfortable, cosy dwellings, and now mostly occupied by jewellers, clock-makers, and metal-workers, the name appears not inappropriate. Here, too, Coldbath Square opens out with its nice eighteenth-century houses, whose carved doorways and panelled entrance-halls are suggestive of the genteel personages who once occupied them, but pleasant enough still, with swarms of healthy, cheerful-looking children on the steps, and workmen in their shirt-sleeves looking out of the upper windows. Here, too, still exists the Coldbath House, supplied by the chalybeate spring, in whose waters, we are told by the advertisement over the door, Nell Gwynne was accustomed to bathe. The original spring, however, discovered by Walter Baynes, A.D. 1697, of the nature of St. Magnus in the north, and St. Winifred's in Wales,

famed for the curing of most nerval disorders, is within the prison walls, in the yard where the old treadmill stood—itsself a pretty good cure for nerval disorders.

The field where the prison now stands was known in old times as Sir John Oldcastle's Field, from a tradition that here the famous Lollard knight suffered martyrdom; and a tavern called The Sir John Oldcastle stood close by, where there was a canal in the Dutch taste, and fishing therein for the patrons of the house. Cobham Row further records Oldcastle's connection with the neighbourhood, for he was often called Lord Cobham, having married the heiress of that barony, and close by is Turnmill Street, where the clack of waterwheels could once be heard from the Fleet Brook below. It is said that the knight once lay concealed among the parchment-makers of that neighbourhood.

Not far to the eastward were the Mulberry Gardens, which were planted in the reign of our English Solomon, James the First, the King having encouraged the planting of these trees, wishing to establish the cultivation of silkworms in England. The mulberry garden in the west is now the site of Buckingham Palace and its gardens; but that of Clerkenwell, with less happy fate, is occupied by the twin prison known as the House of Detention, or shortly, among its inmates, past and prospective, as the "Tench. A curious sight is the out-of-the-way corner by the entrance of the House of Detention, where one or two policemen are always standing, with idlers loitering about, waiting for news of friends within; a cab, perhaps, waiting at the corner, and women inside, their eyes all swollen and red. There is always a certain bustle of coming and going, and a certain free-and-easy atmosphere about the place, that recalls the prisons of an earlier and less rigid period. Public-houses flourish in the neighbourhood, and hang out signs inviting the custom of prisoners and their friends, for most of the prisoners here are untried, and have the privilege of out-commons, if they have the means to pay for it.

And yet in outward appearance this Clerkenwell New Prison, as it is sometimes called—and new it really was some seventy years ago—looks inexpressibly old and shabby, with its dingy red-brick walls, once battered by Fenian explosion, and over all the top of a huge brick funnel, suggestive of mysterious doings inside, and appalling to

popular imagination. It was these huge, ugly prisons that destroyed the pleasantness of Clerkenwell, once the pleasantest and healthiest of all suburban districts. And if, as has been suggested, the prisons with their gloomy aperturances are carried farther afield, there is a little hope for some return to former conditions. We may yet see a drinking-fountain, supplied by the Coldbath spring, in the midst of the green turf of Oldcastle's Field, and the old mulberry gardens may show once more the early blossoms of spring. But if, instead of this, the ground is to be covered by gloomy workmen's barracks, then we may have to say that, æsthetically, we regret the old prisons.

And, after all, looking up at the great gateway of Coldbath Prison, you must acknowledge something imposing about it; the frowning walls, the towers seen above, have a kind of feudal impressiveness. The great gates swing silently open, and a tall, white-bearded warder appears, who would do credit to the portcullis of some royal castle; a van drives in with a clank and a swing, while armed guards are hanging on within and without. The gate closes with a clang, and there is now time to admire the massive archway, where a lion's head grins over the keystone, while between festoons of chains and shackles you may read the inscription: "1794. Middlesex House of Correction, 1866."

The great gate is only opened for vehicles—the prison-van from Clerkenwell Sessions, with its batch of prisoners freshly convicted; other vans of less sombre character—Pickford's van, for instance, with a few bales of stuff to be worked up by the prisoners. But in the thickness of the flanking wall there is a little postern-gate, with a grating in the iron-studded door, and through this we gain access to the prison. We are delayed a few minutes while the gate-keeper examines our credentials, and then a warder takes us in charge, and leads us across an open courtyard, surrounded by high walls, with their iron chevaux-de-frise, to the gateway of the actual prison—an entrance sombre and striking enough, with something of the old-fashioned dungeon feeling about it. And here we have to wait for a few moments in a bare, gaunt room, where a respectably-dressed woman, with her little boy, is waiting with an anxious brow for an interview with her husband, who is a prisoner.

"Can't see your man to-day," said a warder, entering hurriedly, and addressing

the woman. "He's been a bad boy, and lost his privilege." The poor woman sighed deeply, but did not seem surprised. "What's he been doing of now?" she asked rather bitterly, and as if she had a certain amount of sympathy with those who had to look after her man. "Well, I'm not allowed to say that," replied the warder cautiously. "But you come again this day week, and I expect he'll be all right again;" and the woman moves wearily away, chilled and disappointed. We are now fairly started on our rounds, beginning with the gloomy corridor of the old prison. Something worth seeing, this, as realising the old-fashioned ideal of a prison—a strong, gloomy, vaulted passage, with a solemn ray of light at the farther end, where a warder stands with a bunch of keys, and is lighted up into the very figure of an ideal gaoler. This corridor, with its echoing stone pavement and dimly-lighted cells, is what remains of the prison of 1794, about whose history some little interest clings.

The justices of Middlesex, who reared, at the cost of the ratepayers, this baronial pile, have had for centuries a considerable corporate cohesion, and have been accustomed to act a leading part in the government of that portion of the metropolis which is beyond the City boundaries. In the year 1614 we find them about to build a House of Correction for the county—the name expressing the censorial authority claimed by the magistracy, who were expected not only to punish crime, but to repress vice, immorality, heresy, profane swearing, and the deadly sins generally, and to inculcate morality and virtue. Not that the paternal character of the correction made the prison in any way a school of reform. The Middlesex Prison was no better than its neighbours, and it was partly as a work of philanthropy, and to carry out the ideas of the admirable Mr. Howard, that Coldbath Prison was commenced.

But the sight of this great building rising in their midst, seems to have suggested to the populace that here was a kind of menace directed against them. The French Revolution was yet in course of working out its marvellous transformation; the Bastille, that emblem of autocratic power, had fallen before a popular insurrection; and here, on this side of the Channel, a new Bastille was rising to overawe all discontent with the existing state of affairs. Ardent young politicians

encouraged the notion, and in their hot youth, Southey and Coleridge fulminated against the prison in the Devil's Walk—

As he passed through Coldbath Fields he looked
At a solitary cell.

Indeed, the solitary system, upon which Coldbath was first conducted, might well excite popular reprobation. Nothing so cruel had been known even in the days of prison torture. But popular reprobation exaggerated the physical cruelties of the system, and the governor of the prison was accused of barbarities which probably had no existence. But the rumour got abroad of tortures and cruelties exercised upon the prisoners, and an excited crowd assembled round the prison walls, full of anger and indignation. The prisoners within, well aware of the sympathy they excited, added to the effect by giving vent to the most doleful groans and agonising shrieks. The cry went forth that the torture was now going on, and had the crowd found a resolute leader, a tumult would have arisen which might have given a strange, unexpected turn to the course of affairs. It was then that first the cry was raised about the Fields, "Down with the Bastile!" and it is curious to find a trace of this little bit of veritable history preserved in the cant name of the prison among the prison-haunting classes, for "the Steel," as they call it, is evidently a contraction of that once opprobrious term, "the Bastile."

Soon after, a riot broke out in the prison itself, and encouraged by the presence and enthusiastic shouts of a formidable mob outside, the prisoners had almost succeeded in mastering the prison authorities, when the assistance of the military was invoked. There were no regular troops available, but Clerkenwell was then strong in volunteers, with a squadron of light horse, with hessians, plumes, and tight hussar suits—five hundred strong or so—and a battalion of infantry—eight hundred fine infantry—mostly young men of means and position, for Clerkenwell at that date was a favourite residence of the City aristocracy.

And so the Clerkenwell Light Infantry were marched into the prison, bayonets fixed, pieces loaded and primed, pig-tails fiercely curling beneath the tall Prussian shakos, and each man with eighteen rounds of ball cartridge in his pouch. The riot collapsed at once at the sight of this strong force, and the leaders of the émeute submitted quietly to be ironed under the

muzzles of the volunteer musketry. In consequence of these disturbances the governor of the prison was removed; but his fault seems rather to have been laxity of discipline than any actual ill-treatment of the prisoners under his charge.

From that period little happened to vary the dull records of a prison, till the period of the first Reform agitation, in 1830, when a considerable number of political prisoners were detained at Coldbath Fields, and the authorities, in the excited state of public feeling, feared an attack upon the prison to rescue the popular favourites. The warders were armed, and patrolled the battlements, ammunition was laid in, and the prison was prepared for a regular siege. But nobody came to the attack. And then by degrees the prison that had in its first conception been considered as a model one, became in its turn old-fashioned and antiquated, and so, at the time of the second date inscribed on the gateway—1866, that is—the prison was partly pulled down and entirely remodelled on the modern radiating or spider's-web system, with long corridors like the spokes of wheels about a central hole of observation.

And into this new portion of the prison we are presently ushered; a stirring sight, with its long radiating wings open from basement to roof, with light iron galleries running round each stage of cells, which you view from an immense circular grating, from the centre of which can be seen every part of the immense area. Not a gloomy place by any means, but rather lightsome and cheerful, with a quiet echo of distant footsteps among the iron galleries, little bands of prisoners marching here and there in front of a warder, others singly wheeling little trucks filled with stores or carrying bundles of work. The dark grey suits of the prisoners and the blue uniforms of the warders mingle in not inharmonious groups. Here are light, and warmth, and fresh air, and employment sufficient to occupy the mind, without the torture of over-mastering toil, with the certainty of food and shelter. One wonders that the half-starved denizens of the slums of London do not come in a body to participate in these advantages. And yet the place is not popular. The diet, if sufficient for health, leaves an aching void in the interior, and then there is enforced abstinence, and the strict, rigid discipline: all these make the notion of a prison sufficiently unpalatable to the many, although one or two may be found here and there

who find their lot more dreary when at liberty.

And then while the central view of the great prison-house is lively and varied, there is a terrible monotony in the different sections of the building. Cell after cell appears, the very fellow of its neighbour, each with its card with the criminal's number, his sentence, and the date of its expiration, with a schedule of the marks he has earned for good conduct. The only difference is in the colour of the cards—white for Protestants, and orange for Roman Catholics, for the moment that a man comes within the clutch of the law, his religion becomes a matter of importance. He may never have troubled himself about the matter before; but now he must elect under which of the religious banners he will serve. For the benefit of visitors one of the cells is kept completely furnished, and fitted up with all the belongings of a prisoner, but there is nothing attractive about this except to a professional eye; there is not even a dummy figure, like that in the Health Exhibition, to give an air of reality to the scene. But to see a real prisoner in his real cell during his leisure moments, sitting on his prison-stool, and musing upon the fate of man, or reading one of the books provided for prisoners, this would be a study worth taking. Unfortunately this cannot be allowed at Coldbath Fields. There are celebrated captives here, at whom many would give much to have a peep; but prisoners stand on their rights, it seems, and object to be peeped at. So that in this particular aspect the prisoner must be unknown to us. But in every other part of his life at Coldbath Fields our prisoner is in full evidence: we see him marching about the corridors, or standing with his face to the wall, waiting for admittance to his cell. There are over thirteen hundred of them at this moment in the prison—the exact daily average is thirteen hundred and seventy-two—a terribly large army of criminals. Indeed, of all local prisons in England, as distinguished from convict-prisons, Coldbath is the largest, with the greatest number of inmates. Wandsworth comes next with a mixed population of male and female prisoners, with an average of eleven hundred and twenty-seven, and Wakefield next, but at a long interval, with seven hundred and sixty-one.

So that this Coldbath prison may be regarded as the Metropolitan, or primate, among prisons, the best-known among all,

and, as it owns with honourable pride, the least liked of any. To sustain its rank Coldbath shows the following staff: A governor and deputy, two chaplains, two surgeons, ten schoolmasters and clerks, ninety-two warders, seventeen other officers,—in all a hundred and twenty-five. And the total amount of the prison budget is some twenty thousand pounds a year, or something less than twenty pounds as the yearly cost of a prisoner; but this amount is further reduced by the earnings of the prisoners, as will be seen presently, for we are now about to visit the industrial department of the prison.

The door opens upon a large hall half full of steam and vapour, while water is splashing, and clothes are being wrung out, and busy knots of men are about the various receptacles, stirring, wringing, rubbing, and going through all the processes of a laundry on a large scale. Nearly forty men are employed at this work, and only the presence of a uniformed warder, unruffled by toil, reminds us that we are not in an ordinary industrial establishment. The result of this washing and scrubbing is apparent in hundreds upon hundreds of bundles of just the same form and size, each of which is the convict's weekly kit—his shirt, stockings, drawers, and jumper jacket—and then as well, the whole of the washing of the staff and establishment is done here. Another iron doorway leads into the bakehouse, with its huge ovens and great kneading-troughs; and here are some sixteen prisoners at work making bread. It is whole-meal bread of the kind that outsiders have to pay fancy prices for, but the prisoners don't like it, and compare it unfavourably with the white and well-alumed "tommy" of private life. But what strikes one most forcibly in this and the other workshops, is that the prisoners seem perfectly to the manner born; these bakers here are as smart and effective as if they had been at the business from infancy.

"And such is the case, no doubt," said our conductor. There is no lack of workmen at any kind of trade in Coldbath Fields, nor of good workmen at that. Whatever might be wanted to be done, from the delicate work about a watch to the casting of so many tons of metal, there were men always to be had who were equal to the work. In the workshops, when a hand was wanted, he was always to be found among the prisoners; so that from one point of view you have in Coldbath Fields a great industrial factory, with workmen always

under lock and key, and with nothing to fear from strikes or combinations of the employed. Here, for instance, is some of the work done by the prisoners. First of all, the whole building work of the prison: brick and stone work, repairs, plastering, painting, and plumbing; then all the tin work, iron work, and carpentry. Then the tailoring: uniform clothing is cut out on scientific principles for all the local prisons in the country; much of it is made up; the clothing and bedding for the prisoners of this and other prisons is completely made. Thus there are thirty-three tailors constantly at work, and eight shoemakers are busy over the shoes of the prison, while some fifteen less skilful hands are cobbling the worn chausure. Then there is the blacksmith's shop, where all the ironwork of the prison is made, and where a man may be seen forging the fetters which, if he prove outrageous, may be used to bind him. The mat-making sheds occupy some seventy men, and another squad of eighteen or so are making baskets and brooms for prisons and public departments. A great quantity of baskets was supplied by Coldbath Fields at the opening of the Parcels Post, and thousands of wooden cases have been recently furnished from the carpenter's shop for the use of the Post Office.

Then come the unskilled labours of those most unfortunate of prisoners who have learnt no trade, no art or handicraft except that of picking and stealing. For these the oakum-picking room, with its trays of neatly-arranged specimens of cordage, a slice of a huge hawser that may have towed the *Téméraire*, now weighed out by the pound to be reduced by finger and thumb to so much fine fibre once more. There are more than six hundred at this work, or nearly half the population of the prison; but it must not be supposed that all these are unskilled workmen. Many of them could take their places in the workshops if there were room for them. But oakum-picking is a neat and handy form of labour, as far as the administration is concerned, which can be done by the prisoner in his cell, and there is never too much oakum in the world, it seems, while the limits of the demand for cocoa-nut mats, we will say, is soon reached. Else the employment is not a very profitable one. The value of the labour of the six hundred oakum-pickers is put down in the prison reports at three hundred pounds a year, or ten shillings apiece, at which rate

the oakum-picker earns, allowing three hundred working days to the year, just two-fifths of a penny a day.

A more lively and varied occupation, and one more pleasant for the fingers, is paper-picking. Here is a big shed occupied by some six score men; some of them of a venerable and patriarchal appearance. It is never too late to get into prison, it seems. Here is an old gentleman of over seventy, whose passions have still force to lead him astray; and there is a fair sprinkling of greybeards among the paper-pickers, whose work is perpetually picking old envelopes and pieces of waste-paper out of one basket and dropping them into another. The public departments make great quantities of waste-paper; and of that, everything that is not docketed, and filed, and put away among the national archives, is brought to Coldbath Fields to be picked and sorted. And the recognised value of the labours of an active young fellow of business habits, about a basket of papers, is nearly twopence-halfpenny a day at Coldbath Fields, showing a considerable difference in tariff between this and similar occupations carried on further west.

And thus it is pretty evident that if the industrial departments of the prisons earn the large amount that is credited to them in the official reports—in round numbers some ten thousand pounds a year, or half the general charges of the prison—the result is due chiefly to the labours of the skilled workmen—the plumbers, smiths, carpenters, and so on—who make up by the value of their work for the profitless labours of the great mass of prisoners. And this may be an index to the enormous increase of the value of labour arising from technical instruction—since even in a prison the skilled workman is still profitable to the community. But, from another point of view, a visit to Coldbath prison is profoundly dispiriting. Here you have not a colony of gaol-birds, a class apart with whom it is not difficult to deal, but a great aggregate of the real working population of London. The faces you see passing along the prison corridors are the same kind of faces you meet in any London street; they belong to workmen who have robbed their masters, clerks and shopmen who have made free with the till, bank-clerks who have betrayed their trust, small people who have given way to small temptations, not a bit more criminal than thousands who are at large outside. But it is as the sign of a certain blight or mould

that seems to be creeping over whole classes of the community, that the presence of all these non-professional criminals becomes so disheartening. Here you have smart young fellows, fairly educated, and, with ordinary industry, quite above the reach of want, who have deliberately turned to predatory ways, as a kind of labour-saving contrivance, and with the full conviction that honesty is the best policy only for those who are too stupid to try any other.

But now we come to the strangest of all the sights in this great prison—the gallery where the great treadwheel continually revolves with a dull, resounding clank. It is a fine, well-ventilated hall, lighted from above; and on either side are rows of grey-coated prisoners, the strangest collection of human scaramouches, as, clinging to a wooden bar above them, they skip from step to step of the slowly-turning wheel, and are never an inch the farther advanced for all their skipping. A sad, terrible sight of human degradation—as painful to witness, perhaps, as to endure—with a ludicrous touch about it, too, that seems to add to the degradation. Not all the prisoners are at work, however, a third of them are resting—for each man's daily task is divided into quarter-hours, of which ten minutes are spent on the wheel and five minutes sitting down. A prisoner with a can goes round and supplies those who are resting with water. And this is the real hard-labour of the prison—an ordeal that all must go through who are thus sentenced. A month on the treadwheel is the preliminary for all who are not pronounced unfit by the prison-surgeon. As a punishment, it falls most heavily upon the least criminal; the regular prison-bird is accustomed to the work, his muscles have accommodated themselves to his peculiar conditions of life. But to the prisoner who has not been previously convicted, the first week or two are of positive torture, every muscle and sinew being racked and strained by the unaccustomed labour. Silence, of course, is imperative. The lightest accent brings punishment, and yet the prisoners contrive to talk upon the wheel. With faces to the revolving wheel, and without turning in either direction, a whisper is breathed in the air and meets a receptive ear. Occasionally the receptive ear is that of a warder, who, having a little leisure time, devotes it to the chase of small offences—a cruel sport, perhaps, but then the relations between prisoners and warders are not marked by confidence and affection.

But it is rather startling, as we pass by the ranks of prisoners toiling up their never-ending pairs of stairs, to hear, softly murmured, a distant personal allusion to the group of visitors passing through the ward. It is impossible to say whence the voice proceeds, and the warders shake their heads and look sterner than ever; but the incident has its cheering side as showing that all human spirit is not crushed out by the flanges of that hideous wheel.

Turning from the wheel-room, we see the result of this economic application of human force in the shape of mill wheels and stones, and powdery streams of flour. And in the prison report, the gang upon the wheel—a wheel which upon its capacious circumference has room for a hundred and twenty-five pair of feet, and yet is less capacious than the old wheel of the prison; which last caught fire some years ago, and was wholly destroyed, to the great joy of the world of habitual offenders—well, these hundred and twenty-five gangers on the wheel are euphemistically described as “employed in manufactures”—the grinding of wheat, that is, by a process the simplicity of which recalls the arts of primitive man. And the wheel-gang are credited with earning a hundred and thirteen pounds a year towards the cost of their keep—that is, not quite a penny a day per man. But, then, of course, the object is not profit, but the due correction of the prisoners. And, as a rough-and-ready method of punishment, applicable to all cases, and with little trouble—like the favourite bastinado of a more primitive jurisprudence—the treadwheel is a favourite method of discipline with most of the official authorities.

And the millstones grind small enough, if they grind slowly; and listening to the uncertain, intermittent pulse of the wheel, and thinking of the sighs and groans that are echoed in that doleful, clanking revolution, you wonder that the meal should trickle past so fine, and white, and sweet-smelling. Anyhow, the official reporters are satisfied the millstones work well; but they do not grind enough grist to supply the great bakery of the prison, which furnishes all the prisons of London with bread.

And now there only remains the chapel to visit—a square, cheerful-looking place, whose chancel is adorned with some neatness and taste by the hands of the prisoners. Something hearty in the way

of psalmody is heard here on Sundays, with a thousand or so of prisoners and warders stretching their throats to the utmost.

Another less agreeable sight, however, is a vestibule, with the triangles, and a kind of iron horse, used for flogging hardened offenders against prison discipline. There are twenty recorded cases of punishment in one year at Coldbath Fields. But here end the gruesome associations of the prison—there is no execution-shed. Coldbath, as yet, is free from the dreadful presence of the gallows. There are deaths in the prison, as must necessarily be with such a resident population, but the prison mortality is exceptionally low. Last year there were only nine deaths among an average population, it may be remembered, of one thousand three hundred and seventy-two prisoners. And those nine who thus obtained release without resort to human clemency, are so fairly representative of the general bulk of prisoners that their trades may here be given: A carpenter, grocer's assistant, labourer, navy, printer, shoeblick, tailor, waiter, and two generally described as labourers.

And as we are about to leave the prison-walls, we may think of those whose time is on the point of expiring, and who will on the morrow issue forth as free men into a world which is hardly prepared, perhaps, to welcome them very heartily. "And if I was something of a failure," a prisoner may say to himself, "when I had yet a character, what chance have I now, with the prison stain upon me?" But hands are stretched out to the discharged prisoner. Before he leaves the prison-gate the following invitation is placed in his hand: "Dear Friend,—You are kindly invited to partake of coffee and bread-and-butter, free of charge, at the Mission House, opposite the prison gates, on the right." And this is the liberated prisoner's first introduction to a society that is doing a good work among those who would otherwise drift hopelessly and forlornly from the prison gates.

REDMEN'S GRAVES.

WHO are the redmen? Do they belong to some old, old race, of which the Guanches in the Canary Isles, the Basques in Western Spain and France and Britain, and the ancient Egyptians, were offshoots, and

which was more widely spread in the New World, because that New World is, as geologists tell us, older—i.e., more unaltered in its features than the old? Or are they congeners of the yellowmen who fill all northern and a great deal of central Asia, modified from what we call the Mongolian type by ages of different life-conditions?

Who can tell? What is to be the test? Not language, which among tribes with no written literature has a constant tendency to change, and which in South America does change so fast that half a tribe, paddling away on a three years' voyage up one of the great rivers, will come back, Mr. Bates tells us, scarcely able to hold a conversation with the half that stayed at home. Not architecture, which depends so much on the materials at hand, so that even in England the stately grey home-steads all along the line of oolite, are quite unlike the pargetted black and white houses of Shropshire, or the flint walls of East Anglian dwellings.

How about burial customs? They are as lasting as any; witness the "wakes" that still in this end of the nineteenth century go on in Liverpool and London; and, on the whole, the redmen, differing in so many things, agree, all the continent over, in some of their ways of dealing with the dead. They agree, too, with Basques, and Guanches, and Egyptians, in their eagerness to prevent the earth from touching the dead person. The Egyptians never buried, they set their mummies where, when the restitution of all things came round, they might slip their cements and walk forth with all their kin and all their belongings around them. The Guanches also mummified their dead and put them away in caves. The Basques, or Euskarians—builders, we are told, of those rough stone boxes which used to be called cromlechs—laid the corpse on a flat stone, put up stone sides, and laid a big stone cover atop, and then heaped over this "cist" the cairn of earth or pebbles. The Red Indian generally dispenses with the cairn, and seldom has stone slabs wherewith to form the cist; but he is equally careful not to weigh down the soul with earthen clods. Sometimes he lays his dead in trees, sometimes on a platform of poles, sometimes in a canoe set up on posts. When he does heap up a mound, there is always a stick leading from the body to the surface, and up this the soul is supposed to climb and wing its way westward. When he digs

a vault he contrives to make it funnel-shaped, the big end downwards. The bottom is covered with fine mats, the walls hung with handsome shawls, blankets, skins, and not only the dead man's belongings, but contributions from his friends—a saddle, some dishes, ornamental pottery, etc.—are placed around. Then the corpse, wrapped in blankets, and wampum belts, and buffalo robes, is lowered into the vault; a pony (previously selected by the defunct) is strangled, and often a dog also, and their heads are placed on the grave, the mouth of which has been closed with neatly-fitting logs, and over these is laid a coating of earth. Here we have the same feeling which among ourselves prompts the village shopkeeper's widow to go to the expense of a "brick grave," instead of letting her husband sleep with nothing but the coffin-lid between him and the churchyard mould, after the fashion of "the rude forefathers of the hamlet."

When the Indians were great nations, instead of broken wandering tribes, their customs were more elaborate. Lawson, who wrote a history of the Carolinas in the first years of the last century, was struck with the care the Indians showed in keeping the corpse from contact with the soil. Their feeling was just the opposite of that expressed by "Earth to earth." Old travellers give quaint woodcuts of the quigozogon or mausoleum, in which dead people of note were laid. It was lined as well as floored with mats, and had its sides secured from falling in by well-spliced poles, which supported an arched roof. If all this seems too much trouble for "savages" to take, we must remember they were not savages—had many arts which they have lost through contact with the whites; and, from the unsparing way in which nowadays they give their best to their dead friends, we may argue that De Bry and Lafitau, and other explorers, simply depicted what they saw, and that the houses of the dead were, among some tribes, really far more sumptuous than those of the living. Here is an instance of this present-day unsparingness in a poor broken tribe in California. These Californians burn their dead, as do many Indians of the Far West; and the scene at a chief's burning reminds one of the burials of the old Greek heroes. "In his mouth were placed two gold twenties, and smaller coins on his breast and in his hands and ears. All his finery—feather mantles, plumes, clothes, shell-money, bows, arrows—was heaped upon

him; and as soon as the dirge and funeral-dance were set going, the Indian spectators began to lose their heads. One stripped off a brand-new broadcloth coat, and flung it on the pyre, throwing piteously. Another was just howling on a pile of blankets, when a white man offered him ten dollars for them, jingling the bright coins before his eyes." The redman hurled him aside, and threw his offering with the rest. Women kept throwing on all they had in the world—their gayest dresses, their shell necklaces. Indeed, so furious got the excitement that some of them would themselves have leaped in had they not been prevented. The idea was that the souls of the things thus burned went off charioted in the smoke-wreaths along with the soul of the dead man. At this funeral the white men who were looking on calculated that at least five hundred dollars' worth of goods was destroyed, and what surprised them most was that the Indians, at other times such close bargainers, wholly forgot their usual greed. "Why, he'd have cleared eight dollars if he'd sold me his blankets," said the man who had made the offer. "I only did it to try him, and precious glad I was when I saw he was too wild to snap at such a fancy price."

Where they do not burn they are equally lavish. Dr. Sternberg, of the United States army, found in Kansas, among the Cheyennes, a burial-case raised some eight feet from the ground on four notched uprights. Seeing that it was carefully constructed, his "civilised" instinct prompted him at once to send it to the Army Medical Museum at Washington, where it was found to consist of a box, six feet long, three high, and three deep, of white willow branches, neatly plaited, with a flooring of buffalo thongs, and straps fastening it to four twelve-foot ironwood poles, which had rested in the notched uprights. Outside were two buffalo-ropes of the largest size, and inside five more, each bound round with a bright sash, were successively removed. Then came five blankets, two red, two blue, one white; and next a white and grey striped sack, and inside that a United States infantry overcoat—like all the other wrappings, nearly new. Then, on a pillow of rags, was the "medicine-bag" of the dead baby—of course it was a baby; all those wrappings left only room for a year-old child. The bag contained a parcel of red paint, some bits of deer-skin, along with straps, buckles, and other odds and ends. The inner wrappings were three splendid

robes, each about four feet long, of buffalo calf-skin, elaborately decorated with beadwork stripes—blue and white in the first, green and yellow in the next, blue and red in the innermost. The hoods, too, were richly ornamented with beadwork, and all round the robes little spherical brass bells were hung with strings of beads. Next was a grey woollen shawl, then five yards of blue cashmere, followed by six of red, and that again by six of brown calico, and in that last wrapping was the babe, with a beaver-fur cap, and long wampum necklaces, and strings of rare shells, among them that *Haliotis* from the Californian Gulf, so valued by the tribes living east of the Rocky Mountains. The dress was a red tunic, with beadwork frock leggings, red and black stockings, deerskin moccasins with beadwork, and over all a red flannel cloak. All the little creature's toys—a china doll, a vase, a pair of mittens, etc., were placed in the cloak. Think of the amount of self-denial in giving up all those blankets, and all that mass of bead and wampum work! The New Yorkers are only acting like those who held the land before them, when they spend such fabulous sums as the newspapers tell us they do on coffin decoration. Other tribes, instead of plaited willow boxes, use regular wooden chests, wonderfully carved, usually with a lid like a gabled roof, and always with an opening in the side through which food may be passed in, so that the soul may eat the souls of the good things provided by its friends. Old travellers wondered at these coffins set up above-ground; and the Spaniards—as little scrupulous as Dr. Sternberg about violating burial-places—found in some of them a deal of wealth. The burial boxes of a tribe on the Talomeco River, Oregon, are said to have furnished handfuls of pearls to a party of soldiers that was exploring the coast.

The Chinese, we must remember, also keep their coffins above-ground; and, ages ago, they used to be as reckless as the redmen in their offerings to the dead. The Scythians—probably also belonging to the yellow race—seem to us to have been the most lavish because of the quantity of gold found in their tombs. But gold was common in the Ural; and to a Scythian King even the treasures found in such a tomb as Koul-Oba, near Kertch, were not more valuable than all that calico, and those buffalo robes and blankets, were to the poor Cheyenne.

And yet, though the whole country from Kertch to the Sea of Azov is strewn with

burial mounds which from time immemorial have been ransacked for their treasures, there never has been such a find as this Koul-Oba (ash-heap), which somehow remained undisturbed till 1831, and in which, along with the King, his wife, his servants, and his horses, was found a weight of gold (to say nothing of electrum—gold alloyed with silver) in torques, bracelets, sword-hilts, dishes, goblets, etc., of one hundred and twenty pounds. Of this the Russian government was robbed of all but some fifteen pounds, though nominally the greatest precautions were taken to prevent pilfering. This Koul-Oba tomb was draped all round like the burial-vault of a Sioux; only, instead of being lined with furs, its lining was hangings of gold tissue, the only remaining parts of which are the gold nails that fastened them to the courses of stonework, and the masses of tangled gold thread and heaps of thin stamped gold ornaments with which the ground close beneath the walls is covered. You can see at South Kensington reproductions of some of the Koul-Oba things; and, seeing them, you will marvel at the strange feeling which gave to the dead what the living could but ill spare. To keep any large percentage of a nation's wealth in treasure-houses, like that in which Sir Bedivere wanted to put Excalibur, seems to us to savour of barbarism. But such treasures can be used at a pinch. Henrietta Maria turned into money a good deal of the chased and jewelled work that Plantagenets and Tudors had stored up; and what she did not succeed in sending off, the Parliament found very useful; whereas treasures in tombs are lost for ever to the nation that buries them. A redman will sooner freeze than use the most mouldering of coffin-poles or uprights to light his fire; and so the Scythians looked on the vases, bracelets, plates of gold, etc., buried with their dead Kings, as something which it would be sacrilege to touch. The mounds were never desecrated till long after the Scythians had passed away—till the Genoese—so proverbially sharp that it takes two Jews to outwit one of them—came sailing about in those parts.

Any nation that would thrive must give up this excessive funeral unthrift. Do not think I am preaching in the interests of the Cheap Funeral Society; though it always annoys me, in West Cornwall, where they like to "bury decent," to see the coffin covered with good black cloth, and the white-metal plates, and the lining of fine

flannel, when I know that, tin being down so low, the survivors would be glad of the money thus wasted to add a little butcher's meat to their dry bread and pilchards. No; I was thinking of the Chinese, and how cleverly they, while mostly keeping up appearances, have managed to slip out of the cost of funerals. Time was when they, too, offered all that was rarest and best at their tombs; but they have found out that a red paper horse and state dress of gilt paper are just as useful to the ghost as things that the survivors can ill spare.

The redmen have not yet learnt this cheap way of testifying regard. Even when they do not burn or bury everything, they give everything away. It seems a point of honour with the relations that they, and not the dead, should be left as bare as Job after his successive losses. Sometimes, instead of a gift to everyone present at the funeral, there is what they call a "ghost gamble." The dead man's goods are parcelled out into many small lots. In the centre of the lodge is the bundle containing a lock of hair, which stands instead of the corpse, and which the widow has to carry about with her for a year. Close beside this seats himself a near relative chosen to act as ghost; and he plays against all comers. The game is (or was, till cards came in with whiskey and shoddy blankets) a certain throw of eight marked wild-plum stones. Nothing is staked; but everyone who beats the ghost takes one of the lots; everyone whom the ghost beats goes off empty-handed. For a dead woman's goods only women play, using seven instead of eight stones.

The carrying for twelve moons a "husband" of wampum, and clothes, and feathers, is a release from the old custom by which the widow had to carry his bones all through the second year after his death, after daily offering food at his grave for the whole of the first year. The clothes are her own best; and during the time she has to wear her worst, and her hair is never dressed unless a female friend comes and combs it out for her. It may interest those who are working to change our marriage-laws to know that, though during her year of mourning she must not even talk to men in general, and, if caught doing so, has her hair cut off close to the roots by the women of her tribe, there is an exception in favour of her husband's unmarried brothers and cousins, and others of the same "totem" (family-mark). Any one of these she may

marry; indeed, if at the funeral one of the brothers walks her across the grave, she is forthwith his wife, the bundle and other mourning-rites being dispensed with.

As we saw in the case of the baby Cheyenne, the deepest mourning is that for children. A Chippeway mother makes a doll and nurses it for a year, dropping little bits of food close to the imitation mouth. Among the Senel, in California, the mother goes, day by day, for twelve moons, to her babe's grave, or to some place where her little one used to play when alive, and piteously calls on it to return, sometimes singing a hoarse chant, like that which Mrs. Hemans idealised in her *Messenger Bird*, with its melancholy refrain, "We call, and they answer not again. Oh, say, do they love there yet?" and swaying her body to and fro in a weird dance.

Looking over the bulky report (six hundred quarto pages) of the Smithsonian Bureau of Ethnology, I am struck with the want of intelligence of many of the reporters. Knowing how carefully in Germany and France, and our own isles, enquirers have, since the days of the Brothers Grimm, been searching out and jotting down every vestige of old custom, one cannot help being amused at the off-hand way in which a man who hears a Senel dirge that sounds like "Hellellu, Hellelily," jumps to the conclusion that "the Indians must be descended from the Lost Tribes, for he heard them singing Hallelujah." Of human sacrifices, as well as suicides at graves, there is, however, apparently no doubt. Bossu, more than a century ago, tells us that when, among the Natchez of Louisiana, one of the nobles ("Suns," they called them) died, a large number always killed themselves; those, too, who married girls of the "Sun" blood, had to die if their wives died first. Not forty years ago, in Oregon, a Wascopun chief tied to his dead son, mouth to mouth, the lad who had been his comrade in all his youthful games, and huntings, and fishings. Among the tribes of Panama, when a suckling mother dies, her babe is placed at her breast and left at the burial-place; and this not from the wish to get rid of the encumbrance, but because the other world is felt to be only one step from this, and in taking that step, the poor orphan will be helped by her whose spirit is supposed to be still there.

A striking proof of this faith in the after-life as a continuation of this, comes out in the account of a Modoc funeral.

This was the tribe that made such desperate fight in 1873 at the Lava Beds. They had been crushed out; and the survivors were being carried away captive to Fort Klamath, when a great warrior, Curly-headed Jack, shot himself, unable to bear being torn from the rocky home to which they all clung so fondly. At first his friends would not believe he was dead. His mother laid his head in her lap, scooped the blood from his ear, and with it smeared herself and the other women of his family. Another old woman kept chafing his heart, another blew in his face. The soldiers dug a grave and buried him white-fashion; but Bogus Charley was seen running eagerly about the camp, trying to exchange a two-dollar currency-bill for silver. He owed the dead man that sum, and thought the States' paper would be of no value in the other world. A soldier gave him change, and, relieved and delighted, he flung it on the corpse. What is the use of talking about race, as proved by custom, when we know that the old Gauls, as far removed as possible from any kinship with redmen, used to promise to pay in the next life the debts they could not discharge in this, and that such promises were held to be as good as actual present payment? The fact is, many customs and beliefs belong not to this race nor to that, but to man in a particular stage of development. The red-man now is in the state in which the Gaul was when Greek ethnologists used to note down his habits and manners.

But now and then, one does meet something which is so like something else, that one is almost forced to believe in identity of race. Everyone who has read Herodotus remembers his weird story of how a Scythian King was buried. His Queens, and favourite pages, and horses were not simply slaughtered round his corpse, but were stood upright by means of wooden spars driven along the backbone, the horses having cross-spars down the legs, and the King being pinned by a wooden spike upright on the back of his upright charger, a great mound being afterwards heaped over it all. Catlin tells of the strangely similar burial of Blackbird, a great chief of the Omahas. "Take me," he said, "to the top of my favourite bluff that overlooks the river, where I may see the Frenchmen going up and down in their boats, and sit me on my favourite war-horse—the milk-white one—and bury us both together." As he directed, so it was done. He was set astride on

the horse, all the tribe, and the Indian agent, and several fur-traders looking on; in his hand was put his bow; his shield, and quiver, and pipe, and well-filled tobacco-pouch, and "medicine-bag," and a supply of dried meat were slung round him, along with flint, and steel, and tinder, that he might light his pipe on his long road. The scalps that he had taken were hung to his bridle; and he, with face freshly painted red, and war-eagle head-dress, was decked in full costume. The medicine-man then sang his dirge, and then every warrior of the tribe painted the palm and fingers of his right hand with vermilion, and stamped them on the horse's sides. Then turfs were placed round the horse's feet and legs, then up to its sides, then over the unsuspecting animal's back, until, at last, both its head and the head and plume of the rider were covered. I suppose Catlin is trustworthy. Of the Mandans he tells that they keep the skulls of their dead on a mound near the village; each skull rests on a tuft of sage-scrub, and, by the shape of these, the survivors know their own, and go and have a talk with them, setting before them the best food the wigwam affords, just as the Romans used, on anniversaries, to take funeral meats to their tombs, and as Gaelic chieftains used to creep in through the narrow galleries into the chambered mounds where their forefathers were laid, in order to ask counsel and help of them.

More widely spread among redmen than any other custom is that of twice burial; the dead are seldom left to rest where they are first laid; after a year (twelve moons) the bones are gathered and placed with those of their forefathers; the great chiefs, among some tribes, being kept apart in small chests of split cane or reed. These chests, preserved in the "medicine lodges" or temples, have been used to prove an Israelitish descent. Adair and other writers say "they are arks, after the fashion of that which was kept in the Tabernacle." De Brebœuf, the Jesuit missionary, thus describes a great reinvestment among the Hurons before the tribe was broken up: "There were at least two thousand Indians present, who offered, in token of their grief, some twelve hundred gifts. The bones, belonging to five Huron villages, were laid in a gigantic shroud made of forty-eight robes, each robe being composed of ten beaver-skins. In this they were carefully wrapped and then covered with moss and bark, a few grains of maize being first thrown in on them by the women. A wall of stones was then

built all round, and the feast of the dead was held, after which the souls, supposed to be till now in the neighbourhood of their remains, were free to go their western journey." Here, again, we are met with a contradiction; for either Father Brebœuf is wrong or the Hurons differed from other tribes; the fourth day is (we are elsewhere assured) the time when the spirit begins its departure, fires being lighted on the grave till that day that the ghost may be kept warm. There is a discrepancy in the two accounts, due probably to the exceeding unwillingness with which "natives" enter into such explanations. Something must remain, or food would not be served all through the year; yet something is also supposed to take a speedy departure. One school of American archaeologists solves the matter by saying that native belief credits everything with at least two souls. It must be very hard to get at the real feelings of Red Indians; everybody who has tried knows how hard it is to find out what people in our own land think about death and the after-world. Read what hard work Mr. Campbell in the Hebrides, and M. Villemarqué in Brittany, found it to collect legends, how they had to get them, so to speak, by surprise; and anyone who has tried to collect folk-lore in outlying parts of England knows it is the same with that. People get shy, and shut their mouths the moment they suspect you are pumping them. Hence I fancy a good deal of the inferences drawn from redmen's burial-customs are only inferences. I cannot believe that an Indian would explain it all to an inquisitive white, even if the white was an Indian agent. One thing is certain: the dead are in some sense held to be very near; sometimes a thread is passed in a straight line from the wigwam to the grave as if to keep up the connection; but the presence, though recognised, is never referred to. They are as chary of talking of their dead as a Turk is of discussing his wife's health with a man he meets in the street. At the first funeral feast the dead is talked of; the games so grand and long continued when the tribes were at their best), the cutting and maiming, chopping off finger-joints, and all the rest of it, go on while the praises of the dead are being said and sung. The same at the reinterment, when the bones are put away; but otherwise the name is seldom or never uttered. Why? Not, surely, for fear of bringing down the

ghost's malice? That is why the wild non-Hindoo tribes in Central India consign their dead to total oblivion. They put a pot of food in a tree near the grave, saying: "We were good to you in life, and now we have done all we can for you. Go away; we do not want to see you any more." But this cannot be the feeling of those of whose lasting regard and tender reverence we have been noting down so many instances.

Another custom, once as widespread as that of collective reinterment, but, like it, necessarily limited by the encroachments of the whites, is that of burying always in "the sepulchres of their fathers." A tribe that has been out buffalo-hunting and has lost several people, has been known to tie them on horses, and bring them—a ghastly cavalcade, reminding us of those "caravans of the dead" met with now and then in Persia—hundreds of miles to the tribal burying-place. With such burying-places the "pioneers of civilisation" made short work. We are not over careful of our dead. Old City graveyards, and some that can scarcely be called old, are dug out and the contents carted off; and the "jerry"-builder pays for his houses by selling the valuable subsoil, and fills in his foundations with the remains of citizens. It is this uncertainty as to our securing a sure resting-place which is one of the arguments for cremation; and if we deal so with our own people we cannot expect United States men of the Far West to care much for the feelings of Red Indians. The Indians have been moved westward; their burial-places must go with them. One thing is startling in this Smithsonian Report. The Indians are not likely to disappear, in spite of continual shiftings to fresh and fresh reserves. "They are not much diminished," we are told, "in numbers, while those longest in contact with civilisation are increasing." Very comforting that for members of the Aborigines Protection Society; but hardly credible to those who have read in old travellers the accounts of the numbers who used to occupy the districts where now there has not been an Indian for centuries.

Many or few, however, the Indians will gradually lose their burial like their other customs. They will dig graves as the whites do (unless, indeed, the Yankees take to cremation all of a sudden); they will think better of burning or burying so much property with their dead; they will not even strangle an old pony when a chief dies, much less three hundred ponies as the

Comanches have done before now at the funeral of a very great man; they will give up the cutting, and maiming, and the ball-play, and the lamentation ("keening," the Irish call it), though a very matter-of-fact Smithsonian suggests that its object may have been "to prevent premature interment!" Never again, among "civilised" tribes, will a good twenty-five feet canoe be "wasted" by being turned into a coffin, as a missionary in Washington Territory saw done not many years ago. With the arts of white men will come the economy of white men, and that love of heirlooms which is just the opposite of the "spend everything at the funeral" feeling. No one will ever henceforth be buried in a river-bed, a place which makes us think of Alaric, at whose burial the Vasantos, in Calabria, was turned out of its course, the slaves who dug the grave in its dry bed being slaughtered, that no one might know where the spot was. What a chance, that, for Dr. Schliemann, when he has done with Agamemnon and Mycenæ!

The redmen, poor things, never had anything worth digging for, except in a few places, which those clever looters, the Spaniards, have long since pretty well ransacked. How (in Hakluyt) Strachey, writing of the Virginia Indians, despises the "pearle" (mother of pearl), "copper, beads, and such trashes, sowed in a skynne," which he says are stuffed into the bodies of the dead. Instead of reinterment of bones, according to him, the bones were prepared by scraping off the flesh as soon as death had taken place. "The flesh was dried upon hurdells into ashes, which they put into little pots, like the aunoyent urnes. The anatomy of the bones they bind or case up in leather, hanging bracelets, or chains of copper beads, pearle, or such-like as they use to wear about most of their joints and neck, and so repose the body upon a little scaffold, laying by the feet all his riches in several baskets, his apook and pipe, and any one toy which in his life he held most deare in his fancy." Strachey says that only the kings are so treated, and that their final resting-place is the temples, "where the priests are colledged as ministers to exercise themselves in contemplation, for they are seldom out of them, and maynteyne continuall fier in the same, upon a hearth somewhat near the east end." What a change since that kind of thing went on in "Old Virginny"! The common people

were buried, Strachey says (as other writers tell us the Florida Indians were), in a sitting posture, in holes lined with fur, and timbered over to keep the soil from touching the dead. This sitting posture is common in many parts. Some people in Britain used to bury that way. I remember seeing in the side of a Wiltshire chalk quarry near Rood Ashton a number of so-called "Saxon" graves, the skeleton in each with its knees up to its nose. Why? The utilitarians say because such graves take so much less digging; surely rather, since among most early races nothing is too costly to be spent on the dead, either because it was the posture of the living man, or from the horror which redmen, at any rate, feel of letting the earth touch the dead body.

One word about urn-burial, comparatively rare in North America. The present redmen never seem to have used it; but the "mound-builders," whether they were a different race, or the more civilised ancestors of the present tribes, did use urns for reinterments. And Professor Swallow says that sometimes the skull only was interred, and that in an urn so small that it must have been moulded over the head. If he is right, here is a strange reproduction of Chaldee usage. In Rawlinson's Herodotus we read that Chaldean funeral-jars are sometimes too small at the mouth to admit of the skull being passed in.

One useful hint we may take from the redmen's usage. A Cornishman, who has lost a relative, will not go to mine between the death and the funeral. He is like the Esquimaux, a death among whom condemns all the women of the village to four days' idleness, while for five days the men must not use an axe, and the kinsfolk abstain for a whole year from seeking birds' eggs lest they should be tripped up and fall over the cliffs. The Sioux has truer notions of "the dignity of labour." For ten days the women get up early and work all day unusually hard, joining in no game, dance, or feast, and eating little, stinting themselves of sleep and food alike. The men, after one day's fast, go on the war-path, or else take a long hunting journey alone. There is no idling about because the tribe has lost a man or woman; they consider that all the more reason for being up and doing. There are, of course, the two funeral feasts with their games, one a year after the other; but these are, like other "savage" ceremonies, quite as hard work as anything that a Red Indian ever does.

4 Alfred Pla

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
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CHARLES DICKENS

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LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FANCY, Order and Punctuality married, and setting up an establishment? Imagine their furnishing on "first principles," engaging servants, and inaugurating routine without so much as a suggestion from an artist or a woman!

The result might have been Wickham Place, under the rule of Colonel Wickham. From top to bottom of the house everything went as though by clock-work of unflinching regularity. The Colonel had drilled every one of his servants, as in his old soldiering days he had drilled his men; he interviewed his housekeeper daily much as in the old times he had interviewed his commissary-general; and supplied the wants of his household on the exact method whereby he had been wont to provision his garrison.

Perhaps to an eye accustomed to pierce below the surface of things, there might have been something of pathos in the unbroken method and order which prevailed throughout the house. The thought might have suggested itself that the wide, dark-panelled hall, with its highly-polished floor and chairs of two centuries old, would look none the worse for an occasional straw-hat and gardening-gloves—such as one saw so often as one entered Fairfax Hall—or that the green and gold swathed-up drawing-room might be somewhat the better if some half-score young feet went scampering daily over the velvet-pile carpet, letting out the smell of unuse, and breaking the rigidity of the line of wall-supporters in the shape of chairs and couches.

It is true the library and billiard-room

presented a more occupied, informal appearance; also when Phil was at home a general atmosphere of cheeriness and geniality prevailed; also Miss Edie, in her frequent morning visits with her father, never failed to bring in with her a rush of youth, and freshness, and merriment. But, as a rule, the aspect of Wickham Place was much that of its master and ruler—an aspect of even, self-contained melancholy.

Possibly never had this aspect of house and master been more marked than in those frosty November days when Phil in London, full of zeal for Lucy Selwyn's interests, was fighting a prolonged battle on her behalf with Mrs. Thorne. See the Colonel as he sits alone in his den, reams of ruled paper in front of him, his brows knotting and eyes narrowing over columns of figures. Although still some five or six years on the right side of sixty (in spite of Miss Edie's computation), he looks worn and tired as a man might verging on the seventies. He is erect, true, straight as a young larch, but there is that in his eye, in the curvings of his mouth, which seems to say, "Now that I am alone—no young people buzzing about, no neighbourly hospitalities to give or take—I can be old as I like, sad as I like, weary as I like."

Colonel Wickham's den was a model of what a mathematician's den ought to be, but so rarely is ("blue-book parlour," Phil had christened it in his schoolboy days, and the name still stuck to it). Everything in it, books, papers, indexes, and tables, had been arranged upon geometrical principles under the Colonel's immediate supervision. The floor and walls had been measured to the quarter of an inch, and a perfect plan of both submitted to him before he had had placed a single table or chair. These, by dint of "playing noughts and crosses

all over the slate" (thus Master Phil had characterised his uncle's geometric calculations), he had finally arranged to his entire satisfaction, and the total result was as hard, formal, and unsnug a snugger as soul of geometrician could desire.

There is a door leading off this room, the other side of which no stranger's eye, not even Phil's friendly one, no, nor that of any servant in the house, has ever seen. Everyone takes it for granted it is a manuscript-room, nothing more, in which the Colonel has stowed away some of his peculiar treasures in the shape of extracts from insurance magazines, or digests of returns, and no questions are ever asked about it. Could they, however, have turned the handle and looked in, the picture that fronted them might have caused a start of surprise, not for what was there, but for what was not.

It was a narrow, one-windowed little room, scarcely more than a big cupboard, in fact. A small square of Turkey-carpet covered the floor; the window was curtainless; the sole furniture was one small table; the walls were bare, save for a water-colour drawing which hung facing the light, and which a connoisseur of works of art would have held utterly unworthy of so honourable a position. It was, truth to tell, exactly the feeble wish-washy sort of thing a school-girl of sixteen might accomplish to take home to admiring parents. It was the sketch of an old country house, with a fine show of Queen Anne windows in very queer perspective, with some few dejected-looking topped elms in the background, every one of which was out of drawing. In the foreground, somewhere among some ultramarine grass, nestled the initials "E. M." Immediately under this drawing stood the small table before-mentioned, on which were placed but two articles—a pot of mignonette in full bloom, and a photograph-album of the style and fashion which prevailed some twenty years ago. The Colonel does not often open that album; he knows "by heart" every line of every feature of that sweet girlish face which would confront him on the first page. A face which, alas! now some sixteen years ago, was hidden away under the long grass and "moon-daisies" of quiet Stanham churchyard. People don't know that the Colonel carries the key of this little room about with him wherever he goes, in the breast-pocket of his coat; nor that every night, the last thing before he goes up to his room, he wanders in here, opens wide

the window—which commands, across the park, a view of Stanham churchyard, running up the side of the hill—and says his good-night to that grave among the long grasses.

Even now, as he sits at work in his den, his reams of paper before him, his digests and returns by his side, although the door of the little room is closed and locked, mechanically—or as though magnetically drawn to it—his eyes lift and fasten themselves upon it, while the driest of dry calculations fill his brain, and his thin, white fingers don't know how to work fast enough on his long columns of minute figures.

Colonel Wickham has taken up with a new branch of his beloved art since Phil has gone to London, and has gone over head and ears into it. It is vital statistics now, and nothing but returns of births, marriages, and deaths, for the past fifteen years, in the United Kingdom, seems to possess any real or permanent interest for him. He has shut himself up a good deal lately to work at his figures, and, truth to tell, has not seen one quarter of what has been going on under his very eyelids. He has only half read Phil's short, hastily-written letters, running his eye over the page of note-paper and altogether failing to read between the wide-apart lines. So, as a natural consequence, he has utterly failed to catch the under-note of disquiet which runs through them, of dissatisfaction and some sort of struggle going on in the writer's mind. Nor does it strike him as anything out of the way when Phil declines the invitation to Lord Winterdowne's ball and intimates his intention of not being home for Christmas, as he is going to spend the holidays "with Kenrick's people, in the north."

Also the Colonel has been so seldom to the Hall lately, that he has not noticed a fact which just now has been to the gossips of Stanham as good as sugar to their tea and butter to their toast—namely, that Lord Winterdowne spends a great deal of his time there; that, on the days when he is not to be found in Miss Fairfax's drawing-room, he has, as a rule, joined her and her father in their morning rides or walks.

By-and-by the Colonel will wake up with a great start, clear his eyesight of units and tens, and discover that things are not going on just as they ought to go.

But that will not be till Christmas has come and gone, and the ball at Winterdowne Castle is a thing of the past.

CHAPTER XXVII.

EDIE received the intimation from her father that Phil had declined the invitation to the Winterdowne ball. She gave the merriest of merry laughs, and clapped her hands so smartly that she cracked her riding-gloves.

"Why, how delicious!" she cried. "What a ball it will be! I can have as many partners as I like, and as many valses as I like! It will be the very first real ball I shall ever have had. At all my other balls I have always been 'an engaged young lady,' you know. Now, at this ball I sha'n't be the least bit in the world 'engaged,' and shall do just whatever I like."

"Then, my dear," said the squire, "I think the sooner you get 'engaged' again the better it will be for you and everybody about you. I don't——"

But Edie did not wait to hear the end of the sentence. She had flown up to her own room, and there was she vigorously bathing her eyes with sponge and cold water to keep the tears out of them.

"For why should I get red rims to my eyes," she said to herself courageously, defiantly, "and set everybody pitying me? Depend upon it, Phil won't get any to his to keep me in countenance."

But, could she have seen Phil's eyes at that precise moment, truth would have compelled her to confess that, though they had no "red rims" to them, they had an equivalent in the shape of a heavy, weary, downcast lid, which told of sleepless nights and a mind ill at ease. Possibly, could little Edie have caught a glimpse of him for a brief five minutes just then, she would have put her pride into her pocket, and would have twined her arms round his neck, and whispered in his ear some such loving phrase as:

"Dear Phil, let's give over all this nonsense, and go back to the old happy time once more."

However, she did not catch such a glimpse of him, so the words, of necessity, were not spoken. The foolish, proud little maiden threw herself heart and soul into preparations for this that she was pleased to style her "first real ball," saying to herself one day, "It's only for a time; things will soon be all right between us;" and the next, "It will go on for ever and ever. I'm positive Phil and I, in this world, will never meet again!"

So Phil went on his course unmolested—a course that in its day's portion included a good many kindly thoughts for Lucy Selwyn, and a good deal of vigorous cham-

pionship of her and her rights. He had acceded to Lucy's request, and had called upon Mrs. Thorne, with Lucy's magnanimous offer in his hand.

"Does it not take your breath away, Mrs. Thorne?" he had cried enthusiastically, as the lady, in stately silence, fronted him while he made the free-will offering on Lucy's behalf.

Then Mrs. Thorne opened her lips, putting on one side his enthusiastic encomiums with a slight wave of her hand.

"I must take time to consider my reply. I will send it through you, if you will allow me, Mr. Wickham," she said in a tone that suggested mid-winter and skating.

To say truth, this was about the sorest blow to her pride Mrs. Thorne had ever in her whole life received. She would far sooner, had such a thing been allowed, have contested Rodney's will in every law court in the kingdom than thus have had the desire of her heart given to her, "without money and without price," from such a hand.

Of course Phil was in a manner compelled to convey Mrs. Thorne's ungracious response to Lucy. She received it with a start of surprise and a slightly flushing face.

Ellinor was in the room on this occasion. It was the first time she had seen Phil since he had sent her so humble an apology, and she took care to be present, receiving him gravely and graciously, to make him understand—a thing he was not slow to do—that his apology was accepted.

She tossed her head slightly as she heard of Mrs. Thorne's ungracious hesitation.

"I would like to have dealings with a woman like that," she said. "I would make her pay a price for the things she wanted, though it should not be in silver or gold. Lucy, you are too good to have dealings with persons of that order of mind."

"She is Rodney's mother," answered Lucy gravely and simply, showing by her manner that she would not have Mrs. Thorne discussed in her presence, no matter what might be her "order of mind." "By-and-by, I feel sure, when she has taken time to think over the matter, she will send me a kinder message."

But although Mrs. Thorne took time—nearly a week—to think over the matter, a kinder was not forthcoming. There came instead a brief and somewhat formal note to Phil, saying that Mrs. Thorne felt sure the offer that had been made to her by Miss Selwyn had been made without due consideration on the latter's part, and would on

maturer reflection be withdrawn, and a money value be set upon the property according to Mrs. Thorne's previous request. The lady concluded her letter by saying she would be greatly obliged to Mr. Wickham if he would use his personal influence in the matter, and make it plain to Miss Selwyn how unfit it was that such an offer should have been made to Mrs. Thorne by a person in Miss Selwyn's position.

Phil's spirit rose against this letter.

"I will do no such dirty work," he said to himself angrily. "Why can't she write her own messages, or for the matter of that take them. She might do a worse thing than call upon Lucy Selwyn."

Then he went at once to Mrs. Thorne with her letter in his hand, saying to her, in effect, the words he had said to himself some ten minutes previously, softening them only so far as was necessary to meet the exigencies of the lady's drawing-room.

Mrs. Thorne's eyes glittered for a moment.

"Am I to infer, then," she said slowly and coldly, "that you decline to take a message from me to this young person?"

Those three words, "this young person," set Phil in a flame again.

"I most positively decline to take this young lady"—laying marked emphasis on these three words—"the message contained in your letter of this morning," he said, and there was no mistaking that he meant his words as he spoke them.

"Then there is nothing more to be said on the matter," said Mrs. Thorne, giving him a formal bow of dismissal, and ringing the bell for the servant as she spoke.

"One moment, Mrs. Thorne," cried Phil impetuously. "Don't think I won't help you in this affair; it is that I can't in the way you wish. Let me make a suggestion! Why not see Miss Selwyn yourself, talk the thing over with her; I am quite certain it would be the best and the right way of arranging it all."

But Mrs. Thorne only bowed even more formally than before.

"I am not open to suggestions on this matter," she said briefly and coldly, looking at the door as she spoke.

So Phil had no choice but to take his leave, and equally no choice, so it seemed to him, but to go straight from Eaton Square to Grafton Street, to communicate to Miss Selwyn the ill-result of his interview.

As usual the two girls received him in their pleasant little morning-room, which had now been the scene of not a few

pleasant little meetings between the three. It may be noted that at not one of these pleasant little meetings had Sir Peter or Lady Moulsey ever made a fourth.

"Gout holds one victim upstairs, rheumatism another," said Ellinor, as she shook hands with Phil that morning. "Let us be thankful for small mercies!"

It must be admitted that with all this woman's faults—and their name was legion—none could accuse her of ever simulating a kindness of heart she did not feel. No! She knew well enough how to dazzle and befool men without any aid from those small hypocrisies in which so many women run riot.

PARSEES, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

WHEN Diogenes the cynic lay a dying, "Don't dig a hole for me," he strictly charged his friends, "but just throw me out." "What, to the beasts and birds?" asked one. "No, stupid," replied the philosopher; "can't you put a stick in my hand? and then I can drive them off if I like."

Diogenes simply wished to be buried like a Parsee; I had almost said like an old Persian, but for the doubt cast by Herodotus on the universality of the custom. "Some assert," says the scrupulous Father of History, "that no Persian is buried till he has been torn by bird or beast. I know that this is true of the Magi; but the rest of the Persians, I rather think, cover their dead with wax, and then bury." He had probably heard that great men who fell in the Grecian war had been sent home in that way. Anyhow, the Parsees keep strictly to the Magian custom, and have done so ever since they settled in India; for Oderic, an Italian monk who visited India early in the fourteenth century, says: "The people of Thana in Gujarat don't bury their dead, but carry them with great pomp to the fields, and cast them to beasts and birds to be devoured."

Why did they come to India? Because they would not turn Mahometans, as most of their countrymen did when Yazdehard was hopelessly defeated (A.D. 641) at the battle of Nahavand. The Persians are said to have been converted, by the well-known Arab recipe, at the rate of a hundred thousand a day. A few fled to Khorassan, and thence to Ormus, whence some of them sailed to India, others going as far as China, where, in the ninth century, there were

many fire-temples. Naturally the Magian or priestly families would stand out most stiffly against the new faith; so we may well imagine these fugitives to have been mostly Magians, and this will account for the strange way in which they dispose of the dead, even if the Persians in general buried like other people.

Wherever, then, there is a Parsee community, there is sure to be a fire-temple, and one or more "towers of silence" (dokhmas). These are circular buildings, from twenty to thirty feet high, and some ninety feet across. You can see them in their pretty gardens on the top of Malabar Hill and elsewhere in Bombay; and when a corpse is on its way—long before the "nasesalars" ("bearers" specially charged with the work) have brought it near the place—you may notice a congregation of vultures gathering as it were out of the clouds, and perching on the rim of the tower-wall. The dead man is not carried away until seven "has"—short sermons supposed to be by Zoroaster himself—have been recited before him as he lies on an iron bier—wood must not be used, seeing it is fuel for fire, the sacred element. Why these metrical sermonettes, chanted in the old sacred tongue, are addressed to the corpse instead of to the survivors, is because they are thought to act as a charm, keeping at bay the polluting influence which would else pass from the dead upon the living. The dead himself is guarded against evil spirits in a very extraordinary way; a dog—if possible one with "four eyes," i.e., with a peculiar yellow spot on each side of its eyelids—is brought in and made to look at the dead three or four times. Why? The best Parsee authorities leave this momentous question undecided, some of them asserting that the dog, being a sacred animal, guides heavenward the soul, which for three days is waiting about beside the body.

When the bearers have done their work the vultures are not long in doing theirs; and by-and-by the bones, clean and dry, are thrown into the central pit, from which radiate the three tiers of slabs, for children, women, and men, on which the bodies are placed. "Thus," says Mr. Dosabhai Framji, in the very interesting history of his race which he has lately published, "rich and poor meet together. And why (he asks) should you be shocked at our vultures any more than we are at your worms? The Parsees do not see their dead eaten up; they know what

happens, just as you do; and the stomach of a heaven-sent bird is at least as honourable a burial-place as the maw of an earth-worm." And then he goes on to extol the sanitary advantages of the Parsee plan. All fluids are led by channels into the central pit, whence they pass through sand and charcoal into four deep wells, each with many feet of sand at the bottom. The intention is that "Mother Earth and the beings whom she supports should be polluted as little as possible." Hence when a dokhma is being built the circle is marked out and a prayer is offered to Ahura Mazda (Ormuzd, the Almighty) that "though it is wrong to pollute the ground with corpses, He will allow this little enclosure and no more to be used for laying out the dead." At the year's end the relatives again gather for prayer, this time in one of the rooms of the house, which is whitewashed and decorated with choice flowers and fruit; "the holy fragrance helping the survivors to pray for their dead friends in an earnest, quiet, and composed frame." This goes on year after year; and the souls of the departed are thought to look for these celebrations; their appeal to the living is: "Who will praise us? Who will offer to us? Who will deem us his own? Who will bless us? Who will receive us with hands bearing food and clothes? Who will pray for us?" In the same strain, only with Celtic violence superadded to Eastern earnestness, the dead Bretons are supposed to cry: "We are cold and hungry, while you are well-fed and lie warm o' nights. Why didn't you leave something for us? Get up—get up, and spread the table that the poor famished dead may have their yearly meal." And so extremes meet; and that regard for those who are gone from us, the perversion of which had grown so hateful to the English mind in Edward the Sixth's time that it led thrifty West Norfolk villagers to pay men from Lynn to go round and hack out "Pray for the soul of," "Of your charity pray for," and such like from the tombstones, and to break the like mottoes out of the stained glass, leads to much the same course of action on the shores of the "Little Sea" (Morbihan) and under the shadow of Malabar Hill.

Enough about the dead, now for something about the living Parsees. There are only about one hundred thousand of them all told; but then one ought not to reckon a nation by its millions any more than you do a country by its square miles. Look at the

map of the world, and see how many times Palestine or Greece might be cut out of Russia in Europe; and then think how many millions of Hindoos it would take to make the equivalent in energy and nerve-power of this handful of Parsees. I wonder they have not increased more—not indeed in Persia, where they have been thinned out by periodical massacres and forcible conversions, but in India, where, from the first, they have suffered scarcely any persecution.

In Persia they are almost confined to Yezd and its neighbourhood, except the few who are the Shah's gardeners at Teheran. Kerman, where they used to abound, and whence those in Bombay still seek light on doubtful questions of doctrine and practice, has now little belonging to them save the ruins of many fire-temples. Where dissent not only means being shut out from all honourable employments, but involves paying extra taxes, having no protection in the law-courts, and being forbidden to engage in any but menial work, it must be very hard for a small minority to keep their faith. Very many did not do so; but sometimes a father, who could hold out no longer, would send a promising child to India that, through him or her, the seed of true believers might be kept alive. Hence many little romances—for, keen trader as he is, the Parsee is not without a spice of romance. Thus, two hundred years ago, an Ispahan merchant was forced, with his wife, to adopt the creed of Islam, but they had two lovely daughters whom they wished to save from a Persian harem. So they secretly brought them up in their ancestral faith, and looked out for a chance of sending them to Bombay. When the girls were grown up, a German traveller, well reported of as a grave and God-fearing man, came to Ispahan on his way to India. The merchant got to know him, and begged him to take his daughters with him, that so they might find husbands who worshipped as Zoroaster taught. "I will take one," said the traveller, "if you'll give me the other to wife." "Better by far a Christian than one of those who look on us as Guebre dogs," thought the parents; and the girl on whom the German had fixed his fancy thought she owed something to the man who consented to rescue her sister. So the German got his wife, and (says the story) lived happily with her; and Firoza, the other sister, was entrusted to a good old Bombay merchant, who took her daily to the big tank which answered for a Parsee "Serpentine," the "rank and

fashion" gathering there in the afternoons. Very soon she fell in love with Rastamji Dorabji, who came to the front after the plague of 1692, when the English were so weakened that the Sidi pirates of Janjira swept the coast, seized what is now Fort George, and threatened to conquer the whole town. Rastamji armed the fishermen, and fell on and drove away the Sidis, receiving from our Government the hereditary title of Patel (lord). By him Firoza became the ancestress of that well-known Parsee family, the Patels.

Romances in real life are quite a different thing from legends. Many of these gather round the unhappy Yazdeard and his daughters. One of these, Khatun Banu, fleeing from the Arabs, after all had been lost at Nahavand, was almost dying with thirst, when she saw a man tilling the ground. "Give your princess a drink of water," she asked. "Alas!" said he, "where, in this thirsty land, is one to look for water? But not far off I have an only cow; I will hasten and get some milk from her." The cow, however, as soon as the man had done milking, gave a kick and broke the earthen-pan. So the milk was lost and Khatun was in despair. Flinging herself on the ground, she besought Ahura Mazda either to stay her enemies from pursuing, or to screen her from them; whereupon a chasm opened in the hillside, closing as soon as she had entered it. The farmer, who had gone to look for water, found her attendants weeping and wailing at her disappearance; but he, moved with awe, rushed home and drove up the cow, which he straightway sacrificed at the spot where the earth had opened. The news spread; the sacrifice grew into a custom. Every year thousands of pilgrims came to Dari-din ("the door of faith"), and much cow-killing took place. But what seemed a good old practice to the half-barbarous Yezd Parsees, became "repugnant to the feelings" (as the phrase is) of those of Bombay. They had been making great efforts during and since the terrible Persian famine of 1862, to obtain from the Shah some guarantee for the better treatment of their brethren, and to benefit them in other ways; and so, having a right to dictate, they said: "This offensive cow-killing must cease;" and it has ceased, a big-domed "khan," with sleeping and cooking places, being built at the cost of a Bombay Parsee, over the still pilgrim-haunted Dari-din.

I said that after Nahavand a good many

Parsees got eventually to India. Diu was their first resting-place; whence some went to Upper India, and were probably absorbed in the surrounding populations; others settled in Sanjan, from which they migrated, taking with them their sacred fire, after its conquest by the Mussulmans. For some years the valour of his Parsee allies, headed by a chief bearing the historic name of Ardeshir (Artaxerxes), enabled the Hindoo raja to hold out; but in a last battle both he and Ardeshir were killed, and the Parsees left the place. They were brave fighters in those days; but now there is not one of them in our Indian army. Why? The pay, says Mr. Framji, is so small. A Parsee cannot live the pig-stye life that a Hindoo, or even a Mahomedan, will put up with. He eats better than they do, and he will not huddle all his family into one room, and then—it is her one weakness—his wife is fond of dress and jewellery. Some of them were in the volunteers before that corps was confined to Europeans; one man, at Poonah, is the best shot in the place; Rastamji's doings against the Sidis show that he had the makings of a general; and, at a recent Bombay riot, the Parsees, acting as "specials," armed with sticks, drove all before them. Pay them, and they will fight. Fire is their sacred element; but, though its sacredness prevents them from smoking, it does not prevent them from firing a gun.

Surat became the chief settlement of the Parsees. They took to us as if they had an inkling of our future glories. We were very small people early in the seventeenth century, when Rastam Manak, our chief broker, was our great help in all trading difficulties. The Mogul's officers were so extortionate that English profits suffered; so Rastam took with him the head of our factory and appealed to Aurungzebe direct. He was not afraid to say: "This Englishman, a good man and noble, has come to Surat to trade, but your Majesty's officers throw difficulties in his way. He seeks your royal favour, and prays that he may be protected in his business by your imperial commands." How strange the position seems; the English merchant, under the Parsee's wing, begging the Great Mogul's leave to go on with his trade! Just as strange as that the descendants of the men whose empire stretched from the Hellespont to the Indus, and who nowhere found their match, except in Greece and Macedon, should be settled as "shrewd banias" in an Indian town.

Rastam was not well treated by his English friends. Bombay had come to us as part of the Infanta's dowry—foolish Portuguese king, to give such a prize for such a worthless son-in-law as Charles the Second!—and therefore we were anxious to make that place the headquarters of our trade instead of Surat. At least Sir N. Waite, in opposition to Mr. Proby and others, wished to change. Rastam, all whose interests and connections were at Surat, naturally took Proby's side, and exposed some transactions of Waite's in regard to imprisoning his predecessor, Sir J. Gayer. Whereupon Waite dismissed him, though the Company owed him a hundred and forty thousand rupees, and the private merchants six hundred thousand. Worse still, he set the Mogul's officers on the man who, in the interests of England, had successfully bearded them, inducing the Nawab of Surat to imprison Rastam's eldest son, fining him fifty thousand rupees, and making him pay two hundred rupees a day for his keep while in prison. A second son vainly sought redress at Bombay, and was kept there under surveillance; whereupon Naorozji Rastamji, the youngest, came to England, being the first native of India who ever landed in our country, and pleaded his cause so successfully that the directors presented him with a dress of honour, and agreed to pay five hundred and fifty thousand rupees to Rastam's heirs. This was in 1723, and is certainly one of the pluckiest things a Parsee has ever done. Another Parsee came over, sixty years after, as secretary to the Peishwa Raganath Rao's envoy.

Meanwhile, in Bombay, the Parsees rapidly rose to wealth and position, making money as agents and bankers, and especially as contractors for our commissariat. That is how the "Readymoney" family enriched itself, one being nicknamed "Bottle wallah," because he was not above collecting and sending home empty bitter beer bottles. One of the "Readymoney" brothers went to China, where most of the trade with India was in Parsee hands, till the "cotton crash" ruined the Parsee houses, and made room for their rivals, the Bombay Jews. This cotton business was one of the mischiefs that came from the American war. Lancashire was dying for want of cotton, so the Parsees got all the Indian cotton they could, and even went in largely for cotton-planting, going on just a little too long, and therefore suffering when the American supply was again forthcoming.

One notable Parsee family are the Wadias, hereditary shipbuilders, the first of whom, Lavji, had been foreman to our master-builder—also Parsee—at Surat. When the first man-of-war was built at Bombay, and was emphatically praised by men like Admirals Trowbridge and Pellew, and Captain M'Arthur Low, you may fancy the Parsees were not a little proud. Sir E. Pellew, regardless of grammar, wrote, "Tell Jamshedji Bamanji"—Lavji's grandson—"that the Salsette sails as well as any of our frigates, and stands up better; and had any other ship but her been frozen up in the Baltic, as she was for nine weeks, she wouldn't have stood the buffeting of the ice one day, whereas she came off unhurt. It was wonderful the shocks she stood during heavy gales." Just as good as the Salsette were the Cornwallis and the Wellesley, two seventy-four gun ships; and the firm has not degenerated. Two of its members have had gold medals given them—the first by Louis Philippe, the other, in 1851, by the Prince President—for services to French men-of-war.

The notable fact about all these rich Parsees is their exuberant charity. For their wealth, they are much better givers than the most lavish of English or American philanthropists; and their benevolence is not limited to their own people or to India. Ardeshir Hormasji Wadia, indeed, is chiefly remembered for the way in which, after the "cotton crash," he supported many Parsee families which had been suddenly reduced from wealth to poverty; but the typical Parsee, Sir Jamshedji Jijibhai was world-wide in his sympathies. Irish famine, French inundations, Crimean Widows' Fund—wherever help was wanted, he was sure to give it. No wonder Lord Elphinstone said, when inaugurating the statue which stands beside those of Sir J. Malcolm and Sir Bartle Frere: "Our British merchants are liberal; but, when I think of what your family has subscribed to public works, I say, give me a Parsee." His wife was full of the same spirit; one of her works was to make, out of her private fortune, at a cost of nearly a hundred and sixty thousand rupees, a causeway between Salsette and Bombay. Every year numbers used to be drowned in the roaring current that sets between the two islands. In 1841 there was a great loss of life, more than fifteen boats being upset in mid-passage during the monsoon. Government had long meant to build, and had had surveys made, but in India money

for public works is always scarce; so Lady Jamshedji did the work, spending nearly thrice what the Government had imagined it would cost. A convalescent home, the Mervan Bag, was built in the healthiest part of Bombay, by Mervanji Framji Panday, who died in 1876. It cost four hundred and twenty-five thousand rupees, and has an endowment fund of forty thousand rupees. Those who know how crowded and ill-ventilated the poor Parsees' houses are, can understand what a boon such a place must be to a sick man.

Beaten out of China by the Jews, mainly because their sailing-ships were superseded by the growth of steam, the Parsees have opened up new industries in India. Long ago, when Surat was Portuguese, their chintz works were so important that the King of Portugal gave two Parsee brothers a grant of land, on condition of their setting up at his town of Daman. Parsees are now at the head of the steam cotton-spinning of Bombay, the first steam-mill having been started by Kavasji Davar, in 1856. The Sassoon silk-mills, again, were a failure till a Surat Parsee, cunning in making kinkobs and other rich fabrics, took them in hand. Altogether they are the most go-ahead set of men in Western India.

And yet, few as they are, and over head and ears in business, they are split into two sects, and about a very trifling matter. The old Persian year was not a very complete one; in every hundred and twenty years a month was added to keep it straight. But, after Nahavand, the fugitives forgot to intercalate, while those who remained in Persia did so once only. Not till about 1740 A.D. (i.e., 1100 years after Nahavand; the Parsees reckon from the fall of their empire) did this omission become known. Then some priests came over from Persia, and said: "You are wrong. We are Kadmis" (walking in the qadam or footsteps of our fathers). But the Bombay Parsees did not care to be set right. They called themselves Shehen-shais (imperial) or Rasmis (Rasm, custom), and defied the innovators. The quarrel grew; men of one way of thinking would not marry their daughters into families which held the other view; and about sixty years ago there was a very fierce discussion that seemed likely to end in blows. At present the dispute has cooled down, and both go on contentedly their own way, New Year's Day for the one party being the 19th of August, for the other the 19th of September.

As a rule, they do not understand the language of their prayers. Indeed, the great destruction of their holy books—first (says tradition) by “the accursed destroyer of the pious, Alexander the Ruman,” and, afterwards, more completely, by the Arabs, has kept them from any deep study of their early literature. What has been done in this direction has been done in Europe, where the Zend—sister of the Sanskrit, and mother of the Pehlevi—has been written about by learned Germans from Bopp to Haug. Strangely enough, the library at Copenhagen contains the earliest MSS. of the Vendidad (safeguard against demons) and Yasna (book of rites). They were got hold of by Rask, who, in 1820, visited Bombay and went through Persia. They belong to the fourteenth century. At Copenhagen, too, has been published by Professor Westergaard a complete copy of the Avesta in old Zend. Curiously enough, this has been translated into English by Bleek, for the use of the Bombay Parsees, a pious Parsee paying for the translation and distributing copies gratis. The Parsees do not like to be meddled with in religion. When they came to Sanjan, they told a good many “whitelies” to the rajah, saying they were cow-worshippers, making a great deal of little ceremonies not enjoined by Zoroaster. This was excusable in people who had for generations been “hunted like a partridge up and down the mountains;” and when, some seven hundred years after, the Portuguese of Thana insisted on converting them (as they had done the Hindoos of Salsette, who nowadays have a few Christian rites, but cannot, even by courtesy, be called Christians), they dissembled. “We will be ready for baptism next Sunday,” said they; “but suffer us first to hold for the last time a sacred fire feast.” The governor gave them leave, and he and all the officials were first invited to a great banquet. While the Christians were sitting over their wine, the Parsees withdrew—to keep the fire festival, thought the Portuguese, but really to withdraw from the city. They kept on with their music and dancing, and managed so well that, unsuspected, they got away in a body, and settled at a place twenty miles off, not returning to Thana till it was ceded to England by the Mahrattas.

In 1839 there was a great outcry about the conversion, by Dr. Wilson, of two Parsee youths. The missionaries were called “devils in human form, who have

come to destroy the peace of homes, and to make people hate the government.” Before he died, Dr. Wilson had got to be highly respected; the two converts are now Christian preachers, and most Parsees have got so far as to say that a good Christian is better than a bad Parsee. Nevertheless, they keep to their old faith and their old customs, still serving up the marriage-feast, for instance, on plantain-leaves, and still (as becomes the children of the Magi) having a horoscope cast when a child is born. Probably female education, for which they are going in very strongly, will broaden them out far sooner than commercial intercourse would. Public opinion is very strong among them, its mouthpiece being the Panchayet (body of elders). Bigamy, for instance, it has strongly repressed, condemning the bigamist “to take one of his own shoes, and with it strike himself five times on the face in the presence of the whole community, and, with a halter round his neck, ask pardon of the priest who excommunicated him, and repay the cost of the suit which the Panchayet instituted against him.” The elders, also, look strictly after the morals of the women. No one can go after sundown to market or to draw water; no one can go to pleasure-parties without male escort. “Any woman found on the road at night without a servant and a lighted lantern, is to be seized by the nasasalars (corpse-bearers) and shut up till morning in the place where the biers are kept.”

And who was Zoroaster, after whose ordinances this persistent little sect has worshipped steadily amidst the surrounding heathenism and Christianity and Mahometanism? His name, they say, means “the old camel-keeper”; but he was of royal race, descendant of King Feridun, of the second dynasty. When he was born, the king, urged by wicked counsellors, tried to destroy the infant, but every attempt failed. After long meditation and study, he came forth at thirty years old “to guide the heads of houses, villages, and towns into the path of virtue.” Gushtasp, then King of Iran, held his court at Balkh, and thither Zoroaster went, bearing in one hand a young cypress, in the other the sacred fire. “Learn,” said he to the King, “the religion of excellence; for without religion there cannot be any worth in a King.” Gushtasp, despite the opposition of his courtiers, was converted, and became twentieth in rank among the disciples; but

his successor, Arjasp, went back to his idols, and one of his Generals slew the prophet while at prayers.

Zoroaster's teaching is, that good is rewarded, evil punished hereafter; and, at the great revival under Ardeshir Babekan, heaven and hell were depicted in a series of "visions," vouchsafed to the pious Arda Viraf, which bear a considerable resemblance to Dante. All the Parsee books are full of moral counsel: thus, "Take less care of your body, and more of your soul; the pains and aches of the body are easily cured, but who can minister to the diseases of the soul?" containing a double reminder of Shakespeare. Again: "The body is as a horse, the soul its rider; with a feeble rider the horse is ill-managed; with a feeble-horse the rider is ill-accommodated." Mr. Dosabhai Framji, by the way, corrects an almost universal error. We wrongly speak of "Ormuzd and Ahreman, the good and evil principles," for Ahura Mazda is the supreme God, the Almighty; Ahreman, the bad, being opposed to Spenta Mainyush, the good principle.

AN UNPARLIAMENTARY ELECTION.

It may, perhaps, not be altogether unprofitable to occasionally recall to the memory of the present generation some of the pleasantries in which their predecessors sometimes indulged, and to give a glance at the nature of those practical jokes which, in rougher times, helped to keep the Englishman amused. Originated, maybe, by some harmless piece of fun in the circle of a few select cronies, in course of time these overflows of animal spirits exceeded their original bounds, and frequently became an institution in the lives of men never averse to an opportunity for relaxation from their daily toil. Such jaunts as Fairlop Fair, some years back, and even in our own day the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race, are instances of this tendency, and it is a piece of broad humour that was very popular in the middle of the last century, and which sprang from small beginnings, that is here portrayed.

The election of the Mayor of Garrett is said to have had its origin in a very quiet way, as a protest against a piece of local injustice in a little Surrey hamlet; but it was found, in process of time, to prove acceptable to a vast number of people as an excuse for a holiday, becoming a popular entertainment as a political burlesque, and

only expiring from the disorders consequent on its overgrowth, and the disrepute of the actors in the affair.

Following the rule in most antiquarian matters, the learned differ as to the date which may be assigned to the commencement of this curious piece of folly, and even its origin does not escape dispute. One eminent antiquary, Dr. Ducarel, in 1754, gave, as the result of his investigation on this point, some information to the effect that, sixty or seventy years previously, some watermen belonging to Wandsworth, went to the Leather Bottle, a public-house at Garrett, to spend a merry day, and it being the time of a general election for members of Parliament, they took it into their heads, in the midst of their frolic, to choose one of their companions as a representative for the place, and having gone through the usual ceremonies of an election, as well as the occasion would permit, he was declared duly elected, and this became the custom at every Parliamentary election.

Another reason of its origin is given in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1781, in which a writer says he was told that about thirty years previously several persons, who lived near that part of Wandsworth which adjoins to Garrett Lane, had formed a kind of club, not merely for the pleasures of the table, but to concert measures for removing the encroachments made on that part of the common, and to prevent any others being made for the future. When a sufficient sum of money had been subscribed amongst them, they brought an action against the encroacher, in the name of the President—or, as they called him the Mayor—of the club. They gained their suit, with costs; the encroachments were destroyed; and ever after, the President, who lived many years, was called the "Mayor of Garrett." This event happening at the time of a general election, the ceremony, which took place every new Parliament, of choosing outdoor members for the borough of Garrett, was continued, and it was natural that the ridiculous pomposity of the whole affair should be felt and joked upon.

Whichever of these two accounts is correct, does not very much matter. Perhaps both are right, as the latter may have been the carrying out, on larger lines, of the simpler ceremony enacted sixty years previously, and brought down to later times by tradition.

Here, perhaps, it may be as well to give

a short history of the locality, as found in Manning's History of Surrey and other sources. At a short distance from Wandsworth, on the road to Tooting, is found the Hamlet of Garrett or Garrat, which in Queen Elizabeth's time appears to have consisted of a single house called The Garvett. This was in the possession of the Broderick family at the time of its destruction, about the year 1760, and the grounds were then let to a market-gardener. When Lysons wrote, 1792, there were about fifty houses in this hamlet, but the little place gradually grew, until, as now, it is only to be found as part of Wandsworth, though its memory is still kept green in Garret Lane, Garret Green, Garret Mill, etc.

The earliest record as to the candidates in this mock election is in 1747, when there appeared three applicants for the honour, rejoicing in the sobriquets of Lord Twankam, Squire Blowmedown, and Squire Gubbins. These two last were successful, and were known in ordinary life as Willis, a waterman, and Simmonds, a publican, who kept The Gubbins's Head public-house in Blackman Street, Borough. The "Clerk" and "Recorder" came from an imaginary town-hall, at the order of the Mayor, and each candidate distributed handbills, extolling his virtues and vilifying his opponent in much the same manner as in more serious elections. An oath of qualification was administered to the electors at the Garrett hustings, but it was couched in such extremely coarse phraseology as to be quite unfit for reproduction.

In 1754 the same candidates again came forward, and recommenced their paper warfare. Some of the handbills distributed at this election were rather humorous. "Gubbins," while declaring himself "zealously affected to his present Majesty, King George, the Church, and State," asks "Where was Esquire Blowmedown when the Jew Bill, Matrimony Bill, and Wheel Bill passed?" Still further with a view of crushing his rival, he alleges that Blowmedown "Washes his boat every Sabbath day, that he may not be induced to rise on Monday morning before high-water!" This invective naturally provoked his opponent to a rejoinder, in which he says "A large majority of the most substantial and wealthy freeholders, electors of the ancient borough of Garrett, are not ashamed, much less afraid, to publicly declare that Blowmedown is the pride and glory of our minds, and we will support him to the last. N.B.—The Esquire entertains his

friends at all the houses in Wandsworth on the day of Election, which will be elegant and generous, without any other expense than that of everyone paying for what they call for."

The next election, May 20, 1761, was remarkable for the number of the candidates, as well as the literary merits of their addresses. There were no fewer than nine aspirants for the honour of representing Garrett, and Foote, Garrick, and Wilkes were credited with the authorship of their addresses. Foote entered so heartily into the spirit of the affair, that he paid nine guineas for a front room at a surgeon's house, opposite Wandsworth Church, from which he and his friends might view the proceedings. It was from this election that Foote took the materials for his play *The Mayor of Garrett*, which was first printed in 1764, and produced at Drury Lane. The comedy may well be taken as an outline of the prevailing drollery and manners of the spectators of the election at Wandsworth, as it was sketched from the life, and probably every character had its living original.

The names of the nine candidates were as follows: Lord Twankum (who was the parish gravedigger), Lord Lapstone (a shoemaker), Kit Noisy, Esq. (a waterman), Lords Wedge and Paxford, Sir John Crambo, Beau Silvester, and the two sitting members. Silvester's was a very magniloquent harangue, and was evidently intended for a burlesque on the addresses at real elections. He describes his religion "as being not the most profound, but the most universally applauded—twenty shillings in the pound." He promises that "through my purest and universal connections, your liberty and commerce shall be spread to the Antipodes, and I will order yet undiscovered regions to be alarmed with your fame; in your borough I will erect a non-existent edifice for the transaction of your timber business, and in your suburbs plant an imaginary grove for your private affairs. My unknown fortune shall ever be ready for your assistance, my useless sword drawn in your defence; and my waste blood I'll freely spill in your defence," etc. The *St. James's Chronicle* tells us that the procession started from Southwark, preceded by three led blind-fiddlers. One of the candidates, being a chimney-sweeper, walked, playing upon a salt-box; another, a publican, was dressed in a richly embroidered suit of clothes, etc., whilst music was playing and colours flying.

Two years afterwards there was another election, and again in 1768, when the candidates were Sir Christopher Dashem, Lord Twankum, Sir George Comefirst, Sir William Airey, Sir William Bellows, and Sir John Harper. This latter was an extremely popular candidate, and "represented" Garrett several times. He was by trade a weaver, and was qualified, by power of face, speech, and infinite humour, to sustain the burlesque character he had assumed. He made his grand entry through Wandsworth into Garrett in a phaeton drawn by six bays, with postillions in scarlet and silver, surrounded by thousands of spectators, huzzaing and declaring him to be "able to give any man an answer."

At Harper's election, in 1777, a man in armour rode in the procession; this champion was a breeches-maker of Wandsworth, and had the reputation of being a wonderful humourist. The noted "baronet" filled the seat for two Parliaments, and was presumably a man of ready wit, as it is recorded that a dead cat being thrown at him on the hustings, and a bystander exclaiming that it stunk worse than a fox, Sir John vociferated: "That's no wonder, for you see it is a poll-cat."

Speaking generally, it is deemed advisable for the softer sex to avoid interfering in political elections; but in the instance before us, "Lady" Twankum came to the assistance of her lord. Handbills were distributed bearing her name, inviting guests to her ball, and one announcement runs as follows: "Lady Twankum desires those ladies who are in the interest of her lord to come full-dressed, and clean about the heels," and adds "that the lane and the whole borough will be grandly illuminated according to custom during the ball."

During a Garrett election all Wandsworth was in an uproar. It was the resort of people of every description, and the publicans entertained them as conveniently as possible; yet, on one occasion, the influx of visitors was so immense, that every ordinary beverage was exhausted, and water sold at twopence a glass. Besides the hustings at Garrett, scaffoldings and booths were erected at every open space in Wandsworth, and these were filled to their utmost capacity with spectators, the place being crowded with a dense population full of activity and noise. Extraordinary prices were paid for accommodation to view the humours of the day.

The election of 1781 seems to have been

the crowning point of the fortunes of this curious piece of nonsense, both as regards the number of the candidates and the magnificence of the procession. The names of these ambitious folk were: Sir John Harper, Sir Christopher Dashwood, Sir William Blase, Sir John Gnowpost, Sir William Swallowtail, Sir Thomas Nameless, Sir Thomas Tubbs, Sir Buggy Bates, and last—but not least in fame—Sir Jeffrey Dunstan, who was the chosen member for Garrett. History has preserved to us some information about most of these mighty personages, an abbreviated account of some of whom is now presented to the reader.

Sir Christopher Dashwood was personated by one Christopher Beacham, a waterman, who is described as "a fellow of exceeding humour and ready wit," which we may quite credit, if the following anecdote is true of him. He was once carried before a magistrate for cutting fences and posts, and the learned man being informed of the delinquent's name, told him he had heard of his character a long while ago. "Then," said Sir Christopher, "I'll be greatly obliged to your worship to tell me where it is, for I lost it a long while since."

Sir William Swallowtail was one William Cock, a droll basket-maker of Brentford, who, deeming it proper to have an equipage every way suited to the honour he aspired to, built his own carriage, with his own hands, to his own taste. It was made of wicker, and drawn by four horses, whereon were seated small boys dressed as postillions. In allusion to the American War, two footmen rode before the carriage, tarred and feathered; the coachman wore a wicker hat; and Sir William himself, from the seat of his vehicle, maintained his mock dignity in grotesque array, amidst unbounded applause.

Sir William Blase was a shoemaker by trade, and his contribution to the procession was magnificent. He was accompanied by "Lady" Blase, whose costume was, by the way, a triumph of art overcoming difficulties; for it is warranted by a person, who was her lady's-maid for the occasion, that her stays were neither more nor less than a washing-tub without the bottom, well covered and bedizened outside, to look like a stomacher; her hair was piled up three feet high, and stuffed with many a pound of wool. According to a contemporary print, these two were drawn in a boat on wheels, having eight men to act as rowers, and at the stern was a Punchinello, numerous flags decorating this novel vehicle.

Sir John Harper proceeded to the hustings in great state, in a phaeton drawn by six horses, attended by six domestics, all decorated with blue and white ribbons. The "baronet" was elegantly attired in a pale pink suit of silk clothes, with pea-green cuffs, richly embroidered with silver, and wore the ensign of the Garter. Altogether he must have presented an appearance that might have put real pomp and grandeur to the blush.

The next subject for our notice is the notorious and eccentric "Sir" Jeffrey Dunstan (or, as he was better known as, "Old Wigs"); and it is to be regretted that the exigencies of space prevent a more lengthened memoir of him. This worthy was found, in the year 1759, wrapped in a cloth, at the door of a churchwarden of the parish of St. Dunstan-in-the-East (whence he obtained his surname); and, from his attire, was probably the offspring of respectable parents, who did not choose to own him. He was reared in the work-house, and apprenticed to a greengrocer; but he did not serve his time out, and ran away to Birmingham, where he worked in the factories. He reappeared in London in 1776, and gained a livelihood by buying and reselling old wigs, for which head-gear there was always a brisk demand at the East End of London, amongst the seafaring population.

Dunstan is described as being remarkably dirty in his person, was knock-kneed, and had a head relatively too large for his body; moreover, as if to add to this ill-favoured appearance, he had the habit of always wearing his shirt thrown open, which exposed his chest to public view. Yet this repulsive person managed, by his eccentricities, ready wit, and his ever readiness to join his friends in a carouse, to become immensely popular; and we read that, on his election as member for Garrett, he left London in a splendid phaeton, and that the procession which accompanied him extended a mile in length. His speech upon the hustings was the composition, evidently, of a far better educated person than himself, being a racy production full of dry humour, and, as a proof it was appreciated, an attempt was made to bring him out on the stage; but, though he had the best of tutors (either Foote or Garrick), he utterly failed in his part, and was dismissed from the house by the hisses of the audience. He was re-elected several times for Garrett, and retained the honour at the day of his death, which took place in 1797, from the effects of intoxication.

The successor to Dunstan was doomed to be the last of these eminent personages, for the noise, turmoil, and expense attending these elections were very great, and it was felt that the time had arrived for them to cease. The next member was a poor half-witted fellow, one "Sir" Henry Dimsdale, who, when he was not receiving parochial relief, sold staylaces, threads, etc., and finally adopted muffin-selling as his trade. He was elected for four successive Parliaments, despite great opposition, and probably his procession outshone those of all his predecessors. He was placed on an eminence in a carriage somewhat resembling a triumphal car, drawn by four horses, which were profusely decorated with dyed wood-shavings, a substitute for ribbons. The dress of Sir Harry was a rare display of eccentric magnificence, and Solomon would have had to hide his diminished head had he seen the Mayor of Garrett on this memorable occasion. His hat, we are informed, alone cost his committee the then enormous sum of three pounds ten shillings.

In addition to his office of Mayor, he was appointed as the proper person to be opposed to the all-powerful Bonaparte, whereupon he was elected Emperor, and, judging by an engraving of him at this time, he assumed semi-regal costume, carrying in his hand—unlike his fellow monarch—his crown, it not being correct, he said, for him to wear it till he had ousted his more powerful rival. In this character Sir Harry levied handsome contributions on the good people of London; but the novelty of his appearance lost its attraction; he became neglected; illness seized him, and he died in the year 1805.

On the demise of Dimsdale, it was proposed to confer the mayoralty of Garrett on "Sir" John Cooke, a well-known and singular costermonger of Westminster, but no committee sat to determine his claims, as the publicans, who mainly supported the affair, no longer cared to incur the vast expenses of the day, and this great saturnalia died a natural death.

It would be impossible to give in the space of this article anything approaching to an exhaustive account of the humours prevailing at these elections, but notice must be taken of a rather important official called the "Master of the Horse," who commanded the "Garrett Cavalry." This warrior was mounted on the largest dray-horse that could be procured, and was arrayed in the full regimentals of the Surrey Yeomanry—grey, blue, and red.

He had a cap on his head twenty-three inches high, and carried a sword seven feet long and four inches wide. His boots were on the same gigantic scale, up to his hips, and were armed with wooden spurs thirteen inches long. The troops he commanded were worthy of their officer, and consisted of forty boys of all ages and sizes, clad in flannel imitation of the county yeomanry. To enhance their grotesque appearance, they wore cockades made of shavings, and were mounted on horses of all sizes, care being taken to put the smallest lad on the biggest horse, and vice versa.

The popularity of the election for Garrett was singularly great; even in 1781, over fifty thousand people assembled at Wandsworth to witness the ludicrous proceedings, and Sir Richard Phillips, writing in 1817, describes the scene as it was related to him by those who remembered it. He says: "On several occasions a hundred thousand persons, half of them in carts, in hackney-coaches, and on horse and ass back, covered the various roads from London, and choked up all the approaches to the place of election. At the last two elections I was told that the road within a mile of Wandsworth was so blocked up by vehicles that none could move backward or forward during many hours; and that the candidates, dressed like chimney-sweepers on May Day or in the mock fashion of the period, were brought to the hustings in the carriages of peers drawn by six horses, the owners themselves condescending to become their drivers!" A writer in the *Morning Chronicle*, July 26, 1781, says he saw at the election then upwards of five hundred horsemen following the winning candidate from the place of election, and they seemed to vie with one another as to who would be most vociferous.

During the Parliamentary election in 1823, after a lapse of over twenty years, an attempt was made to resuscitate the burlesque, and one Sir Paul Pry issued an address, having for his opponents Sir Hugh Allsides and Sir Robert Needall, but the fun had died out, and a new generation had arisen who were not in the vein for buffoonery, and consequently the project entirely failed, and it was never after attempted to revive it.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES. SUFFOLK.

WHILE the boundary between Norfolk and Suffolk is only a stream that for the

most part of its course may be called insignificant, while there is no very marked difference in physical features between one county and the other; and while the north folk resemble the south folk in many respects; there is still enough difference between the two to give the respective counties a distinct individuality. The north folk have taken some tinge of character from their neighbours of Lincolnshire, and have also been more largely mixed with immigrants from Holland and Flanders; while about the south folk there is a racy indigenous strain, both in themselves and in the animal world about them. Thus among horses, there is the Suffolk Punch, a descendant of the old Suffolk breed thus described in the *Suffolk Traveller*, of worthy John Kirby, himself of the old Suffolk race: "We remember many of the old breed which were very famous, and in some respects an uglier horse could not be viewed; sorrel colour, very low in the fore end; a large ill-shaped head with slouching, heavy ears; a great carcase, and short legs; but short-backed, and more of the 'punch' than the Leicestershire breeders will allow. Could only walk and draw; they could trot no better than a cow." And a Suffolk cow forsooth, one of the old polled breed, as ugly as you please, fine where she ought to be thick, and built without the slightest regard to symmetry; but what a beast for the pail!

It is not the fault of the Suffolk cow that the cheese of the county has for so long had a doubtful reputation. The ancient jokes about Suffolk cheese, by the way, are innumerable. "Hunger will break through stone walls or anything except Suffolk cheese," is a time-honoured saying, and the story is told of how a consignment of Suffolk cheese was sent to India packed in sheet tin. The rats gnawed through the tin—which is practically iron—but they could not touch the cheese within, and so on ad infinitum. A couple of centuries ago Suffolk cheese was in good request all over the country, as a cheap and satisfactory article of diet. Good Suffolk cheese could be bought wholesale at twopence a pound, while Cheshire cost threepence, and Gloucester, which had then the best reputation, as much as threepence-halfpenny. But by-and-by Suffolk cheese went quite out of favour. The Suffolk poet hit the true cause of this decadence, in showing how the London markets, with their demand for butter, had bribed the Suffolk dairy-wives to starve their cheese.

Hence Suffolk dairy-wives run mad for cream
And leave their milk with nothing but its name.

The thoroughly bucolic character of Suffolk poetry renders the transition from cows to poets less abrupt than it would otherwise seem; but there is in this direction also a distinctly original vein, not very deep or rich perhaps, but clear and sweet. Perhaps this East Anglian muse is heard to most advantage in the simple ballad, such as the universally-known *Children in the Wood*; or, the *Norfolk Gentleman's Last Will and Testament*. And less generally known and even more effective in its way, is the Suffolk tragedy, with its simple metre that has yet a ring in it of pathos and weird solemnity:

In Suffolk there did lately dwell,
A farmer rich and known full well;
He had a daughter fair and bright,
On whom he placed his whole delight.

Not far off, alas! was the detrimental young man beloved of ballad-mongers, who forthwith became possessed with the charms of the fair maid.

He made address to her, and she
Did grant him love immediately,
But when her father came to hear,
He parted her and her poor dear.

And the poor dear's dear was sent to her uncle forty miles away, an insurmountable distance for the unfortunate lovers. The young man could do nothing but sigh and sob at the cruel separation,

That in short time for love he dy'd.

The maid knew nothing of all this, the insurmountable forty miles intervening, but remained calm and constant in her love. But the perturbed spirit could not rest.

After he had in grave been laid
A month or more, unto this maid
He came in middle of the night,
Who joy'd to see her heart's delight.
Her father's horse which well she knew,
Her mother's hood and safeguard too,
He brought with him to testify
Her parents' order he came by.

The watchful uncle, too, with whom she was residing, is deceived by these tokens, and consents that the maid shall go with her lover. So they ride away as swift as any wind, the corpse in front and the maid holding on. On the way the lover complains of headache.

Her handkerchief she then took out,
And ty'd the same his head about.

We might here expect some horribledénouement, in which figures a descent into the tomb, but the ballad-maker, with a better instinct, eschews any such violent end. The man leaves the maid harmless at her father's door, and departs to "set up" the horse in her father's stable. The farmer,

aroused, is full of wonder. What brings you here? he asks his daughter.

"Pray, sir, did you not send for me
By such a messenger?" said she,
Which made his hair stand on his head
As knowing well that he was dead.

The father ran to the stable—no man living or dead was to be seen,

But found his horse all on a sweat,
Which made him in a deadly fret.

The girl has told her father about the handkerchief she bound about her lover's brows, and, with the sexton's assistance, the grave was opened, and there, sure enough, about the brows of the corpse was bound the young maiden's kerchief. All this was soon related to the unhappy maid, and we are not surprised to be told:

She was therest so terrify'd
And grieved that she quickly dyed.

While the moral of the whole story is thus pointed by the artless bard:

Part not true love ye rich men then.

In another and more martial strain is a fine Suffolk ballad, with the true ballad ring about it, that stirs the blood like the sound of a trumpet. The hero is the Suffolk hero, Peregrine Bertie, who, fighting in the Low Countries in Elizabeth's time, is set upon by an overpowering force of Spaniards.

Stand to it, noble pikemen,
And look you round about,
And shoot you right, you bowmen,
And we will keep them out.
You musquet and caliver men,
Do you prove true to me.
I'll be the foremost man in fight,
Says brave Lord Willoughbie.

But this martial strain is hardly in the vein of the true Suffolk bards, whose strains are rather for the homely people of the farmstead and the dairy,

Sung to the wheel and sung unto the payle, than for the lords and ladies of the castle and baronial hall. One of the last of the wandering minstrels of Suffolk died in the early part of the present century, having to the last eked out a precarious living by selling books and matches. For a shilling or so he would write you a stanza or an epigram, and at anagrams or acrostics he would have scored heavily among those who cultivate such freaks of the muses.

Something real and original, partaking of this homely country spirit, renders enjoyable the more artificial poems of *The Farmer's Boy*. Really a farmer's boy had been Robert Bloomfield, a scion of a humble family, among whom, however, some degree of culture had been hereditary. Old Isaac Bloomfield, of Ousden, the village factotum,

was the ancestor of Robert the poet and Charles the bishop, the once well-known Bishop of London; but the mother of the poet, who kept the village-school at Honington, seems to have supplied the element of poetic fire. The father of Robert died when the latter was an infant, and his mother married again, so that, at eleven years of age, he went to Mr. Austin of Sapiston, whose wife was Robert's aunt, as farmer's boy. Small of his age, he was hardly likely to make a living by his hands, thought Farmer Austin, and so his mother, in distress, appealed to his elder brothers, who were at work in London, to help her with the boy. Said George, the eldest brother, "Send him to me, mother, and I'll make a shoemaker of him." And so the mother and the boy travelled up to London together by stage, and Robert was left with his brother, with many commendations as to his careful bringing up—easier to be given than carried out, for George then lived in a light attic at Number Seven, Fisher's Court, Coleman Street, with two turn-up bedsteads in it, and five men at work; and Robert became handy man to the workshop—fetched the men's dinners, and whatever else they might want. The potboy came every day to know what porter was wanted, and brought the newspaper with him, which it was now Robert's task to read to the rest. On Sunday there were walks abroad, and discursive visits to places of worship here and there. One Sunday the brothers visited a chapel in the Old Jewry, and were much impressed with the style and diction of the preacher—a Dissenting divine, who discoursed in the style of *The Rambler*, with dignified and tragic action. And George could not help thinking that his brother took a start from this time, for Robert began to con over *The London Magazine*, which the elder brother took in, and specially the Poets' Corner, and thought he would try his hand. And so his verses got into the poets' corners of country newspapers, and were cut out, and handed about, and much admired by the shoemakers.

All this time Robert had been at work, discrediting the old adage, and sticking to his last, even when tagging rhymes and verses; and he was now able to earn his bread, when a sudden storm arose in his trade, as between lawful and unlawful journeymen. Robert was in the latter category, having never served a regular apprenticeship, and, meek and uncom-

bative, he bent before the storm, and went back to Suffolk, once more to his old master, as an enlarged edition of the farmer's boy. And now the vivid but limited impressions of boyhood were strengthened by more fully conscious observation. The sweet pastoral calm of his native county, its gently-swelling hills, and softly-flowing streams—all this spoke strongly to his newly-awakened sense.

And when Robert went back to London, to make himself a lawful journeyman by apprenticeship, he felt that, lawfully or unlawfully, he had become a journeyman-poet, and thus was conceived and set to fructify the germ of *The Farmer's Boy*, while in other ways he was nothing but a working shoemaker. And while he stitched and thrummed the numbers grew. When the poem was finished, a local Mæcenas was soon found in the person of Capel Loft, of Troston, by whose means *The Farmer's Boy* presently appeared—a small quarto volume, elegantly printed, with wide margins, and illustrated with cuts by the inimitable Bewick. Happy the possessor of the original edition, with its charming vignettes, and who possesses the calm and equable temper duly to enjoy the quiet, pastoral spirit of the poem!

Others may prefer something more stirring, and even Suffolk has memories of war and strife, of proud nobles, their greatness and their ruin, with the crumbling walls of their castles and palaces as the only witnesses that once they existed. And Suffolk has even had its wars and invasions all to itself, and, unshared by the rest of the country, peculiar calamities, which have left some impression upon the popular imagination. Such was the invasion, about the year 1173, of Robert, Earl of Leicester, under the banner of Henry the Second's rebellious son—the Henry, crowned and anointed in his father's lifetime, whom some old chroniclers style Henry the Third—with an army of Flemings, who had been promised, as a reward for their services, the full possession of the land; after the fashion of the Norman invasion, which had happened scarcely a century before. Popular tradition long preserved the picture of the joyful antics of the hungry Flemings at the sight of this land of milk and honey.

Hop, hop, Wilkine; hop, Wilkine!
England is mine and thine!

Thus sang the Suffolk men in scorn and derision, for at Farnham St. Geneveve, near Bury St. Edmunds, was fought a decisive battle between the army of

England, under the Chief Justice, Robert de Lacy, and the foreign invaders, in which the latter were routed and dispersed.

And in the reign of John the county narrowly missed another invasion. This time the quarrel between King John and his barons was the cause, when one Hugh de Bures undertook, on the King's side, to bring over an army of Flemings and Picards, and was promised by the King—so goes the story—the whole counties of Norfolk and Suffolk as prize of war. The invaders were coming, with wives and families, intending to people the lands anew. And they had actually embarked, it is said, at Calais, when a great storm arose, and destroyed both fleet and army.

All this time the two counties of Norfolk and Suffolk formed but one Earldom, and it was not till the reign of Edward the Third that one Robert de Ufford was created Earl of Suffolk; a line that soon came to an end; when Richard the Second bestowed the title upon Michael de la Pole. Michael's father had been a rich merchant, of Kingston-upon-Hull, who had supplied Edward the Third with large sums of money for his foreign wars. Michael, however, soon lost the favour of the King, was accused of treason, fled to Paris, where he died, and all his estates were confiscated. Michael's son, however, another Michael, came back with Henry Bolingbroke, and recovered his patrimony and title. This one died at the siege of Harfleur, and his son, a third Michael, was killed at Agincourt.

Tarry, dear cousin Suffolk,
My soul shall keep thine company to heaven !
cries the old Duke of York, mortally wounded on the field. The hero of Agincourt was succeeded by his brother William, whose career and fate are still enigmatical and puzzling. It was he who selected Margaret of Anjou as a bride for the young King, but whether his relations with the Queen were of the nature shown in the play of Henry the Sixth is more than doubtful. He was in great favour with the Queen, and was created, by her influence, Marquis and Duke of Suffolk. He was detested by the populace, and when his enemies gained the ascendancy, and the Duke was dismissed to exile, the Londoners, we are told, swarmed out to St. Giles's Cross, hoping to intercept and slay him as he rode towards Suffolk. But the Duke managed to evade his enemies. Perhaps he took the route described by a versifying young lady of much later date :

Down Hound's Ditch we drove, and by Whitechapel Church,
And our London friends now fairly left in the lurch.

The story that follows is one of the strangest in the mediæval chronicles—how the Duke sailed from Ipswich for Calais and was driven into the Downs by stress of weather, where he was seized by the Cinque Ports men, and hastily beheaded, as if by the sentence of some secret tribunal.

The causes of his unpopularity are fully summed up by the Kentish captain, who has not forgotten the lowly origin of the De la Poles :

Poole ! Sir Poole ! Lord !
Ay, kennel puddle sink, whose filth and dirt
Troubles the silver spring where England drinks.

And then the irate captain recounts the Duke's ill-deeds: his intrigue with the Queen; his plotting the death of the good Duke Humphrey; his bringing the Queen, at all, into the land—

Daughter of a worthless king,
Having neither subject, wealth, nor diadem ;
and then the loss of all our French conquests :

By thee Anjou and Maine were sold to France ;
The false, revolting Normans, thorough thee,
Disdain to call us lord, and Picardy
Hath slain their governors, surpris'd our forts,
And sent the ragged soldiers, wounded, home.

The body of the proud Duke was brought to his once favourite seat of Wingfield, and there buried. In the ancient church of that quiet country parish are the fine altartombs of the De la Poles. There lies John, the son of the decapitated Duke, who married Elizabeth of York, and whose son, another John, might, in virtue of his birth, have been King of England. Richard the Third had proclaimed him heir to the throne after the death of his own only son, but Bosworth Field put an end to his chance of the crown. But he was too likely a future claimant ever to find safety under the rule of the Tudors, while his own name was too little popular in the country to give him a chance of making a successful pronouncement. Thus he was driven to take up the cause of Lambert Simnel—and so was killed in the mêlée at Stokefield, in 1487. This was while the old Duke, his father, was still alive—who died quietly in his bed some five years after—and the next Duke, as heir of the Plantagenets, was ever a terror and reproach to the Tudors, till Henry the Eighth shut him up in the Tower, and presently had his head cut off. Only a daughter was left, and she was made a nun, and thus was swallowed up the noble blood of the Poles and Plantagenets.

But the title was revived to honour Charles Brandon, the King's favourite, the cloth of frieze who mated with cloth of gold, having married the King's sister, Mary, the widow of the French king, Louis the Twelfth. From the time of the hasty marriage to the end of the chapter, the Duke and his royal bride were effaced from affairs of state. But they lived together in comfortable state at Westhorp, and every year drove over in a gilt coach to Bury Fair.

A grand meeting-place was this autumnal fair of St. Edmund's Bury, held three days before and three days after St. Matthew (21st of September), where booths were assigned to manufacturers of Norwich, Ipswich, Colchester, London, and even to foreigners, especially Dutch. The Abbot kept an open table all the time of the fair, for the great people of the county, while a motley crowd assembled about the long tables of the refectory.

And a grand potentate was this Abbot of St. Edmund's, with jurisdiction over eight hundreds in one county or another, and lord of town and tower in all the country round. A special sanctity, too, for the English heart had this shrine of an English king slain by a foreign invader. All kinds of stories and legends gained current and honest faith among the visitors to the abbey. Familiar to all was the story of the finding of King Edmund's head that had been smitten off and cast away by the heathen Dane among the briars, where it called out to the searchers: "Here—here!"

And his hed also thei off smette,
Among the breres thei it keet,
A wolf it kept without in lette,
A blynd man found it at the last.

And is not the wolf still retained in the city arms as a testimony to the truth hereof?

Another legend which it requires a less robust faith to believe, represents the King as hiding from his pursuers under a bridge, not far from Hoxne, and now called Gold Bridge. The glitter of his golden spurs in the moonlight, reflected in the water, caught the sight of a newly-married couple who were going home late at night. The pair betrayed the secret to the Danes, who quickly dragged out the King and dispatched him, but not before he had time to curse all newly-married couples who should pass over that bridge, for all time. The bridge is still avoided, says Gillingwater, in his history of Suffolk—a work that was published some time ago, indeed;

but, possibly, the tradition is not forgotten even in this sceptical age.

But Bury St. Edmunds has many stirring memories of more authentic complexion. Of the grand old Norman Abbey church little is left but the central tower, standing alone in dignified isolation, a memento of all that the old Abbey had seen within its walls. Here, at the feast of St. Edmund, the barons of England assembled among the multitudes that thronged to the shrine, and before the high altar they swore to win the charter of their liberties, or die. The Abbey-gate, with its richly-decorated panels of the fourteenth century, is a memorial of the great rising of the townfolk against the monks. Thus, in 1327, the townsmen attacked the Abbey, burnt the old Norman gateway, seized the treasury and muniments of the Abbey, and extorted a charter of immunities from the Prior. Then the King's men-at-arms were marched against the town, and bloody reprisals enacted, while the trials and actions that followed were only concluded five years after the event. And thus there was never any love lost between town and cowl, and were any mindful to mourn the downfall of the monasteries, they were not the townfolk of Bury.

And thus, here and there, the bones of the ancient world still show themselves grimly among the neat and pleasant houses of the quiet town. The old Bridewell was, it is said, the Jews' synagogue in the days of old Isaac of York. There have been no Jews here since till quite lately, perhaps. And Moyses's Hall was, and it is to be hoped is still, an almost unique example of a Norman dwelling.

Here in Bury St. Edmunds John Dudley raised the standard of Queen Jane, expecting that the whole eastern country would rise en masse for the Protestant Queen. But the great Puritan party had ever its alternating fever and cold shivers, and this was shivering time, and not a man of them stirred. And so presently faggots blazed, and martyrs were burnt. A century afterwards another set of martyrs were swinging from the gallows. For to Bury in 1644 came Matthew Hopkins, of Manningtree, Essex, the witchfinder, and in a wild flurry of superstitious fear, no fewer than forty poor wretches were hanged for witchcraft, and twenty more at Great Yarmouth. The witchfinder's victims were among all classes—clergy, artisans, gentlefolk, and poor, miserable old women. But it is comforting to find that at last some

Suffolk men, revolting against this reign of terror, proposed to test the witchfinder himself by his own favourite method. With thumbs and toes tied together, the wretch was thrown into the water; he proved to be a veritable wizard, for he floated like a duck, and was dragged out and to the gallows amid the cheers of the mob.

Not far behind Bury in interest is Ipswich, the Queen of the Eastern lowlands—a port, though far inland, and lying gracefully on the banks of a noble estuary. And Gypeswick, as the name is written in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle, was an important town long before the Conquest. Indeed, this last calamity was almost the ruin of the place. While in the time of the Confessor there were five hundred and thirty-eight burgesses, men of substance and heads of houses, when Domesday was compiled only one hundred and ten were forthcoming to be answerable for the King's dues, while a hundred poor burgesses could pay little or nothing, and three hundred and twenty-eight houses were standing empty—a sad, silent chronicle of ruined homes and desolate hearths. Ipswich, however, soon regained a part of its former prosperity, and was able to pay handsomely for a charter from the impetuous John.

In the reign of Edward the Third the town lost its privileges for a time in a whimsical manner. Some sailors of the port were attending the assizes in the town, and, tired of the protracted proceedings and endless delays, they played off a little joke upon the Judge. His Lordship, whose name has been preserved as William Sharford, having lingered a long while, as Judges were wont, over his dinner and wine of Cyprus, the impatient sailors, in a frolic, scaled the bench of justice, and, while one bestowed himself with mock dignity in the Judge's seat, another, as crier, called on William Sharford to come forth and save his fine. The Judge, whom eating and drinking had rendered rather crusty than jovial, took the matter in high dudgeon. It was something more than contempt of court: the crime was in the nature of high treason, and the good-natured magistrates of the town failing to lay the rogues by the heels to await the sentence of the law, the Judge persuaded the King that the royal dignity was invaded, so that he took the town into his own royal hands. But this lasted only a year, when things went on as before.

To most people Ipswich inevitably suggests the famous butcher's son of that town.

Though it is not at all clearly established that the elder Wolsey was indeed a butcher, yet the universal tradition to that effect goes a long way to command belief. And the Cardinal as naturally suggests the Cardinal's College, one of

Those twins of learning that he raised in thee,
Ipswich and Oxford; one of which fell with him,
Unwilling to outlive the good that did it.

Of this College only the gateway is in existence—a handsome, but not magnificent archway of brick.

But more in character with the Ipswich of to-day are the memories it excites of one of the greatest, if not actually the greatest, of our English painters—Gainsborough. He, too, is racy of Suffolk, and was born at Sudbury, just where the real Suffolk scenery commences; where of every stump or old cottage, or picturesque bit of hedge-bank, the youth made a sketch or study. To London he went in due time, and made such professional studies as were open to him; but Suffolk drew him back, and having secured a wife with a comfortable little income of her own, he was able to work at his leisure, and indeed, at Ipswich, executed some of his very finest works. When Mr. Thicknesse, amateur and virtuoso, the newly-appointed governor of Landguard Fort, first visited the artist, he found him in a house at six pounds a year, contentedly painting priceless pictures for fifteen guineas apiece. Are any of those fifteen-guinea pictures still left in the neighbourhood?

Gainsborough painted for Thicknesse a picture of the Landguard Fort and surrounding land and sea scape, which the governor carried to London and had engraved by Major. The picture itself has perished from damp and neglect, but the engraving may still be met with. In time, through the influence and advice of Thicknesse, Gainsborough removed to Bath, and then to London; but was never, perhaps, happier than among the honest folk of his native county. One of the artist's intimates was Joshua Kirby, son of John Kirby, the "Suffolk traveller," quoted in the early part of this article. He began life as a house-painter, but worked round to higher branches of the art, and wrote a treatise on perspective which brought him into notice among artists. And he, too, gravitated towards London, where he settled presently, and became one of the set that moved about the great Sir Joshua Reynolds. The King made him clerk of works at Kew, and there

he published his *Magnum Opus*, an elaboration of his former treatise. And Joshua had a daughter, Sarah, who became the famous Mrs. Trimmer, whose *Easy Lessons* have drawn such woeful tears from infant eyes, but who deserves, nevertheless, her modest niche among the worthies of Suffolk.

A PIRATE CREW.

IN their way—and what manner of way it was will be seen presently—the Pirates of Floodgate Street were a formidable crew, and Captain Trunkey, their chief, both by election and aggression, was, as became such a character, an especially truculent personage. Captain was, with him, a courtesy title, nor was Trunkey, as will probably be supposed, his legal surname—the name by which, for instance, he figured on the charge-sheet of the metropolitan police-court within the jurisdiction of which his crew wrought their deeds of pillage. Trunkey was a sobriquet bestowed upon him in playful allusion to the fact that, in relation to his face, which was small, his nose assumed trunk-like proportions. His Slawkenbergian proboscis was pretty well matched by a portentously large mouth, which his friends were wont to speak of as his “gap.” In addition to this, he was deeply and abundantly be-freckled, and had a shock of hair so fiery-red that even the toning-down effects of dirt could scarcely dim its lurid brightness. Taken on the whole, therefore, the Captain’s countenance, if not a pleasant, was a striking one to behold.

He was not of the conventional “penny plain, or twopence coloured” type of pirate chief. True, he was generally big-booted, in the sense that his boots were “sizes” too large for him, but they were ordinary “trotter-cases,” not the piratical jack-boots of nautical melodrama. He wore no gaudy tunic or tasselled cap, and though he did wear a belt, it was not of the broad-buckled, “sea-rover” pattern. It was of “home manufacture”—an improvised arrangement of broken braces and knotted rope-ends, and it held in it no armoury of dirks and pistols. The only weapons of offence employed by the Captain were a club-like stick, or “neddy,” and “arf bricks,” in the “eavin” of which latter he was a noted expert. Still, if, as is sometimes argued, raggedness gives picturesqueness, the Captain must have been a highly picturesque figure. His clothes

were always brilliant examples of the looped and windowed style of raggedness. They hung about him in a freely-fluttering fashion, and were ever as dirty as ragged. But they were worn with a bold, brigand-like air that “carried them off” with something of effectiveness—gave some touch of artistic relief to a picture that would otherwise have been solely emblematical of squalor. The getting in and out of such garments must have been a work of time and skill, but the Captain minimised his labour in that respect by sleeping in his clothes, save in very warm weather.

To come to a prosaic explanation, the Pirates of Floodgate Street, including their large-nosed chief, were of a distinctly modern kind—were self-dubbed “Boy Pirates,” ranging from ten to fourteen years of age. There are boy pirates and boy pirates. There are boy pirates of the respectable classes, who work off their romantic notions in talk, or at the worst, by the purchase of pistols, which are for the most part only harmful to their owners, or by the purloining from the parental cupboard of tins of biscuits or pots of jam, with a vague view to buccaneering expeditions to the Spanish Main. But the Pirates of Floodgate Street were not of this mild-mannered stamp. There were no provisions in their parental cupboards to be requisitioned, and if there had been, and they had annexed them, they would have received such “quittings” at parental hands—wielding the buckle-end of leathern waist-straps—as would have feelingly convinced them there was “no romance in that.” Their depredations were committed at the expense of such of the public as had portable and snatchable property to lose, upon children entrusted with money to go errands, women—notably old women—out marketing, shopkeepers, and proprietors of houses to let. The gang were “a mark” on empty houses, which they would often strip to their boards, and sometimes of their boards. Occasionally they would engage on a long shore expedition, in the course of which they would “convey” anything not too hot or too heavy that they came across in unguarded boats, or barges, or wharves. But these raids were episodic; in a general way the Floodgate Street crew were land pirates. They cherished no glorious design of seizing a ship and hoisting the black flag. Their thefts were not with a view to equipping a pirate barque of the future, but with an

eye to present dealings with marine-store keepers.

It was said that each member of the gang was sworn in by an oath which they, at any rate, considered terrific and binding, and they avowedly took a swaggering, "bold, bad man" sort of pride in being regarded as a terror to the neighbourhood. As a simple matter of fact, they were thorough-paced young ruffians. Whether or not they were sworn to each other, they certainly swore a great deal at each other, and at people and things in general. Apart even from blasphemy and slang, their language was anything but that of the poets, and their actions were often wantonly vicious. They would slang, or bustle, or chivy the strangers who entered within their gates, and from hiding-places, in which they were practically secure against pursuit or capture, they would in sheer "cussedness" discharge volleys of stones at unoffending passers-by, sometimes with serious results. More than one inhabitant of the neighbourhood, or of such outsiders as have to frequent it for business purposes, will carry to their graves the marks of wounds inflicted in this way by the Pirates of Floodgate Street.

With every allowance made for romantic notions, and the principle involved in the adage that boys will be boys, this particular band of pirates were undoubtedly "a bad lot." That they were so, however, was not wholly their fault. To a considerable extent it was their misfortune. Their undesirable characteristics were, as already intimated, such as would be looked for as a natural outcome of their social environment. For Floodgate Street was the most outcast street of an outcast quarter of the great city. It was a street in which nondescript workers of the "poor but honest" orders were mingled with the no-visible-means-of-support and habitual criminal classes. There were two common lodging-houses in it, to which only the lowest grades of tramps and beggars resorted. Its private dwellings were let off in tenements, each room having its family, and some of them more than a family—a lodger or two "thrown in." Poverty in its direst shapes, drunkenness in its most brutalising forms, crime in its most sordid and least remunerative guises, had all their permanent abiding-places in it. Through its length and breadth—or, rather, narrowness—it was a material embodiment of dirt and dilapidation, and it abounded in evil sights, and sounds, and

smells. It goes without saying, therefore, that it was a street in the homes of which the graces of life were unknown, and the practice of the decencies of life impossible, even where there might have been a desire to observe them. In such a street, children were subjected to comparatively primitive conditions of existence. Many of the parents had neither the means, leisure, or inclination to "bring up" their children in the ordinary acceptation of the term. From the time they could crawl the children had for the most part to "tumble up" as best they could, and they were early expected to turn out to "cut their own grass," and not unfrequently to cut some for their parents also. That children reared amid such conditioning environment will be more or less rough and vicious, is certain. And the Pirates of Floodgate Street were the more rough and vicious of the juveniles of their neighbourhood.

Even pirates are not always on the war-path, and the Floodgate Street crew might occasionally be seen "carousing." In some of their expeditions, or "lurks," they had hidden away, until required for use, a zinc house-pail—presumably stolen—which they had perforated with holes in the bottom and sides. This mounted upon an open work pedestal of bricks, and filled with wood, coal, and coke, made a fairly good camp-fire, by the aid of which the pirates roasted potatoes and cooked whatever other viands they might have secured towards a feast. They had no caves wherein to camp, and sought no barren wastes. Their favourite carousing grounds were certain alleys running between Floodgate Street, and another street of the same character—alleys with very narrow entrances, but widening into something like squares in the middle, and at each end of which a sentinel could be placed. It is due to the publicans of the neighbourhood to say that they would not allow the pirates to drink on their premises, but seeing that in such localities it is generally children who are sent for drink to be consumed off the premises, they could scarcely avoid serving the pirates in their "own jugs." Fiery rum or sparkling wine, is, of course, the proper drink for pirates, but the Floodgate Street crew could not "run to" rum, and they had probably never looked upon the wine when it was red. The liquor upon which they caroused was "four ale," and a pot of it, among eight pirates subscribing a half-

penny each, did no great harm. Indeed, in this connection, it might be said that the pirates were friends to temperance—in a sense. In the sense, that is, that when they came upon any helplessly drunken man or woman, they regarded such horrible example as a helot providentially delivered into their hands to make them sport and profit. Any snatchable property that the inebriates might have about them was looked upon as legitimate spoil, and on the principle of business first, was instantly grabbed by the gang. Then came pleasure—such pleasure as savages may be supposed to feel when they have a captive foe at the stake—the pleasure of baiting a “human” incapable of effective resistance or reprisal. Having been robbed, the victims were hustled and pelted until goaded into making a rush at their tormentors, when, of course, they went down. This was the golden opportunity of the pirates. With a triumphant whoop they would literally fall upon the prostrate “lushington,” bash him—or her—about “promiscuous,” and roll him in the mud or dust. During these proceedings they would yell with delight, and having worked their wills, swagger away with an air that said, “We know we are dare-devils and heroes, and have just performed a notable achievement, but still we will try not to be too proud.”

The Pirates of Floodgate Street were so far like stage-pirates that when carousing they were a good deal given to song. But their songs were not of the briny deep, the ocean wave, the pirate’s life, or the like. They were of the land, and modern, as for instance, Up to Dick, That’s Where You Make a Mistake, The Strict Q T, Can You Lend My Mother a Saucepan, and Mickey’s on the Booza. These are—save the mark!—modern comic songs, and the musical inclinations of the pirates were decidedly towards the comic, though they occasionally indulged in such popular sentimental ditties as Only a Pansy Blossom, We never Speak as we Pass By, or Wait Till the Clouds Roll By, Jenny. Captain Trunkey rather fancied himself in the singing line. His favourite song was entitled, What Does Your Mother Say? This composition is supposed to be sung by a dissipated labourer, who, coming home intoxicated, is in fear of a “tongue-dressing” from his wife. Near his own door he meets his son, and addresses him in the words which form the chorus of the song:

Oh, what does your mother say, Johnny, my lad?
Has she been rounding upon your old dad?
Just step in and see if she’s down upon me,
And I’ll wait for you just round the corner.

Captain Trunkey, as will be readily imagined, was not a modest youth. On what he conceived to be his own merits he was not dumb, and he claimed high merit in relation to his execution of this song. He could sing it, he was wont to say, as though he had been born to it, “sling out” its patter, or “spoken parts,” like shelling peas; while, as to the “haction,” he was given to add, it came to him as easy as drawing on an old stocking. When “obliging” with What Does Your Mother Say, he would “make up” to the extent of ruddling his face, cocking his hat on one side, sticking a short pipe in his “gills,” and assuming a staggering gait and general limpness of limb supposed to be indicative of a state of drunkenness. If he was at all an observant boy, the Captain’s “study” on the latter point ought to have been a good one, for as an inhabitant of Floodgate Street, he had abundant opportunity for noting all kinds and degrees of intoxication.

The pirates picked up their musical notions in a certain palace of delight of which they were frequenters. Not a palace of delight as imagined—and we would fain hope foreshadowed—by Mr. Besant, but the existing substitute for such a palace—a music-hall. With its glare of gas and glitter of gilt, and glass, and colour, it was, as compared with the home surroundings of the pirates, a seeming embodiment of the halls of dazzling light. Though the patrons of its higher priced parts were but Arrys—and third-rate specimens at that—they were, in the estimation of the pirates, “tip-top swells,” dashing and gilded youths whom a boy of spirit would do well to keep in his mind’s eye, and build himself upon. The “lion comiques” of the stage, the pirates counted as high up among the great ones of the earth. Miss Victorine Vere de Vere, Miss Millicent Montmorency, the Sisters Aubrey, and the other shapely and showy “lady serio-comics” of the establishment, the pirates regarded with enthusiastic and unbounded admiration. Altogether, their music-hall was to the pirates as the earthly paradise, and in seeking it they went upon the plan suggested by the Salvation Army hymn:

If you can’t get in at the pearly gates
Get over the garden wall.

When they had not sufficient “browns” to

pay for admission within the portals they became watchers on the threshold. They hung about the doors trying to beg or snatch re-admission checks, and failing that they appeared to derive a certain amount of gratification from being informed from time to time who was "on," and what he or she was "tipping 'em." What checks they succeeded in getting were generally obtained from young people who were probably visiting the hall "unbeknown" to parents or employers, but who, in any case, had to be home early—young people whom the bold pirates despised, but flattered, for the sake of the checks. Trunkey's crew were themselves children of the night. They were always out of doors late, and if any necessity arose for their "bunking out" for the night, it was no great hardship for them to do so.

The pirates were also supporters of a local theatrical enterprise, in the shape of a threepenny "gaff." At that temple of the drama, the plays presented were of a type that playgoers other than "gaffers" fondly imagine to be extinct. In them, the poor, but virtuous maiden and lovely village rose, the "mustachioed" libertine, the comic "dang-my-buttons" countryman, the stalking, cloak-wearing, ha-ha-ing villain, nightly revisit the glimpses of the gaslight. Gunpowder—of a particularly sulphurous quality—is freely expended, and dagger and broadsword combats occur at frequent intervals. During the greater part of the action, the "machinations" of the "mustachioed" plotter against virtue are successful, and the villain who carries out his "behests," and "removes obstacles from his path," is imbrued to the eyebrows in be-lood. But in the end virtue triumphs, and vice is defeated and punished. This is strong meat, but it suits the dramatic tastes of the gaffers, though many of them are little more than babes. At their gaff, the Floodgate Street crew were honourably distinguished for the enthusiasm with which they roared themselves hoarse in applauding the elaborately-expressed but highly virtuous sentiments of the "good" characters, and yah-ing! at the villain.

So much for the pirates when on pleasure bent. On business they were, perhaps, even a more interesting spectacle than when pleasuring—putting aside for the moment the question of morality. The deftness with which Captain Trunkey, "covered" by two or three of his crew, would "nick a block-ornament" from a

butcher's-shop was admirable in its way. The patience and perseverance with which he would watch for his opportunity, and the decision and dash with which he would make his "snatch," were emphatically worthy of a better cause. The bagging of vegetables to go with the "block ornaments" being considered mere journey work, was left to subordinate members of the band. The comprehensive glance with which the Captain would take in the possibilities—or impossibilities—for "nicking" operations in a workyard or other place into which he had penetrated for an instant to pick up his ragged cap, which some comrade had in play thrown in, was a thing to remember. So also was the style, the actual order and method underlying the seeming confusion, in which the gang would storm a small shop kept by an old woman, or minded for the time being by a child. The unerring accuracy of aim with which they would strike children on the hand in such a manner as to ensure their dropping their school pence or errand-money could only have been acquired by constant practice. As backyard poachers or "nickers" of poultry, pigeons, or rabbits, they were—judged by results—specially skilful and daring. In the illegal pursuit of larger live game they were not so successful. Over an attempt to steal a goat two of the crew were taken by the police, and sentenced to be birched; while in trying to walk off with a donkey from the kitchen in which it was stabled, and which also served its owner as living and sleeping room, the valiant Captain came in for a tremendous "quilting." His calculations had been reasonably well made, but the fates were against him. The owner was sleeping the sleep of the drunken, and was therefore thought to be safe, but his "moke," on being grabbed, he-haw'd so terrifically as to awake him. Being awake he took in the situation at a glance, went for Trunkey with a mad-drunk rush, and administered such punishment as put the pirate chief on the sick-list for a fortnight. The operations of the pirates in the poaching, house-stripping, and other leading lines were, however, carried on under circumstances that afforded outsiders but little opportunity of studying their methods from the standpoint of robbery as a fine art.

The pirates of Floodgate Street have here been spoken of in the past tense, for the band has for the present been scotched. The police and School Board authorities

combined have, after prolonged exertions, just succeeded in breaking up the crew. The brighter stars of the constellation, including the Captain, have been "put away," have been sent to industrial schools or training-ships. Thus disorganised and deprived of their leaders, the others have "knocked under." Some of them are attending school, while the remainder are simply guilty of truancy, unassociated with larceny. Such depredations as those of the Pirates of Floodgate Street could not be indulged in with entire impunity. From time to time members of the gang were captured, and taken before the magistrate, by whom, however, they were generally referred to the School Board. The latter body knew them without any reference. The pirates were one and all among its hard bargains. The parents of the boys had been summoned by the Board and fined, and, in some instances imprisoned, repeatedly; but though they had been punished, the boys had not been got to school. Some of them, it is true, had attended school fairly well up to the period at which they had joined the ranks of the pirate band. They could read, and turned that accomplishment to account by reading to their companions from Charley Peace; or, The Burglar and the Beauty, The Boy Bushrangers, The Wild Boys of London, and other "dreadfuls" of a like character. When summoned, the parents invariably pleaded that the boys were beyond control, and seeing that, as a matter of fact, they were not controlled, and bid fair to become criminals, the Board was ultimately, on the principle of choosing the lesser of two evils, fain to accept the plea in some of the worst cases, and to consign the boys to institutions in which they would be under control. In other cases, where the boy was charged with theft for a second or third time, the magistrate made an order for his committal to an industrial school without further delay.

The latter was Captain Trunkey's case. We saw him as he was taken to court on the day of his last appearance there, and he bore himself as became his name and fame. It was on a Monday morning, and he had been locked up from the previous Saturday night, when he had been arrested red-handed in an attempt to "sneak a till." In company with a number of other "morning charges," he had to be conveyed in the van from the police-station

to the court. The usual crowd that witnesses the departure of the van was duly assembled, and the Captain, knowing that numbers of those composing it were his friends and admirers, rose to the occasion. As he had to move at a jog-trot to keep pace with the stalwart constable who held him by the arm, he emerged from the station-gates in a rather Jack-in-the-box fashion. When fully in sight, however, he steadied himself, put his free arm "akimbo," set back his head, and assuming—as well as he could—the manner of a "Lion Comique," trolled out, as he was scuffled along:

O ain't I having a day,
Enjoying myself in this way!
O it's proper, you know,
And I do like it so.

O ain't I having a day.

Still singing, he was literally "chucked" into the van, its door closed upon him, and he had looked his last on liberty for some years to come. Within the hour, the order for his detention, till the age of sixteen, upon an industrial-school training-ship, was made.

As just said, the Floodgate Street gang is scotched—but only scotched. E'en in their ashes lives their wonted fires, and they will blaze out again. Boy-pirates of the Floodgate Street stamp are now a class—are the forerunners of the street-roughs who have "made themselves felt" so much of late. We hear a great deal about the diminution of juvenile crime, and, measured by the number of commitments to prison, no doubt juvenile crime has materially decreased. But it is to be feared that the decrease is not all clear gain to the cause of order. Industrial schools have multiplied in our midst, and are all full to overflowing. But such statistics as can be gathered concerning the after careers of those who have passed through them, are by no means of such a gratifying nature as might reasonably be desired. Numbers of these "Industrials" undoubtedly go to swell the ranks of the "rough" and "corner men" classes—classes of which, at this present day, it may safely be said they have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished. If they are to be diminished on the principle of nipping an evil in the bud, our boy-pirates, though "amoozing little cusses" enough, from some points of view, will, from other standpoints, have to be regarded as a serious social problem.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"A LITTLE country-girl who is playing fast and loose with him." The words kept repeating themselves with a painful iteration in Lucy's mind, more especially on those days when Phil had dawdled away the best half of the morning in the society of Ellinor and herself.

She conjured up a picture of the said "little country-girl," which, it may be conjectured, neither Edie's best friend nor her worst enemy would have recognised. She must be, so Lucy decided, before anything else a heartless, unblushing coquette—one who tried to win men's hearts without having quite made up her mind whether or not she wished to keep them when won.

"Playing fast and loose" must mean that if it meant anything. Of course she must have beauty of a certain sort, or opportunity for "playing fast and loose" would not be vouchsafed to her; but it could only be "of a certain sort," for the words "little country-girl" did not seem to imply beauty of a refined type; also they suggested the idea—at least to Lucy's mind—that this beauty "of a certain sort" was the young lady's chief and one qualification for playing her game of fast and loose. Her intellectual attainments were possibly nil; her moral nature, no doubt, at an equally low ebb.

Thus Edie Fairfax stood personified to Lucy's imagination.

And a tiresome, haunting personification it was too. Do what she would, go where she would, Lucy somehow could not shake herself free from it. Did she and Ellinor go for a walk, a drive, or sit in cosy silence over a crackling fire, this "little country-

girl" seemed to force herself upon them an unwelcome, uninvited, third. Did Phil come in for half an hour's chat—as he did so often during those foggy, frosty mornings which set in before Christmas—the "little country-girl" somehow seemed to make her presence felt in the room, and Lucy as she sat quiet and all but unnoticed in a corner, would find herself wondering over her ways, her looks, her doings, in a manner that was quite unaccountable to herself.

For instance, when Phil's eyes wandered, as they so often did now, to Ellinor's face, wonderingly, enquiringly, yet always admiringly, she found herself saying: "I wonder if he looks in that way at the 'little country-girl'?" When Phil would suddenly and unaccountably change his seat—to Lucy's fancy it seemed for the whole and sole purpose of getting a view of the beautiful Ellinor from another angle—she would say to herself: "I wonder if the 'little country-girl' could stand being looked at from so many points of view!" And last of all, as it so often happened when Ellinor would rise from her chair and say she had an engagement somewhere or other, and must go, and Phil would rise also to take his leave, and their eyes would be on a level one with the other, she would find herself saying not only, "What a splendid pair of lovers those two would make!" but "I dare say the 'little country-girl' is only just up to his chin, if she gets as far as that;" and so on, and so on.

It was tiresome, this haunting personality of a perfect stranger. Even when Phil went away for the Christmas holidays up to the north, and might have been supposed to carry his "atmosphere" with him, Edie seemed somehow left behind; and when Ellinor became, as she did just then, suddenly quiet, thoughtful, a little triste perhaps, and

assuredly by a good deal less haughty and satirical than her wont, Lucy said to herself: "She is thinking, as I am, of the 'little country-girl,' and wondering how she can find it in her heart to play fast and loose with one so good and true as Mr. Wickham."

Thought so perpetually setting in one direction must with practical matter-of-fact people lead to some definite result. Lucy was practical and matter-of-fact to a degree, and her thinking had a very definite and practical ending, as Edie Fairfax was in due course to discover.

Meantime, the subject of so many meditations, little, tempestuous Edie herself, was having but a sorry time of it down at Stanham, in spite of the Christmas festivities which the Castle ball had inaugurated. In the first place the Castle ball itself (given a day or two after Christmas) was a failure; look at it which way she would, Edie was bound to confess it was a failure. Although she had absolutely kissed herself in her own mirror with delight at the success of the toilette she had planned, although she had gone out of the house saying in a most resolute voice, "Papa, I know I shall enjoy myself to-night more than I ever have in my whole life!" yet, long before the ball had reached its height, she was sitting, white and weary, talking platitudes with the oldest of the dowagers present, and just when everything was at its gayest and best, the band playing the most delicious of waltzes, and the muscles of every young foot in the room settling itself into three-four time, Edie had crept up to her father in the card-room, and was whispering in his ear: "Papa, I am worn out—tired to death. You must order the carriage at once, or I shall die on the floor." And all through the dark, cold drive home she had leaned back on the cushions, saying never a word.

Colonel Wickham, calling at the Hall on the day after the ball, was struck by the little, white, forlorn-looking face. After a month of good hard working at his vital statistics, the Colonel had awakened suddenly to the fact that they were too much for him; they somehow touched what he had been vain to hope was a vacant place in his organism, but was now compelled to admit held a heart. The returns of the deaths of the young sempstresses and mantle-makers in the metropolis possibly struck the first chord, the death-rate (and its causes) of the infant population

struck the second, a yet fuller and louder note.

The Colonel swept all his books and MSS. into a cupboard, and turned the key on them.

"Heavens and earth!" he said to himself, "if I work at those figures much longer I shall lose my head over them, or else turn every acre I possess into hard cash, and found a huge crèche somewhere for the ill-used little ones."

And then, to somewhat brace his nerves from the strain he had put on them, he had taken his hat and gone over to the Hall, thinking he would get little Edie to "talk the blues" out of him.

They were just sitting down to luncheon as the Colonel entered, Edie, her father, and one guest—Lord Winterdowne. Colonel Wickham had the heartiest of welcomes. It seemed to him that Lord Winterdowne appeared on very easy, intimate terms at the Hall, also that his gold eye-glasses were very constantly turned in Edie's direction.

"Perhaps he bores her, poor little maid! and that's why she looks so white and tired," the Colonel thought, and then he fell to wondering over the "little maid's" obstinacy and silliness in setting on foot an order of things which left her open to any amount of disagreeable attention from this or any other almost stranger.

"It's a thousand pities Phil took her at her word; he might have been sure she didn't know what she was doing, and didn't mean a quarter of what she said," his thoughts went on; "it's only when women deliberate over things and thoroughly know their own hearts—"

"Why, Colonel, you look as blue as the books you're always studying," said the Squire's loud, cheery voice, striking athwart the current of his thoughts.

Lord Winterdowne turned to him politely.

"I have always thought the study of Blue-books must be a most—a—interesting study—one I should like to have taken up with, had I been able to concentrate my time and thought—a—to one pursuit. Where would any science be in the present day without Blue-books to substantiate—a—or otherwise the theories it—a—from time to time puts forth? Theories are nothing unless built upon facts—a—facts are worthless until we reduce them to—a—their elements—a—and—a—index these elements, catalogue them—a—for future use."

It was said with the air of a man inaugurating a science congress, and in a tone of voice that would have done credit to the President of the Royal Society himself.

"Good Heavens, what a dose!" thought the Squire. Aloud he said cheerily: "I believe you two gentlemen would enjoy seeing your best friends reduced to their 'elements,' as you call it, so that you might 'catalogue them for future use'—eh, Edie?"

"I think dust and ashes are very good things to be reduced to," answered Edie with an energy that made them all start. Then, as she finished speaking, she rose from the luncheon-table and left the room by a door leading into the conservatory.

Lord Winterdowne rose also and followed her.

Colonel Wickham looked after them uneasily.

"Now, surely," he began, turning to the Squire, "that man isn't going to make a fool of himself over our little Edie!"

"Looks rather like it—doesn't it?" answered the Squire serenely; "but whether Edie will feel inclined to make a fool of herself by way of acknowledging the compliment is another thing. I rather think not."

The Colonel did not feel so sure on the matter. More especially when, half an hour afterwards, he heard Edie in the drawing-room, at her piano, singing, evidently for Lord Winterdowne's delectation, one after the other, exactly the songs she was wont to carol to Phil.

One—a quaint little French ditty with the refrain, "A toi à toi je chante toujours"—made the Colonel jump clean out of his chair and declare that he must make haste home at once; that he had a letter of importance to write; that he had forgotten he had the post to save that afternoon.

The song pursued him out of the house and half down the avenue. He could picture little Edie's sweet mouth as she sang the "A toi à toi," and—yes—well—he knew what her eyes could say to the man to whom she chose to sing it.

Colonel Wickham did save the post that afternoon. His letter of importance was addressed to his nephew Phil, spending his Christmas up in the north with the Kenricks. It told him, in a few short, strong sentences, how that a man, who had lately come upon the scene at Stanham, had taken it into his head to poach upon his (Phil's) preserves, and if he

did not make up his mind to come back home at once, he might rue it to the end of his life.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PHIL, however, did not get his letter till it was nearly a week old, and for these reasons: The house-party at the Kenricks' was a dull one, consisting chiefly of fathers and mothers of families, and middle-aged maiden aunts. Christmas Day over, the young men grew bored.

"Let's go and shoot snipe at Dartmoor. I've an invitation to a jolly house there, and can take a good 'gun' with me," whispered Arthur Kenrick in Phil's ear.

So the young men took their guns and set off for Dartmoor, thankfully shaking their heels free from the decorous dust of Kenrick Manor.

At Dartmoor the house chanced to be as cheery as Kenrick Manor was grim. Bright eyes looked pleasant welcomes to the young men as they came in be-llegged, mud-spattered, with a fresh gorsy smell hanging about them from their long tramp over moor and fen, after the beautiful, difficult, zigzagging birds. Arthur Kenrick fell victim at once to a sweet blue-eyed maiden of seventeen, an Australian heiress, who wore the loveliest of maize tea-gowns, and had hair about a yard long, even when plaited in five. Phil watched the rapid, headlong love-making that went on under his very eyelids with an odd sensation somewhere about the left side of his waistcoat. Escaped from the spell which a certain pair of large, lustrous brown eyes had appeared to cast upon him, the memory of the old, happy, lazy, love-making days at Stanham, and of little Edie in all her sweet, lovable whimsicalness, rushed back upon him in full force. On the third day of his stay at Dartmoor, he woke with the resolution strong upon him of running off to Stanham for a week or so, getting as many glimpses of Edie in the time as possible, and—well, if she should ask him to prolong his stay, or show the least symptom of an inclination to let things slide back to their old happy footing, he would not be the one to say "No."

But, alas for these brave resolutions! Like the morning clouds, they had all vanished, before breakfast came to an end, with the turn of the key in the lock of the family letter-bag. The post that morning, with a tailor's bill and a boot bill, and a reminder from his club that his yearly subscription was due, brought Phil a small

missive, written in a hand that he had learnt to recognise as Ellinor Yorke's, but which, in reality, was that of the faithful Gretchen. It informed him, in the briefest and most conventional of sentences, that Miss Yorke would be very glad to see him immediately on his return to London, to consult him on a certain matter connected with Miss Selwyn's affairs, which had occasioned her some little perplexity.

Now which was it to be—Stanham or London?

"Stanham," said common-sense, reason, and every right feeling left in Phil's honest heart.

"London" said every one of his five senses which Ellinor had befooled, bedazzled, and bewildered to her heart's content. So to London he went, steaming into Waterloo about six o'clock that same evening, and saying to himself as he drove off once more to his old hotel, how easy it would be to run down to Stanham in a day or two when he had seen Miss Yorke, and talked over with her Lucy Selwyn's perplexing affairs.

What the exact cause of perplexity was, truth to tell, did not trouble him greatly. For the nonce lighter questions held his brain, and importuned for an answer. Such as, how would Miss Yorke receive him—warmly, coldly, indifferently? With what looks would she greet him? What would be the first words her lips would speak to him?

Not till some twelve or fourteen hours afterwards did he receive answers to these questions, and when they came they were certainly not of the sort and kind he expected. As, for instance, could the half-turn of a reclining head, the suspicion of a smile, and the coldly explanatory phrase, "I dare not move, I am posing for Mr. Effingham; he is arranging his colours in the next room," be deemed satisfactory by a young man of six-and-twenty, who considered that he had something of a right to an extra warm greeting, a kindly pressure of a soft hand, a long, lingering look, not careless glance, from a pair of beautiful eyes.

"Is Miss Selwyn in?" asked Phil coldly, disappointedly, trying to meet indifference with indifference.

Ellinor looked towards the door, at that moment opening to admit Miss Selwyn.

Phil had been received this time in the drawing-room. It had the swathed-up look that furnished-house drawing-rooms generally wear. It was a big, lofty

room, divided from a smaller by a pair of thick dark curtains. As Lucy entered by the door these curtains were pushed on one side, and Mr. Effingham came in, palette in hand.

He was a small, dark man, of the lazy, effeminate, Italian type. There was nothing particularly noticeable about him save his eyes, which were large, dark, and lustrous, and had expression enough in them for all the Paolos and Francesca da Riminis that ever were painted. He was a slow and reluctant speaker, but those eyes of his did duty for his tongue—when, where, and as he willed. As, for instance, when they rested for a brief moment on Phil, making a slight formal bow in acknowledgment of Ellinor's introduction, they said as plainly as lips could: "Philistine of Philistines, stand off from the holy of holies." And when they wandered from Phil's fair face to Lucy's brown one, their language was: "Good little soul! you play gooseberry as sweetly as such a sour part can be played."

Phil read and mentally resented both looks.

"No doubt we shall come to a reckoning by-and-by," his eyes would have said had they been as skilled in optical telegraphy as Mr. Effingham's.

"Come into this little room, please, Mr. Wickham," said Lucy, leading the way through the curtains. "How good of you to come! Oh, I have been so troubled and perplexed, but have made up my mind at last."

Then she laid the cause of her trouble and perplexity before Phil, in the shape of another letter from Mrs. Thorne's lawyers.

It was a plain business communication, informing Miss Selwyn that, as she had declined to affix any money value to the property bequeathed to her by the late Mr. Rodney Thorne, Mrs. Thorne had had a careful estimate made of it by qualified persons, who had valued it, as it stood, at a little under ten thousand pounds, inclusive of pictures and jewellery. This sum Mrs. Thorne had had paid to Miss Selwyn's credit at the bankers through whom she would receive the dividends on the one thousand pounds bequeathed by Rodney to her. When duly advised by the bankers that this ten thousand pounds was in their hands, they (the lawyers) would feel obliged if Miss Selwyn would sign and return to them the enclosed formal receipt, and Mrs. Thorne would consider the matter concluded.

Phil's indignation at the cool, business-like tone of the whole arrangement, at the distance placed and kept between Mrs. Thorne and the girl who ought to have been her son's wife, would no doubt have risen more rapidly and to a greater height had not his ears been caught, now and again, as he read the lawyers' letter, by the half-sentences that were going on the other side of the curtains between Ellinor and the artist.

"I fail to see," Ellinor was saying in slow, low tones, "why you cannot paint me except in a slumberous or semi-slumberous condition. I must be either going to sleep or awakening from it, it seems, to give you satisfaction."

"Repose without solidity, immobility without marmoreal hardness, can only be expressed by beauty of the highest, purest type," was the artist's reply in equally slow, but somewhat deeper tones.

"The arrant young coxcomb!" thought Phil. "I should like to——" Then he caught Lucy's eyes fixed on him, and felt she was waiting for him to speak. "Ah yes, it's simply abominable—that's all I can say, Miss Selwyn. Of course, you'll just send back the receipt unsigned, and tell them Mrs. Thorne may have the things as a free gift, or not at all."

Lucy's reply was to spread the receipt signed before him.

"It cost me something to accept it," she said apologetically; "but, after thinking for hours and hours over it, it seemed to me the only thing I could do to end the contention——"

Phil's astonishment was halved by his anxiety to catch Ellinor's next sentence.

"It is easier to find a Gyneth than a De Vaux," she was saying, and the words seemed to end in something of a sigh.

So, then, she was posing as a Gyneth. Would that small, large-eyed idiot staring at her in there be fool enough to imagine he could pose as a De Vaux? Phil waited impatiently for the artist's reply. It did not come for full a minute and a half, and then it was:

"He'll be a happy man, whoever he may be, when he is found."

Phil could fancy the look that went with the words.

Lucy was obliged to claim his attention.

"I hope you think I have done right, Mr. Wickham," she said anxiously; "it has all troubled me very much. Mrs. Thorne was so resolute, the contention was so unseemly."

Phil, with an effort, placed both his ears at Lucy's service.

"You could have been equally resolute if you had chosen," he said. "I don't suppose I'm a particularly good hand at giving advice, but if you had asked me I should certainly have advised a different course. I would at least have been treated with common politeness, after the magnanimous manner in which you have acted."

Lucy sighed.

"So Ellinor said; but of course she might do what I could not. I am thankful to end the matter, the contention was so unseemly."

And that was all she seemed capable of saying or thinking. "The contention was so unseemly—and with Rodney's mother."

"You should have had dealings with Rodney's mother direct, not through lawyers," Phil said hotly. "But, however, nothing I can say will be of much use now, I suppose."

Then he rose in a great hurry to take his leave. For one thing his conscience was pricking him sharply in that when he had had the opportunity of setting Lucy's conduct in a right light before Mrs. Thorne, he had not done so, though it might have been at the expense of Ellinor Yorke and Rodney himself. For another, he felt that existence was impossible within twenty feet of that supercilious young artist—even though tapestry curtains might divide them—unless permission to break the peace were granted to him.

As he passed through the other drawing-room Ellinor did not rouse herself from her dreamy, delicious attitude of rounded repose. She, however, gave him a dozen or so of words.

"I want you to do something for me if you will, Mr. Wickham," she said sweetly. "I want you to get me the address of the cleverest lung doctor in London, and bring it to me to-morrow—will you?"

Phil looked his amazement.

"I hope his services are not needed here," he said, and quite involuntarily his glance shifted to Lucy Selwyn.

Ellinor's smile reassured him.

"It is to please Uncle Hugh," she said; "old men are always fussy. Because I have had a three-days' influenza, I must needs have my lungs sounded and be dosed with cod-liver oil."

Phil went straight from Grafton Street to the Consumption Hospital to get a list of all the clever lung doctors in London.

And all this time there was lying waiting

for him at the cheery house at Dartmoor, Colonel Wickham's earnest, warning, beseeching letter, which Arthur Kenrick, all-absorbed in the owner of the lovely blue eyes and exquisite maize tea-gowns, forgot to have forwarded.

A GREEK ISLAND HERCULANEUM.

WHETHER or not Tenterden Steeple—as the old proverb says—caused the Goodwin Sands, it is certain that the Suez Canal caused the unearthing of a prehistoric Herculanæum in the island of Therasia. From time immemorial, the pumice-stone of this and the neighbouring islets has been used for house-building. Ground up and mixed with lime, it forms so tough a mortar that walls and arches which are cemented with it will stand against a moderate earthquake. Probably one like that which ruined Chios would be too much for them; but, happily, such terrible convulsions are rare, while little shocks happen in those parts almost every year. It has, too, that property which makes our English lias-lime so valuable—of setting under water; and, therefore, just as lias is exported from England to Holland, to help to fasten the blocks of Finland granite with which the sea-walls are faced, so the Therasia pumice-stone has been very largely exported to Egypt, not to build only, but to keep up the different works in connection with the Canal. This light kind of stone, named tufa in Italy, and there made into a cement called pozzolano, much like that exported from the Greek islands, may also be seen in perfection in the Eifel, that volcanic district between the Rhine and Moselle. Most of the fine stone roofs of the churches all down the Rhine, right into Holland, are made of it; it is just the thing for stone vaulting, being as light as wood and as tough as hammered iron. I doubt not that many Pompeiis and Herculanæums underlie that Eifel country, where the cinder-heaps round the extinct craters (now tiny circular lakes) still crumble dustily under one's feet; but though there's a good deal of tufa-quarrying in the Eifel, it is not on such a large scale as that which the Canal set going in Therasia.

Therasia, Santorin, and Aspromonti are very small islands, especially the last, which, composed wholly of light tufa, is getting rapidly smaller year by year. The other two have both the same horse-shoe shape, the

hollows fronting one another, and rising, in vertical cliffs, fifteen hundred feet high.

These cliffs are banded, like those in the west of our Isle of Wight, with stripes of different colours. There are black lava-beds, red cinder (*scoriæ*) beds, violet-grey ash-beds, and, topping all, the brilliant white pumice-stone or tufa bed, reaching often a thickness of from twenty to thirty yards. The outer face of the three islands is quite different. They slope gently seaward, and the whole surface is tufa, thicker here than on the cliff-tops, and decomposed on the surface into the thinnest of vegetable soils, which admirably suits the vines, whose produce has of late years been making its way in the English market. If you were there during an equinoctial gale, you would fancy the whole ground must soon be blown into the sea. A good deal does get there every season, and perhaps this is the secret of the wine being so good; for, fresh decomposition taking place, fresh earth is supplied, and there is no fear of the soil ever being exhausted, or losing the peculiar salts which suit the grape so admirably.

These three islets are, in fact, part of the outer edge of a big volcanic crater which once filled the bay of Santorin. At the end of the tertiary age there was no Mediterranean. Greece and Africa were joined by a low marshy continent, with a chain of salt lakes united by a big river running through it from the Dardanelles to the Straits of Gibraltar. These tracts of low-lying land were common at that time. By soundings we can map them out—bar volcanic disturbances in times nearer our own—almost as certainly as if they were still dry land. Thus we are told there was then no German Ocean, but land more or less solid from Hull to Hamburg and Harwich to Ostend, and again from Chichester to Dieppe. A vast river, of which Trent, and Thames, and Rhine, and Seine were affluents, drained this vast meadow; and on it browsed the elephants, rhinoceroses, and other pachyderms, whose bones are found so abundantly in the London clay. What a time the geologists will have when diving apparatus gets so perfected that we shall be able to make diggings at the sea-bottom! What a world of strange creatures, of some of which neither Owen nor Cuvier ever dreamt, will then be brought to light. But we already find enough of them to make the fact of this now submerged plain absolutely certain as regards our corner of Europe. It was the same thing on a smaller

scale in the Severn valley. If you drive on a frosty afternoon over the Somersetshire marshes, where Brent Knoll and Glastonbury Tor, and a few more stand up like islands out of the sea of white mist, you will understand how the land lies in that direction, and will not be astonished that the clay-beds on each side of the Severn are storehouses of tusks, teeth, remains of all kinds; and, if you are wise, you will stop at Banwell station (Bone-well, so called by our Saxon forefathers), and look at the wonderful collection picked out of the clay which, during the ice-age, got washed into those caves on the Mendip slope, carrying with it the bones of the creatures who had lived and died in what is now the Severn estuary.

It is the same all round the Mediterranean. Wherever there is a clay-bed or a convenient cave in which such things would be kept safely, there you find bones. In Attica, in the Morea, in Malta, in Algiers you find them. Naturalists of the old school, who were never happy unless they were inventing new species, have distinguished among these remains four or five different kinds of rhinoceros and as many elephants, including the elephant of Gozzo.

Well, towards the very end of the tertiary age the greater likeness to creatures now alive of the then existing animals has led to the period being called Pleistocene—i.e., "fullest of modern forms of life;" Eocene being "the dawn of the new, i.e., of modern forms;" Miocene, "less new, i.e., less than fifty per cent. of present forms;" and so on. And during that Pleistocene time there were upheavals and depressions as if this solid globe was taken with a fit of restlessness. Such ups and downs necessarily caused cracks in the surface. Wherever there was volcanic agency near the surface, these cracks would give vent to the subterranean fire. Everybody knows that over most of the Mediterranean basin this fire is very near the surface, and exceptionally eager to force its way upwards.

And so it was in prehistoric times; all over the Archipelago, in lesser Asia, down into Syria, wherever the geologist has studied the surface, he finds volcanic deposits—lavas, basalts, tufas, overlying the schists and marbles, which are the chief rocks of the whole district. These marbles, too, and schists are (they tell us) "altered," crystallised from ordinary limestones and clay-slates by the transmitted action of the fiery force. And some of these eruptions

have been very recent. In Syria the tradition of them was taken up into Jewish literature; we can trace it again and again in the Psalms; and here in these Greek islets, men built houses partly of lava-blocks, partly of stones from the marble sides of Mount St. Elias, at a time when all the bay was a big volcanic mountain like those in the Sandwich Islands, pierced in one place by the peaks of St. Elias aforesaid, and rising in another into a huge cone, the height of which must have been far greater than the cliffs of the islets and of the mainland of Santorin, which are fragments of it. How do we know all this? Well, the cliffs prove it; they correspond to one another as exactly as would the edges of the great crater of Mouna Koa, supposing Hawaii and the rest of the group were to sink below the sea-level, as some tell us they are gradually doing. The houses, too, of the prehistoric village are built on the lava-rock, and not a morsel of tufa enters into their composition, either as stone or as mortar. Clearly—quite clearly to an eye accustomed to study these matters—the case stood thus: You know who the Neolithic men were?—men of the newer stone-age, who could shape flints into dainty arrow-heads, as distinguished from those Palæolithic (older flint) fellows whose rough stone hoes and other tools, scarcely to be known from the nature-shaped stones around them, are found in the Somme Valley and other gravel-drifts. When these Neolithic men were building, not huts, but good big houses, growing barley, keeping fowls and sheep, weaving flax, and grinding corn in hand-mills, and squeezing oil out of olives, in various parts of the Archipelago, the bay of Santorin was a high, green hill with breezy downs, like what Virgil says Vesuvius (our Vesuvius; in his day an excellent sheep-walk) was. But, like Vesuvius, it was dangerous ground. There came a day when (as the Greeks would have phrased it) Hephaistos, the fire-god, was angry, and the earth giants, buried below, stirred uneasily and poured out over the fields and olive-woods a flood of liquid fire, while, along with their snortings, were belched forth solid clouds of ashes that settled all over the land. It came of a sudden, like the Pompeii overthrow, when Vesuvius first threw off the mask. As yet—i.e., when M. Fouqué wrote, they had only found one human skeleton; but then they had only thoroughly examined one house. That the houses were there, the quarrymen and

landowners had known for years ; but not till 1869 did M. Christomanos, chemistry professor at the University of Athens, happen, on a yachting trip, to pass under the quarries, and, landing, see for himself what he soon after published to Western Europe. This one skeleton was found doubled up, with head close to feet, one leg stretched out, the other bent under the body, skull and backbone broken by the falling in of the roof. Many mutton-bones have been found, not thrown on the kitchen-midden after cooking, but in a walled-yard, where the animals to whom they belonged were, no doubt, penned, as the Cyclops penned his sheep in the cave in which he lived, and in which he imprisoned Ulysses and his crew. There was nothing overwhelming in the way of an earthquake while these showers of ashes were being poured out. Buildings like those I speak of, made of huge blocks bonded here and there with olive-wood beams, will stand a good deal, and they have stood very well. The windows and doors have mostly fallen in, their lintels being charred ; but the walls are all upright. However, a coating of ashes from twenty to fifty yards thick is enough, without an earthquake into the bargain. Man and all his works disappeared in the Santorin country ; and, probably, very soon after, the greater part of this circular area, some seven miles across, sank down bodily, letting in the sea from outside. That is often the case after a great eruption ; and naturally, for all this pouring out of matter leaves a hollow inside, and the overlying surface is pretty sure to cave in to some extent.

It has caved in to a very great extent in Santorin Bay. The water is very deep ; even close to the islands there is no anchorage ; ships have to anchor on the edges of a submarine volcano of quite recent origin—*Palæa Kameni* it used to be called in the second century, when it was above the surface, and was made bigger by every one of the frequent eruptions ; but it has now sunk again, though not far. But how do we know that the caving in came after the volcanic shower ? Because this bright white layer of tufa, which over all the islands covers the topmost ash-bed, is, on the landward side—i.e., on the inner edge of the crater, where are the high vertical cliffs—cut sheer through exactly as the rocks below it are. I do not know that the argument is worth much, for snow on a

sea-cliff is just as sharply cut as the rock on which it lies ; but it is thought conclusive by those who have studied the matter on the spot. Anyhow, the bay of Santorin is the crater of a volcano—by no means an extinct one ; and it became such a crater long before the fifteenth century B C, about which date it is calculated that the Phœnicians, who have set their mark on the whole Mediterranean, began to settle in the Archipelago. Not that the islands remained uninhabited all that time ; man's wonderful courage or recklessness is nowhere more strikingly shown than in his readiness to begin work again before the lava-crust is well cooled. Before long (as geologists count time) what was left of the Santorin group was re-peopled, and by the self-same race as that which had been there before the eruption. This is proved by great "finds" in Santorin—at Acroliri and elsewhere—above instead of below the pumice crust, of vases and other pottery identical in form and make with those discovered in the buried houses at Therasia. In these finds not a trace of bronze has been discovered, but obsidian (i.e., black lava) arrow-heads, and scrapers after the type used all the world over by Neolithic carriers, and still used by such tribes as have not emerged out of the stone-age. In fact, it was the Phœnicians who first brought in the use of metal tools, as they probably did the cultivation of the vine, unknown, it would seem, to these earlier men, who have left abundant testimony of their knowing all about the manufacture of oil.

That it was probably a long time after the formation of the crater before the Phœnicians came is surmised from several of their buildings being on beds of shingle and sea-shells, which themselves overlie the tufa-bed. At the time of the eruption, then, those parts must have been below the water, and the pumice shower must first have sunk and solidified, and afterwards have received the marine deposits on which the Phœnicians built. They are, in fact, "raised beaches," and such beaches in general rise very slowly. However, it is best not to be too certain about time-intervals ; for there is no saying how suddenly anything may have happened here in one of these "centres of volcanic activity," in one of which a whole line of coast has been known to rise or fall scores of yards in an hour. Anyhow, the Phœnicians brought in bronze and improved pottery to a people who

were by no means savages, though they could work no metal but gold. The working of this they had mastered; that is, if the two little rings found below the tufa were not, as the pottery must have been, imported. They are wholly without alloy—the Stone-man was not up to adulteration—hollow, and evidently made by rolling up a thin gold plate; small enough for a baby's finger, they were probably links in a chain, and have each two holes for stringing. I said the pottery was imported. You cannot make vases without clay any more than bricks without straw, and there is no clay in these volcanic islets. It is that want of clay which hindered the development of the South Sea Islanders; when they came from Malay land, or wherever they did come from, they probably knew something about pot-making; but knowledge is of no use without stuff to practise on. The vases found in the Therasia village are of various kinds—big jars, such as over all Greece in the old days were used for storing corn in; little basins with and without handles, coloured red, and marked with circular bands and rows of slanting lines; other little vases rudely resembling the human—mostly the female—form, more like those that one sees in Peruvian collections than anything else; and a very few of fine, bright yellow clay, ornamented with dots and curved lines, very gracefully arranged like festoons of foliage. None of these kinds can be mistaken for what are known as Etruscan, or Greek, or Egyptian, or Phœnician; but, strange to tell, one of the bright yellow ones has been found in the Syrian desert, and is now in the Louvre; while another was dug up near Autun, in France. This proves, thinks M. Fouqué, a widespread trade in the Mediterranean long before Phœnician days. One knows how things used to travel—jade ornaments found in the Swiss lake dwellings, Gulf of Mexico shells in the mounds up by the Great Lakes, Baltic amber in Etruscan tombs; so this need not astonish us. It is worth noting that the way of building in use in prehistoric Therasia—a bond of timber every now and then between the rows of stones—was used, Cæsar says, in Gaul for town walls; and he found it as effectual against battering-rams as the Greek islanders did against earthquakes. Besides vases (the big ones still full of barley, which was also found heaped up against the partitions), there were feeding-troughs of lava (some in the sheep-

pen still containing chopped straw), hand-mills, such as are still used in Santorin, the only modern improvement being a wooden handle to the upper stone, weights, stone discs for keeping the web straight in the loom, and a lava oil-press polished with much wear and just like those in use in the more primitive isles of the Archipelago.

Feeding-troughs and “querns” of granite I have seen scores of in Cornwall; only, instead of an upper stone, the Cornish men seem to have used a “muller” (pestle). Discs (spindle-whorls they used to be called) are found wherever Stone-age remains are turned up. Nothing is simpler than an explanation when once it has been made; and one wonders how these discs—so admirably suited to their purpose, showing, so many of them, when the stone is at all soft, the channel made by the thread—can have been such a puzzle to the archaeologists. The web of a hand-loom has to be kept tight, but not too tight. What fitter for the purpose than light weights, which would pull it taut again as soon as the deftly-thrown shuttle had made its stroke? Then there were the stone scrapers, a few arrow heads, and one spear head, and a strange cylinder built up from the ground about a yard high, solid all through, with a slight hollow at top.

“The mouth of a well,” said the first discoverers; but where did the water come from, and how could it rise in a solid cylinder? The idea now is that it was an altar; so that these Stone-age men had already elaborated a form of worship. Weights? You would not guess it if you saw the pile of rough stones dignified with that name. It shows the patience of the archaeologists (and in no kind of work is patience more needful) that somebody should have weighed all those stones, and found that the little ones are what the old arithmetic books used to call “aliquot parts” of the big ones and of one another. Of course it is only guess-work, and I do not think anybody claims that Neolithic man understood the decimal system; but one supposes he had common-sense, and would not choose stones of certain weights, rejecting others, without some reason. Here, then, is trade developed to the extent of selling things by weight.

I said that these prehistoric buildings had been known long before M. Christomanos examined them. They were a constant nuisance to the quarrymen, and a source of regret to the landowners. For

when their level was reached, the tufa, which had till then been beautifully homogeneous, and only needed to be cut out almost as easily as cheese, and sent down the zigzag slides to the boats that were ready to carry it off to Port Said and elsewhere, became full of stones, blocks of lava and marble, and was, therefore, harder to work, and much more unsatisfactory when worked. This is what has saved these remains for the delight of Western savans; when they got down to the stone-bed, the workmen generally preferred making a fresh quarry somewhere else.

At first the buildings were thought to be excavated cemeteries, like some that have been found here and there in the Archipelago, since Bory de St. Vincent's scientific expedition in 1829. But graves do not want windows; and though funeral feasts and offerings to the dead were universal institutions, it has never been the custom to make your tombs store-houses for your grain. Besides, there was no sign of burial, by cremation or otherwise; the one human skeleton was (as I have said) clearly that of a man killed by a falling roof. The roofs were heavy. Of course they have all fallen in. They were not of asphalté like the flat roofs of modern Greek houses, but of woodwork, with a moderate pitch, covered with a foot or more of small stones and volcanic earth. Sometimes there was a central pillar, of which the socket still remains; and then the roof seems to have sloped all round up to a point. All this can be traced, the olive-wood supports being here and there not wholly carbonised.

From the position of the windows one is certain (even if other things did not prove it) that these buildings were raised before the eruption. For, in the present lie of the ground, the windows, which are all on the land side, would have no possible look-out—the soil rises outside them. So it is no use saying: "These rooms and courtyards were filled in, not by an eruption, but by the washing down of light volcanic soil, with which the island had been covered long before they were raised." Water and time together will do a good deal; but as, even now, after all the washings, the ground rises several yards higher outside the windows than it does the other way, outside the blank walls, we must give up that hypothesis. Besides, a sudden flood would have knocked over the corn-jars, and swept away the barley-heaps. Here everything is as quietly buried as if snow had fallen

instead of volcanic dust; while, as for roofs being broken, think what twenty or thirty feet of snow would do! The pumice-shower went upwards as well as downwards; on Mount St. Elias, almost to the very top, one finds scorise caught in crannies. Altogether it must have been as fierce for an eruption as the recent Chios business was for an earthquake.

All the life of those old people is there, even the red-wash with which they adorned the insides of their houses. Their rooms were large, from twenty feet by sixteen the biggest, to eight feet square the smallest; in one house there are six of them, besides a courtyard for animals. Not by any means savages these Neolithic men; the strangest thing is not that they already imported wheel-made pottery, but that, with nothing but flint implements, they could manage to shape their building-stones, a good many of which on the insides of the rooms are carefully hewn. They could not have known anything of the tufa, which makes such splendid mortar (pozzolano), else they would not have been driven to fill up the chinks of their irregular cyclopean building with red volcanic earth. Wherever their pottery came from, the hewn stones could not have been imported.

Well, one lesson from this Therasia Pompeii is that in the earliest-civilised, best-explored parts of the earth there is still much to be found if we knew how to look for it. Thousands of tourists had idly gazed at the Mycenæ lions; but it was reserved for Dr. Schliemann to find the very tomb of Agamemnon; hundreds of yachtsmen and others had stopped at Therasia, perhaps had walked up the steps cut in the face of the high sea-cliff, and had admired the contrivances for getting the tufa out to sea; but till M. Christomanos no one had dreamed that the stones at which the quarrymen grumbled belonged to a prehistoric village. You never can tell where you may come on some remains of your remote forefathers. The great thing in exploring is insight (a gift of nature), and care, and patience, without which the most precious remains may be broken up, in getting them out.

DIETETIC PHILOSOPHY.

THERE is an old saying among the French that, "Un cuisinier est un mortel divin," which is a step towards an open deification of the stomach no doubt suffi-

ciently shocking. On our side of the Channel we prefer to worship in this direction without formulating our creed. All the same, there are a few bold enough to affirm that the seat of the affections is not in the heart but in the stomach. And, curiously enough, even as the heart is declared to be above all things deceitful and desperately wicked, so there are very proper persons who regard the word which represents our digestive organ as a "bad word," and not fit to be used in polite society. Is it possible that such was the prevalent belief at the time when took place that famous controversy about whether the first syllable should be pronounced *stom* or *stum*? It used also, by the way, to be a much disputed point, and one which raised a great deal of hot blood, whether *cucumber* should be pronounced *cowcumber*, or *kewcumber*. Of course it wouldn't sound very pretty for a gallant to say to his lady that he loved her to the very bottom of his stomach, but that is just what Polyphemus of old might have said. He was not a very handsome creature, it is true, and his personal character left much to be desired. Yet for two things will he be ever remembered: his absorbing devotion to the fair Galatea, and his straightforward declaration that the only deity he admitted was his stomach. It is not without significance, too, that the Old Testament writers, when speaking of sorrow or longing, do not locate the yearning in the heart.

Not to pursue this point, however, we may take it for granted that happiness in this world is scarcely attainable without a healthy digestion. Dyspeptic persons can and do lead noble lives, and to surmount a trouble is, no doubt, to secure one of the purest measures of enjoyment one can have. But physical discomfort and mental serenity are rarely to be found in combination, and if we do occasionally find a man who remains happy while eating is to him a daily torture, because digestion is an inevitable agony, we may accept such an exception which serves to prove the rule. If the want of food provokes one half the crimes of the world, an excess of food probably provokes the rest. A disordered liver is as active an agent of evil as what is usually known as a bad heart. Perhaps more so, because it may send a naturally good man wrong. Does not Mr. H. M. Stanley ascribe the obstinate clinging of General Gordon to Khartoum as the result of a disordered

liver? The excessive biliousness of a great and good soldier and a devout Christian is thus the cause of a vast expenditure of British money and a great shedding of British and African blood. We are not responsible for the theory in this case, but it forms a timely illustration of our argument.

That people so wise as the Athenians of old should waste good meat and drink in idle efforts to propitiate their gods, seems absurd. But did they waste their offerings? Were all the libations poured out on the ground? And did their feasts differ materially from our own celebrations? We still commemorate a victory, do honour to an eminent person, or cement old bonds of public association, with a banquet. We still speed the parting guest with the stirrup-cup, and even our religious combinations cannot get along without their annual soirées.

In all the customs of all countries and all ages which associate feasting with joy, with kindly affections, with comradeship, even with benevolence, we may find the germ of the idea which framed the French proverb, and which ruled Polyphemus.

There is a reverse to the medal, of course. You remember the picture of the satiated revellers when the little bill is presented. "Then comes the reckoning, and men laugh no more!" And there are also men, who, unlike the dear old Balbus of our schooldays, do not eat to live, but who live to eat. There are the scientific epicures, who, like Pelham's friend, regard a bad dinner as the most serious calamity which can befall a man, and who count a lost dinner as a lost day. But we will not take these as types of rational mankind, any more than we will take Brigham Young as a type of the marital affections of ordinary mortals. There is a wide range between the luxurious Lucullus and those modern enthusiasts who are always for teaching us how to live on sixpence a day, or a shilling a week—not to go so far as the American Dr. Tanner, who tried to show us how one might live on nothing at all. But, as Socrates would say, we cannot away with such absurdities. We love not extremes, either of indulgence or of abstinence. Man being reasonable, says Byron, gets drunk. That is to say, a man because he is reasonable is unreasonable—which is absurd. No! Reasonable man eats and drinks in moderation. If he does so well, he does so economically, because economy is wise

expenditure, which permits neither parsimony nor waste.

We must candidly confess to having very little sympathy with vegetarians. If we could not afford anything else, we should endeavour to be content with "potatoes and point," even if we had not the imagination of Mr. Dickson Chaffinger, who constructed a *recherché* banquet out of half a sausage. But having a pretty firm conviction that animals were created for the use of man, we are not inclined to forego our share of them, when we can pay for it. We would rather dine with a vegetarian than with Duke Humphrey, but we would prefer a modest chop to either. Of course, in the matter of economy—or, rather let us say of expenditure—the vegetarians have the best of the argument just now. But do not let us lose sight of the change which would take place in that respect were everyone to become vegetarian. Vegetables and fruit would then become as dear as butchers' meat is now, and cattle and sheep would be "unmerchantable."

It is idle, however, to speculate on the advent of such a time so long as there are twenty millions of British money invested in cattle-ranches in the United States—not to mention the sheep-runs of Australia and New Zealand—and the limitless pampas of South America. We are a nation of beef-eaters, and even in Scotland it may be doubted if "ham and eggs" is not more of a national dish than porridge.

That there is a great deal in diet affecting not only individual but also national character, there seems no room for doubt. Yet the philosophy of the subject remains to be formulated, and in the meantime we are confronted by a great many apparent inconsistencies. "Why we confine our food unto certain animals, and totally reject some others; how these distinctions crept into several nations; and whether this practice be built upon solid reason, or chiefly supported by custom or opinion," admits of as much consideration now as it did in the days of old Sir Thomas Browne.

That learned writer, he it remarked, contended that there is no absolute necessity to feed on any animals, and that flesh-eating only began after the Flood. The fact that Abel was a shepherd does not prove the contrary, he holds, for the sheep may only have been kept for their skins and their milk, and also for sacrifices. At the same time, it is difficult to realise that early man could offer burnt sacrifices with-

out being tempted to eat of the flesh. Nay, how could he select the fat, or most acceptable parts, if he did not know the taste of the same? But since man did take to flesh-eating, at whatever period of his existence, it is curious to recall how, as worthy Sir Thomas does, the taste has varied. "We single out several dishes, and reject others, the selection being but arbitrary or upon opinion; for many are commended and cried up in one age which are decried and nauseated in another."

Why were the Jews forbidden to eat swine? Was it because of the uncleanness of the animal, or to avoid disease? The prevalence of trichinosis in our day, which has led Prince Bismarck to forbid the importation of American pork into Germany, suggests an explanation. And yet the Cretans would not eat pigs, not because they thought them unclean, but because Jupiter was supposed to have been suckled by a sow. The ancient Egyptians, the Phœnicians, the Syrians, and the Arabians refrained from eating pigs neither on sanitary nor on religious grounds, but simply because pigs were found more useful as animated ploughs in turning up the soil with their snouts.

It is said that Pythagoras, who forbade the use of flesh-meat in general, would not have refused a dish of roast pork, so little likely were pigs considered to harbour the souls of the departed; and yet he could not possibly have eaten beans with his bacon, because he conceived beans to have had the same origin as man. Herein, be it noted, the old Greek seems to have had an inkling of the theory which we are accustomed to associate with Darwin, only Pythagoras found the missing link between plants and animals—let us say, between beans and bacon—in the soul, while the Evolutionists of our time are still on the hunt for it.

Pythagoras, it may be remembered, also disallowed the use of fish for food, for certain philosophical reasons.

But why did the Syrians refrain from eating fish? Sir Thomas Browne says they did, but does not give his authority—an unusual omission with so precise a writer. The same people, it seems, eschewed pigeons, and yet the ancient Egyptians, according to Herodotus, ate dogs, eels, and crocodiles, notwithstanding that the latter were held sacred by some of them. Now we reject dogs, and we have not the opportunities for gastronomic experiments with crocodile flesh; but we eat eels a

delicacy, whether stewed or in the toothsome pie.

The diet of Cato was hare and cabbage, and the black broth on which Spartan youths were nourished to speak the truth and draw the bow, was neither more nor less than hare-soup made with the blood, as we make it even unto this day. We may fancy that the addition of port-wine is a modern innovation, but how do we know that the Spartans had not some equivalent ingredient?

Julius Cæsar records that the Ancient Britons accounted it impious to eat goose, and Galen condemns the same savoury bird as fit only to be put on a level with the ostrich. Shade of Father Christmas! to call the goose no better than the ostrich! Who would dream of eating an ostrich—that omnivorous biped which is said to be able to digest anything short of lace-collars? We say, short of lace-collars, because that was the only item found in the stomach of a tame ostrich, which mysteriously expired after a hearty meal of rusty nails and miscellaneous etceteras, among which happened to be some of the family washing of its proprietor.

But Galen was no worse than Aristotle, who commended the flesh of hawks; and, indeed, Galen himself recommended the flesh of foxes. He restricted the season, however, to the autumn, when they were busy feeding on the stolen grapes of the vineyards. Yet, while Galen, along with Herodotus, considered the flesh of dogs most excellent, Galen, along with Pliny, repudiated horse-flesh as utterly abominable. We have not come to eating horse-flesh in this country, but in many parts of the Continent it is exposed for sale as freely as beef and mutton, and that it is quite as palatable the present writer can testify. Herodotus tells that in Persia, not only was horse-flesh eaten, but also that camels were roasted whole at times of great rejoicings, just as, in our grandfathers' time, whole oxen used to be roasted on special occasions.

The truth is that, in seeking to find the foundation for a philosophy of diet, we are met with so many contradictions that it is difficult to know where to begin. That there must be firm ground somewhere between the *pâté de foie gras* of the Western epicure, and the roast missionary of the South Sea Islander, we cannot doubt—but where is it? "The practice of diet," says Sir Thomas Browne, "doth hold no certain course, nor solid rule of

selection or confinement—some, in an indistinct voracity, eating almost any; others, out of a timorous pre-opinion, refraining from many."

"All things almost are eaten if we take in the whole earth, for that which is refused in one country is accepted in another." But it is just in the difference between what is "accepted" and what is "refused" that we must look for our philosophy. Is there, for instance, no connection between German cookery and German character? Is it not possible to trace, in the strong flavours and the odd mixtures of sweets and sour beloved by that people, the germ of the assertiveness, the perseverance, the strength without loveliness, which may be said to characterise the German nation? And is there not something suggestive between the oleaginous diet of the Italians and the smoothness of their language, and the slipperiness of their morals? Take the French, again—the gayest-hearted people of Europe. Have they not the most delicate, the most etherealised cuisine—food elevated into poetry—of any people we know? Then we never speak of a Russian without thinking of a bear. Bears yield grease, and the Russian peasants are popularly supposed to live upon tallow-candles. Is there any real connection?

To come nearer home, we confess we are puzzled by the contrast between the Irish peasantry and the English. The Irish peasant subsists mainly on potatoes, with an occasional slice of bacon, and yet manages to be light-hearted, or at any rate ready-witted. The English peasant lives also on bacon and potatoes, reversing the order, but is slow and dull-witted.

The Scotch, again, are fond of ascribing the strength of the national character to porridge, but porridge is not nearly so universal an element of food, or at any rate the leading element, as is generally supposed. Yankee scoffers have asserted that the stern Scotch Calvinism is the logical result of an oatmeal diet. There may be something in this, and the theory finds some support in the fact that while Calvinism is waning, so also is the extensive use of oatmeal. But we must repudiate the Yankee calumny that the introduction of porridge breakfasts into New England accounts for the alarming prevalence there of juvenile depravity. It is said by some unreasonable Americans that the juvenile stomach revolted against the unnatural food, and boys, having to choose between it and matutinal starvation,

chose the latter, and began to steal. Now this theory is manifestly untenable, because a stomach which can digest the hot bread and pastry of the Americans, could not find any difficulty with porridge.

This suggests another reflection. Is the proverbial rapid-eating of the Americans the cause or the result of their restless, feverish, speculative character? We have always, by the way, thought that the Americans were the fastest eaters in the world, but this seems to be a mistake. It is alleged that the people of Saxony eat twice as fast as Americans, and are "as little troubled with their digestions as an American bank-cashier is with his conscience." Per contra, the English are supposed to be the slowest of all eaters, and yet the Yankee taunt has some foundation of truth—that the average English stomach will yield more bile to the square inch than the stomachs of any other people on earth. Dyspepsia, however, if unknown in Saxony, is common enough in America, and if not due to fast-eating is assuredly due to hot corn-cakes and pies.

The Americans admit themselves to be a pie-eating people, and when in Europe they pine daily for their native food. Cut off from pie they "feel lonesome," and almost in the mental condition of Sam Weller's crumpet-loving friend. But we have been accustomed to consider this pie-eating as the practice merely of the common crowd, and to think that inordinate love of pastry and high intellectual development are incompatible. What can we think, then, when we are told that Ralph Waldo Emerson regularly ate pie for breakfast? There was no symptom of dyspepsia about his intellect, and we will search the ranks of literature and philosophy in vain for a higher example of pure, vigorous, elevated thought. On the other hand, his friend Carlyle adhered to porridge to his last days, and the effects of dyspepsia are evident both in his character and his writings.

Where are we then?

Poor Colin Clout,

To whom raw onion gives prospective zest,
 Consoling hours of dampest wintry work,
 Could hardly fancy any regal joys
 Quite unimpregnate with the onion's scent.
 Perhaps his highest hopes are not all clear
 Of waftings from that energetic bulb;
 'Tis well that onion is not heresy.

One might multiply examples did space permit. Only the other day, for instance, the Duke of Westminster declared that Turner's latest works are also his worst,

entirely because of the painter's impaired digestion. We might proceed to show how much of the misery of our working-classes is due to the deplorable absence of culinary skill in the women. We might recall how battles have been lost by reason of an undigested onion, and how dynasties have been overturned by a disordered stomach.

But the more we consider the subject, the more reveals itself to be considered. It is altogether too large and wide for adequate discussion in these pages. We have but touched on the verge of it, but if our efforts suffice to stir up someone to deeper study, which shall result in the evolution of a Philosophy of Diet, even as we have already a Philosophy of Clothes, then we shall feel that we have ample reward.

A VALENTINE.

Oh love, lost love, do you as I remember,
 The long-past days, when good St. Valentine
 Took tokens each from each—hearts, darts, and
 blisses;

'Mid simple rhymes—love, dove, and mine and
 thine.

What did it matter to my boyish ardour.

That you were thirty, and I only nine?

Oh loves of stronger age, of manhood's glory;

Your names are legion, your remembrance nil;

I try in vain to picture half your faces,

But dreamy mists alone my chamber fill.

Your eyes shone brightly once, now mem'ry only

Lends hazy help, when all around is still!

Ah me! ah me! will some far-off bright heaven

Contain that love that had so fair a shrine?

Will it return to me the loving credence

In all thy wondrous spells, St. Valentine?

No, never more; nor heaven, nor earth can give
 me

That perfect faith I had when I was nine.

ABOUT THE DOCKS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

FATE and an acquaintance of nomadic instincts has taken me many times to that curious centre of the world, "the Docks."

It would be difficult in this kaleidoscopic life of ours in town to find a greater or more striking difference than that between the ordinary everyday emotionless routine of the average Londoner and the strong purposeful life of the docks.

Probably to most people the expression "the docks" only gives some dim idea of bales and warehouses, of casks and vaults; and a description of some experiences in that strange land may consequently not be without interest.

My first visit was to what I may call the "professional" part of the docks—the part, that is, whence the sailing-vessels clear out, as differing from the passenger-steamer neighbourhood. An acquaintance of mine

had a boy who was starting for his second voyage as midshipman of a ship belonging to one of the large lines of merchant-vessels. On the last day of his leave I met him and his father at dinner at the house of a mutual friend, and finding that they were going to see the boy on board, I agreed to bear them company to Blackwall, where the ship was lying. It was late before we started. The change from a comfortable dining-room to the Blackwall Railway is not so enticing as to make one eager for it, and when we arrived at the docks it was some time before we could find where the vessel was, and get ourselves and the boy's traps on board.

At last this was accomplished, but when we proposed to retrace our steps, we found that our retreat was cut off—in other words, the last train for town had started. This was a turn in affairs for which we had not bargained, but it seemed to suit our young friend's views very well. He explained to us that we could get a shake-down where we were, and should so have the privilege of seeing the last of him in the morning, as his ship was to clear out of the dock at an early hour, in order to take advantage of the ebb-tide. With this he disappeared into the dim bowels of the ship, and presently returned with a being who seemed to have been evolved out of the gloom. He was dim as to the outline of his figure by reason of many wraps, dim as to the outline of his voice, I suspected, by reason of much drink, and dim to us as to his rank and status, for I never discovered whether he was captain, mate, pilot, steward, or ship-keeper. He seemed, however, to have some authority on board, and after informing us that there was no bed to be had on shore "handy," gave us a husky permission to "take a caulk on the cabin sofas." With that he took a dim lantern from a dimmer corner, where it was suspended from a beam, and led us to a cabin, from which air was as absent as light. It was not a luxurious place. There was little in it in the way of furniture, but the black horsehair sofa on which we were to "take our caulk"; a table, over which was suspended a swinging glass rack; and some empty lockers; but any deficiency in this respect was made up by the multitude of other things that cumbered the place. Packing-cases, rope, a couple of casks, parcels, a hank of spun-yarn and a couple of marlingpikes, an empty black bottle with a tallow candle stuck in the neck—from every part of the

ship seemed to have been collected and stowed there the very things that should not have been in the cabin. It was not a tempting or altogether a cheerful place in which to spend a night, but our night was not likely to be a very long one, as the ship was to leave the dock at some unearthly hour in the morning, and so after half an hour's talk, we curled ourselves up as comfortably as we could on our hard "sofas," and our young friend left us for his own berth.

It has ever since been an unsolved problem with me whether it would be possible, under any circumstances, to sleep on these "sofas." I have sometimes thought that if I were a Channel pilot, and had been navigating the ship for two days and two nights without leaving the deck, I might perhaps manage to sleep on them for an hour or so; but then a vivid remembrance of their hardness, and smoothness, and coldness, and that dreadful grit to the nervous system that horse-hair alone can give, has come to my mind, and I have doubted whether, even under such circumstances, sleep would visit me. I hope I may never be in a position to determine the matter, great though the annoyance is of an unsolved problem that constantly presses for settlement.

That night we had little chance of learning the truth. After we had been lying down for ten minutes or so, my neighbour said, in a dreadfully wide-awake voice:

"I say, is that a cockroach?"

I declared it wasn't—that it was nothing like a cockroach, and turned round on the other side. Presently the same man asked, in the same tone of its not being worth while to make any pretence of sleeping:

"What is a cockroach?"

"I don't know, and I don't care," I replied. "I want to go to sleep."

"It's a brown thing with wings," said the third man from the other side of the cabin.

"I thought that was a cockchafer," said number two.

"So it is," said I, remembering the days when some brother fiend at school had conceived the idea of propelling boats with spinning cockchafers. The propeller of a ship spun round and sent the ship along. Cockchafers spun round when they were impaled upon a pin. Why should not this spinning be utilised for the propulsion of one of our miniature fleet, by sticking the pin into the vessel's stern? was his argument. His brilliant conception was not crowned with the success it deserved, but

I remembered that the poor victims were brown.

This did not seem to the man opposite to be a sufficient reason for disputing his idea of the colour of the creature, and we had quite a hot discussion on the subject, at the end of which sleep was not much nearer than before. All the time we had been on board work of some kind had been progressing. Men had been moving about, and from the noises that reached us they were stowing heavy things away.

They had not come near us, however, till after our discussion about the cockchafer. When that was over we turned round and pretended to try to go to sleep again, but we had scarcely done so, when someone came into the cabin and began moving about with some violence the various stores that cumbered it, muttering to himself the while. For all the notice he took of us we might have been coils of rope, such as those he was rummaging among. His search appeared to be futile, and presently another man joined him, and after a while our original dim friend. They all seemed to be discontented and angry, and to make far more noise than there was any sort of occasion for, till they left the cabin with an air of defeat.

If I had any skill in the graphic art, I could draw portraits of those men—not of their faces, perhaps, for they were not very clear to me, but of their figures and attitudes, so strongly are they impressed on my memory, even after this lapse of time.

We had turned round again, and I had just got on to the edge of an uneasy sleep in which I was trying to catch a vanishing train, dragging a black horsehair sofa with me along an airless tunnel, and attempting to light my way with a tallow-candle stuck in a black bottle, when I was awoke by a gruff voice near me. Something was missing—the sucker of the starboard-pump, from what I could hear, and as there seemed to be a fixed impression in the ship that everything but the spars and rigging was stowed in the cabin, a fresh search was instituted there.

This search was as unsuccessful as the last, and as they were giving it up, my dim friend remarked, that if it wasn't there, it must be "under the youngsters," and they departed to rummage there.

After this it seemed to me that someone or other of the party came in to look for something or another about every ten minutes. They never found it, and always went away expecting to find it "under the youngsters."

At last, to our infinite joy, day dawned, and as the light increased, the noise lessened. Presently there were sounds of reviving life on shore. We sat up on our "sofas," yawning and stretching ourselves, making a desperate effort to cheat ourselves into the idea that we had had a night's sleep, and then went out of the cabin.

For all we could see, the noises and disturbances we had endured through the previous hours might have been merely distempered dreams. Everything round us was arranged with the neatness and precision of a Chinese puzzle.

Our dim friends had disappeared, and it seemed as if they had been moving about in the uncertain light and unwonted environment, doing the part of nautical good fairies in reducing chaos into order while the world slept.

As we came out of the cabin our young friend met us, and as he said he had heard "no particular noise" in the night, I concluded that my conjecture was true. There was no means of performing any sort of toilet on board, and no place for the purpose ashore, but the middy said we could get some coffee at an "early breakfast stall," just outside the dock-gates, and seemed to think that was of far more importance.

At the gate we were eyed keenly by a sort of watchman, muffled up in much great-coat and comforter. I noticed that he wasn't at all content with observing our faces, but looked us up and down as if he rather suspected that the clothes we had on were not honestly come by. On mentioning this to the midshipman he said that if we had "bulged" anywhere the watchman would have insisted on searching us to see if we had any copper nails or other dockyard stores about us. They were rather suspicious of people who came out of the yard at that hour of the morning, but that thanks to our all being tolerably slim, and to his, the midshipman's, protecting presence (he had his brass-buttoned coat on now), we had been allowed to pass without undergoing that indignity.

Outside the dock-gates we saw a sight, common enough, but one that comes like a dreadful revelation to the ordinary well-fed citizen. We all know about the poor and their poverty—how hard is the struggle for life with them—and wonder how "somebody" is going to relieve it; but we seldom see anything of it. The wretched-looking people who ask for

coppers in the streets are put down as impostors, and of the others, though we hear a good deal, we see nothing. Now, as we came out of the gate, we met streams of workmen coming in to their work, carrying each one his bundle and tin can. The morning was damp, and raw, and cold, and the untended roads were sloppy with slimy-looking black mud. It was not a pleasant morning to be out in, and under ordinary circumstances I should have sincerely pitied those unfortunate workmen for having to turn out and begin their work in it. These men were, however, the fortunate ones—men who deserved envy rather than pity—for behind them was a crowd, reaching far down the street, of wretched fellows who were not fortunate enough to be able to turn out at six o'clock to earn good wages for their day's work, but had been waiting there from dimmest dawn, so as to get as near as possible to the pigeon-hole where workmen are engaged, for the chance of getting a job. Naturally, the strongest pushed their way to the front, and so as we went along we passed a stream of misery that deepened in its intensity as we advanced. The rear-guard of this army of want was very wretched. Poor, dwarfed, starveling men, whose very want of proper nourishment robbed them of the chance of that work by which alone they could get it.

These men, as a rule, have been taught no trade. They are mere "labourers"—little more than beasts of burden, to lift and carry things from place to place. Sometimes they get a job at Covent Garden, sometimes at the docks. In the late summer they tramp down to Kent for the hopping season, earning always a very meagre and precarious existence, always in the extreme of misery, and with no joy but in the public-house.

We soon reached the "early breakfast stall," where a brisk man, girded with a white apron, was dispensing "coffee" and thick slices of bread-and-butter. Accosting this functionary, I asked him if he would give me a cup of coffee. "No, sir," he replied with a grim sort of smile, "we don't give nuffin away here; I'll sell you a cup, if you like;" and on my accepting that emendation of my demand, he poured me out a large cupful of brown fluid, which he handed me with one of the hunks of bread-and-butter, and for which he demanded the modest sum of "tuppence."

What share the cold, gloomy morning and the squalid surroundings may have had

in the appearance, I cannot tell, but the mixture was not as bad as I had expected. Probably it would not have tasted as well in one's own house. While we were swallowing the steaming compound we could not but notice the eager glances that were cast upon our perambulating kitchen by the hungry crowd beyond. We invited them to join us, and the rear-guard accepted our invitation without any further pressing—hesitation on the subject increasing with proximity to the dock-gate. At the point where success with the dock authorities seemed hopeful, there was a fringe of men who appeared to be in danger of developing a permanent squint, for the chance of a day's work being balanced against the offered breakfast with about equal weight, kept one eye of each of them looking in different directions. However, the contents of the breakfast-van were soon exhausted, the eager look on many faces faded into settled gloom again, and we returned to the ship, followed by the strangest expressions of thanks and blessing I have ever heard.

When we got back to the ship we found steady business going on there. Where the people had all come from I did not make out. As far as I knew, none of the regular complement of the ship had slept on board, and yet when we returned the officers were all at work getting everything ship-shape, preparing for leaving the dock, and mustering the crew. These latter were a motley crowd. Some of them had apparently been drunk very lately, others were evidently drunk still, and a proportion of them looked as if they would be drunk for a very long time. It did not seem to be a cheerful condition of things for a vessel just starting on a voyage, the first part of which would take her down the crowded Channel; but on my mentioning it to one of the mates, he seemed to take it as a matter of course—it was always so; they had to take their chance; they generally had enough sober men to work the ship somehow; of course they couldn't expect to shake down properly till they got into blue water.

Whether they were part of the regular crew or not, I did not know, but there was a very workman-like gang of men working persistently, sometimes on deck and sometimes below. Their work seemed mysterious, but they hauled about an enormous quantity of cable with a great deal of "yo-heave-ho-ing," to the accompaniment of many husky orders given apparently with much indignant anger.

By degrees these hoarse murmurings were echoed from the quay, followed by occasional splashes into the water of cables that had somehow stretched themselves from our vessel to a distant part of the dock. Then I noticed that the distance between us and the quay had increased, and found our vessel was floating with a slow, dignified movement towards the lock that gave access to the river.

At this we became alarmed, and catching one of the officers, the first moment he took his eye off his cables, I asked him what we were to do—we had no desire to be taken to Australia just then, as we had business in town during the day, besides having our clothes there. He laughed at our alarm, and told us we could go ashore at the lock, or go down with the vessel to Gravesend, where she would anchor for the night to adjust compasses.

Thinking that our strange night had spoilt the value of the succeeding day for any useful purpose, we thought we might as well close with this offer, and accordingly went down the river with the ship to Gravesend, where, after a late luncheon, or early dinner, at which I had the most enormous appetite I ever remember to have had, we took the steamer back to town. The sun was getting low as we came to Woolwich, and from there up to Blackwall it spread a deep crimson glow farther and farther over the sky. The glow widened and deepened till it was a centre of intense crimson red, graduating to a quivering fringe of rose-colour all round the horizon. Every tone of red seemed to be represented there. It was the most gorgeous mass of colour I have ever seen.

As we came to Blackwall, the centre of this beautiful world of colour was immediately in front of us, so that the masts and rigging of the ships in the docks showed out like a black lace-work of exquisite delicacy and intricacy between us and it. At our feet the black grimy water of the river was glorified by it. Each dirty wavelet seemed to catch part of the wealth of colour that was pervading the earth till it flowed like a stream of polished jewels. It was a scene that makes one turn with a kindly fellow-feeling to Turner, knowing how keenly he must have seen and appreciated such scenes, and how bitterly he must have felt the inability of his art to reproduce what his eye of genius saw.

Above Blackwall there was a slight mist hanging over the river, and the sun setting behind it dyed it a rose-colour of the most

tender tint. The water was filled with the colour, and it seemed as if you could collect it in buckets from the steamer's side.

It is an effect that may not unfrequently be seen on the Thames, as well as other streams, but one which our artists seldom try to reproduce—so seldom that the only attempt I can recall now is a chalk sketch, evidently by an amateur, that I saw one day in the window of a colourman's shop. The artist's technical skill was not great, but he had seen with the eyes of an artist. The artist of the Thames has yet to arise. There is an inexhaustible field ready to his hand. Pictures that change day by day, almost hour by hour, will provide him with such a variety of subject as will prevent it ever palling upon him. Days when the whole world seems to be made up of wild sweeps of neutral-tinted rain and wind; days when a fierce unclouded sun burns upon a placid stream, and oily ripples gurgle round the barges' sterns; days when the stream is thick with sails flying before a breeze that seems to be composed of equal proportions of wind and sun and fleecy white cloud; days when the stream quivers under the throb of countless engines, and the heaven is obscured by their streamers of smoke. Strange channels down at the mouth of the river, densely inhabited below the surface by fish and porpoises, and on the surface by water-fowl; where, except an occasional bargee, or more occasional fisherman, you never see a human face; and fairylike bowers in the upper waters, where kingfishers and dragon-flies disport themselves. From source to mouth, the Thames is filled with subjects for the artist's brush—scenes of fierce energy, of stern fight, of human interest and pathos, and scenes of natural beauty from the wildest to the most tender. Of some of its aspects we have an interpreter whose work is steadily gaining in power year by year. Let us hope he may found a school that will do honour to the stream that is so great a power in our country.

RUSSET AND GREEN.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

MARY KENNETT lived in Paradise Street, a delectable thoroughfare in the great West Central district of London, which everybody fancies he knows so well, and which so few people really know at all. The name of the street is a grim irony—the only bit of humour visible anywhere about it, either

in the street or in its inhabitants. It is a collection of high and narrow-fronted houses, grimed and smirched with the rain, and smoke, and dust of half a century. It is not a large street; there are, perhaps, a hundred houses in all, and, of these, fully one-tenth are public. It has its own baker, its own butcher, its own greengrocer, its own laundress—almost an unremunerated sinecurist, that last, in Paradise Street—and its own newsvendor, in whose grimy windows are displayed, side by side with the back numbers of the *Police News* and kindred cheap publications, thin slabs of weakly-perspiring toffee, spotty-complexioned cigars, and cheap walking-sticks of bygone fashion, ringed and tasselled with tarnished metal and faded silk. Although well within sound of the great tide of traffic which rolls along one of the main arteries of London, Paradise Street is itself quiet, and the roar of wheels and voices, heard through its intervening silence, falls upon the ear like the distant beat of surf upon a rocky shore. Its inhabitants are marked by as many individual differences of nature and appearance as are the denizens of other thoroughfares, and are yet all as curiously alike one another as are their grimy habitations, which frown one at another across the narrow roadway. The men are all wizened of limb and small of stature; they all wear badly-fitting clothes of dingy black, and battered felt hats of deerstalker pattern; they all carry soiled white aprons twisted round their waists; they are none of them very young when they are born, and they all age early. Their idea of earthly felicity always seemed to me a curiously restricted one, and consisted, so far as I could make out, of spending every available moment in a public-house, or on the narrow slip of pavement outside it. And though they frequently quarrel and occasionally fight over other topics, they are wonderfully unanimous as to the tyranny of the Sunday Closing Act, and would resist the Permissive Bill to a man. They have no clubs or associations of mutual amusement or social improvement, and they never go to church. The vast majority of them never opened a book, or saw a billiard-cue, or a chess-board, or the interior of a theatre or a lecture-hall. Art, literature, and science exist not for Paradise Street, and recreation is not a word to be found in its vocabulary. They live this sterile and monotonous existence with a settled ignorance of, and indifference to, the possi-

bility of any fresher or more full-blooded life, which might almost pass for contented tranquillity. They are all, or pretty nearly all, as honest as they are poor. If I knew any stronger form of words than that I would employ it.

To the Rev. John Barton belongs the credit of discovering Mary Kennett, he having discovered Paradise Street itself long aforetime. At the date of my story, the Rev. John was a young-looking man of thirty, broad of shoulder, strong of arm, and resolutely cheerful of aspect. He was one of that not over large band of silent and steadfast workers to which society will, some day, acknowledge an already long outstanding debt. He knew Paradise Street well, and Paradise Street knew him, and his cheerful face was a frequent sight there. He did the work of ten men, and paid rather heavily for the privilege. His hand, heart, and pocket were open to all, and his ready counsel was at all men's service; nor could the surly ingratitude which was but too often the only return for his kindly offices alienate his sympathy. The only revenge he ever seemed to take for that and other disappointments was the heaping of new benefits upon the unworthy object, and save for that curious anodyne, he had no ointment for the sore heart which his pensioners must oftentimes have given him. Paradise Street, as a whole, was not inclined to be effusively grateful. Sick Paradise Street drank his wine and swallowed his medicine; impecunious Paradise Street allowed him to pay its bills; infant Paradise Street rendered itself appallingly sticky and more than usually objectionable with "rock" and "parliament" at his expense, and Paradise Street generally had a defiant and injured sense that in some mysterious way the Rev. John was its debtor, and owed it collectively a debt of gratitude. "He made something out of it," said Paradise Street in effect, "else why should he do it?" An unanswerable argument which the Rev. John essayed not to answer, going on his way with a resolute pluck and cheerfulness beautiful to see. Being a parson, he could not even swear at its stupidity and ingratitude, and the priceless consolation which the big D will sometimes bring to the laity was denied him. He moved among sin, and hunger, and misery all day long, and somehow, in spite of the tenderest heart in the world, managed to suck marrow of cheerfulness from all things.

The Rev. John was a bachelor. This Paradise Street knew. Miss Mary Kennett was a spinster, according to the same authority. Paradise Street, as an entity, possessed one virtue which is not always found in higher quarters—it was generally supremely indifferent to all things which did not immediately concern itself; but Miss Kennett's advent in its midst was marked with surprise and wonder. She was young—perhaps had seen at most some three-and-twenty summers, and she was pretty, too. Beauty is a plant of hardy growth, and flourishes in all kinds of uncongenial soils, and there had been pretty women in Paradise Street before Miss Kennett came there, but they had not been of her type, which, indeed, is rare enough to make it remarkable anywhere. She had a pale face, too thin for perfect beauty, and large eyes, and a manner which Paradise Street had hitherto had small chance of studying before—the manner, namely, of an English lady—that aspect of quiet courage and timid fearlessness common to good children, and to such women as have retained enough of the beautiful child-nature to sweeten and soften the attributes of completed womanhood.

Mrs. Perks, temporary proprietress of Number Eighty-nine, on the second floor of which Miss Kennett had established herself, had had experience of the upper classes, or as she preferred to put it, “knowed a lady when she see'd one,” a faculty which dated from her employment as under-housemaid in a gentleman's family at Highgate. That had been many years ago—so many that, at that date, the plump countenance, which simpered dimly from a cloudy daguerreotype on the wall of her little sitting-room, had really borne some faint resemblance to the faded original now familiar to Mrs. Perks's acquaintance. So when the quiet young lady had paid the first week's rent demanded in lieu of the “reference” which no tenant of Mrs. Perks's had ever been known to give, and had seen her meagre luggage mount the tortuous staircase to the second floor on the shoulders of the cabman—whom she amazed by thanks and apologies, in addition to an extra shilling—Mrs. Perks determined that here was an additional case for the Rev. John, and took counsel with her first-floor, Mr. Samuel Bunch by name, as to the propriety and the best manner of making them personally known one to the other. Mr. Bunch was a gentleman of humble birth and education, who—till

recently in receipt of a sufficient salary as a shopman in the concern of a firm which he persisted in alluding to as “Ogan Brothers,” whose fifty yards of plate-glassed shop-front glorified the neighbouring 'Ampstead Road—had in some mysterious way come to believe himself gifted with artistic powers, and had renounced the lucrative sale of cuffs, collars, and body-linen, for the unremunerated manufacture of studies in still life, which were the laughing-stock and terror of every picture-dealer and hanging committee in London. Mr. Bunch, on being appealed to, pushed from off a bumpy forehead the soiled white deerstalker without which he was never seen in waking hours, and in which he was generally supposed to go to bed, and gave it as his opinion that the Rev. John was a very decent sort for a parson, and couldn't do the girl no harm; and as to introduction, “Why, wait till there was a chawnee, and then introduce 'im, permiscus;” which programme was so favourably received by Mrs. Perks, that Mr. Bunch borrowed a shilling from her on the spot, which he dispensed in a much-needed meal and an even more urgent ounce of bird's-eye. And Mr. Bunch, who, whatever may have been his failings as an executant, had enough artistic feeling to find delight in the contemplation and conversation of beauty, found means of his own to make himself known to Miss Kennett, with that beautiful affability and ease which she came to recognise as peculiarly his own, and unique in her experience of men.

The promiscuous presentation which Mr. Bunch had recommended came off, favoured by accident, and Mrs. Perks's first impressions of her new lodger were deepened by the Rev. John's conduct on that and subsequent occasions. Mr. Barton was invariably courteous to all women, and of his nature could not have been otherwise, but he knew his world too well to waste upon the female habitants of Paradise Street the manner he extended to Miss Kennett. For he had learned that the ladies of that celestial neighbourhood regarded polish of manner as the cloak of wicked intent, and that a man who accosted them with anything approaching to polite punctilio did so, in their opinion, for the furtherance of dark and mysterious designs—that, in fact, in their delicious idiom, he was trying to “get at” them, for some vague and terrible purpose. And as, with people in whose

minds first impressions cling with the tenacity noticeable in Paradise Street, to make a mistake at the opening of acquaintance is a fatal blow to its prosperous continuance, the Rev. John suffered cordially to take the place of courtesy, and, in the light of experience, would as soon have thought of taking off his hat to a lady of that neighbourhood as he would of standing on his head in her presence. But before the pale face and unmistakable quiet dignity of Mary Kennett, Oxford asserted itself, and beauty and ladyhood were received, in Mrs. Perks's dingy entrance-hall, with the courtesy which dignifies a palace—when, as Charles the Trenchant has it, it is found there.

Miss Kennett sat alone in her little sitting-room on one bright morning in early spring. The room was very small and very meagre, and was only saved from a hopeless grimness of poverty, which was its own, by right of that nameless influence which some women exert over even the most untoward surroundings. The sun shines even on Paradise Street sometimes, and it was shining now, and the dusty town-sparrows chirped outside with the best counterfeit of cheerfulness they knew how to assume. There was something of the spring feeling in the girl's own heart, and upon her face something which only needed actual provocation to become a smile. And this was opportunely furnished by the entrance of the Rev. John. The smile broke out fully as her eyes met his, and beautified her face almost beyond knowledge.

"Good-morning," said the Rev. John, in a voice which accorded with his face in its cheery and contagious geniality. "Pray don't rise; I have good news for you."

"Indeed."

"Yes; and not before it was needed, I'm afraid," he added silently, at the quick flush of glad gratitude which filled her face. He drew a card from his waistcoat-pocket. "Mrs. Travers, Number Sixty, Beatrice Place, Regent's Park, an invalid lady, an old friend of mine—in fact, a sort of relation, who needs a bright, intelligent companion to read to her or talk to her every day from twelve to four. The appointment depends, of course, on your pleasing Mrs. Travers. There's no fear on that score, I think," he added with a smile, "but you must try and look your best. I have blown your trumpet gallantly."

"Not too well, I hope, or Mrs. Travers may be disappointed."

"I don't think so," returned Mr. Barton. He said it gravely, but his eyes twinkled slightly immediately after, and the girl's face flushed a little.

"But," she asked, after a moment's hesitation, "is—is that all? Is there no—no reference—or anything of that kind required?"

"No; Mrs. Travers acts on my representation."

"You are very good to me," said the girl, obviously relieved by the reply, and as obviously troubled how to express her gratitude. "I don't know how I shall ever be able to repay your kindness."

"By putting on your bonnet and allowing me to walk with you as far as Beatrice Place. I undertook to present you personally, and if you have nothing better to do I should be pleased to conduct you there now."

Another five minutes saw them on their way.

"I hope," said Miss Kennett, "that I am not robbing you of time which might be more usefully employed."

"No," said the Rev. John. "I have some parishioners out Regent's Park way whom I have been rather neglecting lately, so I can kill two birds with one stone."

"Your parish seems to be rather a large one."

"Yes—rather. My parish, Miss Kennett, is London."

"But are you not attached to any church?"

"No, I have no cure. I sometimes preach or take a service to oblige a friend, as *locum tenens* during his absence, but otherwise I am quite unattached. My idea in taking orders was that there are enough preachers already. A man who has the routine duties of a parish to attend to cannot spare half the necessary time for his own parishioners, and there is a vast amount of work left undone in that direction. And my cloth is often useful to me—and to others. In this coat I can go, unquestioned and unresisted, into places where, in any other dress, I dared not enter. So, when I joined the Church, I marked out my own course, and when my fellow-workmen got used to me, and found that their objections had no effect, I got on pretty well."

"Objections! What objections could they have?"

"Oh," said the Rev. John, "we all

have our own little ideas and crotchets, and don't like them interfered with. But I soon convinced the clergymen whose parishes I visit, that my work did not interfere at all with theirs, but helped it on the contrary."

I am of opinion that the Rev. John might, by pursuing this theme, have a little astonished his companion. Miss Kennett's knowledge of the world was small, and of that section in which he moved she knew so little as to imagine that any honest and capable worker joining the ranks of the London missionaries would be welcomed by his brethren in the cause. There are a good many people, of wider worldly knowledge than she, who share her ignorance on this point. With that staunch esprit de corps which is as strongly developed beneath black as under scarlet broadcloth, the City Missionary, as a rule, leaves the laymen in blissful ignorance of the troubles and difficulties—half of which are created by those who should be most eager and ready to smooth his path—with which, being unaffiliated to any recognised clique or order, he has to struggle; and says nothing of the ill-will, uncharitableness, and backbiting of those who should most warmly welcome and support him. A poor district, well stocked by Christian and benevolent workers, resembles nothing in the world so much as an omnibus station, where the intending traveller is torn limb from jacket by a bawling crew of spiritual touts, each recommending his own vehicle as offering the advantages of the most comfortable accommodation and the shortest route to the desired haven of religious rest; and vilipending his rivals, one and all, as patent and infamous frauds, who will assuredly land all unhappy victims self-committed to their charge in the ditch of perdition. That the lame, and halt, and heavy-burdened would find a seat in any vehicle a godsend to their wearied limbs, is nothing to these zealous gentry; that many, tired of the tugging, and pushing, and scrambling, grow sceptical as to the destination, or even of the starting at all of the belauded and vilified conveyances, take their own thorny and desolate paths to their own dismal bournes, might be something, if only the spiritual conductors would pause to think of it a moment. But meanwhile, the scramble goes on bravely, and the eleemosynary half-pence which support the rival conveyance companies rattle gaily into the collection-plates of Exeter Hall.

CHAPTER II.

NUMBER SIXTY, Beatrice Place, Regent's Park, although bearing an exact resemblance to many other tenements in the block to which it belonged so far as architectural features were concerned, had yet a distinct physiognomy of its own. To an observant eye, this is true of most houses, and in nineteen cases out of twenty a dwelling-place is as distinctive and as typical of its inhabitants as a lobster-shell of the animal it encloses. A man well up in town-life needs no Asmodeus to unroof a house, that he may know the character and pursuits of the ratepayer who dwells within. Such knowledge—could a man be found with the requisite time and patience to pursue it—might be reduced to a definite science, by following whose rules the character, antecedents, religious bent, and general mental, moral, and physical arrangements of any person might be accurately learned by inspection of his door-plate and window-curtains. Two drops of water, two peas, two twin-babies, two bullets from the same mould, two leaves from the same tree—no two entities under the universal canopy of the sky can be more alike, while empty and untenanted, than two houses of a London street or terrace built by one contractor; but the individual differences of character and taste of their respective tenants will impress their mark upon the blank sameness of their genteel aspect so deeply that their original likeness shall be quite erased by it.

There is, to be sure, a legend of a certain street in Bloomsbury, mostly given over to the legal fraternity, wherein dwelt, side by side, two lights of the law, personally unknown to each other, which legend relates how Jones, of Forty, walked one dusky evening into the house of Smith, of Forty-one, took possession of his neighbour's slippers and armchair, and smoked his neighbour's pipe in peace of heart, only discovering his mistake when an unfamiliar buttons entered with the coal-scuttle. But I have my doubts about that story. It is probably the basis of a Criterion comedy adapted from a Palais Royal farce, whose astute author found it in Goldoni, who had read it in Plautus, who had conveyed it ("convey," the wise it call) from a forgotten contemporary of Aristophanes, or from Josephus, or some other ancient humourist.

There is a house, for example, its windows backed by blinds of inter-

twisted cane, and flanked by curtains of thin Chinese silk of an indeterminate golden-brown, the lower panes of heavily-loaded painted glass, half hidden from the wayfarer by the lilies and crocuses springing from the oblong box of white faience, variegated by reminiscences of Flaxman's Homeric Studies in blue line, on the sill. The tenant is a youngish man, who wears a bronze velvet jacket, and a wideawake, and a bifurcated beard. He allows his hair to grow unrestrainedly, and you will meet him to-night at Mrs. Winalove Brown's, accompanied by a lady of pallid complexion, in a sea-green bedgown, with puffed shoulder-pieces, and its waist an inch and a half below her armpits. His neighbour's windows are hung with curtains obfusc of hue and heavy of texture, and are innocent of floral display; his blinds are venetian, his lattice of wire-work. Asmodeus needs not the coloured lamp nor the burnished door-plate to tell him that the inhabitant of this mansion is one of the great healing brotherhood—to sensitive nostrils the very air about it is odorous of pill and plaister.

There dwelt about Number Sixty, Beatrice Place, an air of desertion and forlornness in striking contrast with the bourgeois cheerfulness which characterised its neighbours. Every other house in the place was gay in its summer suit of paint, its windows brightly set with snowy curtains and flowered blinds. The walls of Number Sixty were foul with the encrusted dust, and smoke, and rain of many years, and its bleared windows stared like sightless eyes upon its gayer neighbours. It was not only that these things were so, and that neglect or poverty had denuded it of brighter attributes. There hung about the place that sense of mystery and desolation, that forgotten and forlorn aspect, which more sorrowful circumstances than poverty and neglect alone have power to give. Nude and bare as it was, there was yet nothing of squalor in its aspect. A sad dignity in decadence seemed to dwell about it; a mournful memory, expressed, perhaps, in no one detail of its appearance, but legible in all, of a date when it had shared the gaiety of its surroundings. It was no ruined spendthrift of a house whose premature old age might serve as a melancholy memento of a misspent youth to its more prosperous neighbours. It was no miser, grudging the slight extravagance of expenditure necessary to fit it for its company. It was a house of mourning, whose woes the artifoer's utmost skill could but have

gilded, leaving it sorrowful still; a brick and mortar job, upon whose head had fallen that sorrow's crown of sorrow—to remember happier days, itself forgotten and abandoned.

At the strident complaint of the rusty gate which barred the access to the strip of neglected garden, garnished by some half-dozen dead and rotting shrubs, and bisected by a gritty causeway of flagstone leading to the front door, grimy with dust and pockmarked with broken paint blisters, a head showed itself at the lower window, and vanished. By the time they reached the door, it was opened for them by a decrepit old woman, who, leaving unanswered the cheery greeting of the Rev. John, closed it behind them, and disappeared into the lower regions. There was something ghostly in all this, something chill and comfortless in the empty hall and the dismantled stairs beyond, that seemed to change the very character of the light which filtered through the opaque window, and dimly lit the dusty banisters and handrail. The sudden passage from the sunlit street, with its air, and light, and motion, into the cold atmosphere and heavy silence of this mournful house, filled Mary with a vague surmise of fear.

Mr. Barton saw the look of half-frightened wonder in her face, and smiled encouragement, wherast she smiled reply, and they went up the naked stairs together, waking reluctant echoes, which groaned behind them in sulky protest against this unfamiliar disturbance. Mr. Barton's knock at the door on the first floor being answered by a barely audible summons to enter, he did so, drawing his companion with him, and they entered together into a large room, with a high ceiling, decorated by cobwebbed and dusty tracings and cornices. Through two wide, uncurtained windows poured in a flood of light upon the floor, covered in the centre with a threadbare square of carpet. The walls were bare of any attempt at ornament, and the room almost empty of furniture. There was a loud-ticking clock of rusty bronze upon the ungarnished mantelpiece, and a sullen fire, half smothered in grey ashes, burned in the grate below it. A night-table, bearing a heavy book, stood upon the hearth, and beside it sat, with its eyes fixed upon the expiring fire, a muffled female figure. It did not stir upon their entrance, but Mr. Barton, drawing his arm anew through his companion's, brought her forward.

"This, Mrs. Travers, is the young lady of whom I spoke, and whom you desired to see."

The muffled figure turned its face towards them, and, as it did so, Mr. Barton felt distinctly the quick throb of the girl's heart beneath his arm, and a strong trembling of all her body which followed it. He glanced quickly at her, and saw that her face was pale, and full of a half-frightened wonder. The look faded almost as rapidly as it had appeared, and gave way to her usual expression of quiet sympathy, as her eyes dwelt on Mrs. Travers's face. It had been a beautiful face once—perhaps was so still, though of a beauty few would be found to covet, so set, and drawn, and livid with grief and pain. She yet retained one living memento of her youth intact—a wonderful mass of rich black hair, unmarred even by a single strand of white. It had been the befitting crown of beauty once, and fate had left it to her in bitter irony, this poor rag of queenship, this emblem and remnant of a forgotten royal state. She looked at the girl—a long, keen regard from under her straight black brows—and Mary returned the gaze with that look of wondering fear dawning again in her eyes.

"You are better to-day, I hope?" continued the Rev. John.

"I am," she answered, "as I was yesterday, as I shall be to-morrow, to the end; and the end is not far off. 'The day is far spent, and the night is at hand.'"

The voice was monotonous and hollow, and fitted well with that renunciation of all human pleasures and hopes her words conveyed. She had not taken her eyes from Mary's face, but still looked at her, less intently, with a growing softness in her look.

"It is a good face," she said. "Will you kiss me?"

Mary stooped and touched the withered cheek with her lips, and would have drawn away again, but the old lady detained her by the hand, and still searched her face with eyes in which the tenderness grew and broadened till it seemed to soften the hard lines about them almost beyond recognition.

"You, too," she said—"you have known trouble. I see it in your face. Ah, it spares none, young or old. 'Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards.' Be patient, my dear, it is not for long. The night cometh, and sleep therewith, and no man toileth, or taketh labour any more."

There was something so tender, so motherly, in this unexpected recognition and pity of a sorrow presumably so much smaller than her own, inasmuch as it still left youth and beauty and the possibility of future hope, whereas hers had so long ago robbed her of all these, that the tears were in Mary's eyes as Mrs. Travers drew her face down to her own again. And from that minute, though she often saw the lined and withered face with that same dumb pain and stern patience which had been its first expression in her experience of it, the memory of that motherly touch, and those strange, sad words of sympathy, beautified it always in her memory. Mrs. Travers turned to her companion.

"You have no news for me?"

"None."

Her face grew set and dark again, and her chin fell forward on her bosom for a moment, while her lips moved silently. Then she turned again to Mr. Barton.

"Do not forget. Full forgiveness."

He pressed the hand she extended towards him, bowed silently to Mary, and left the room. The rusty gate had screeched and clanged, and the pavement beyond had ceased to echo to his feet, when Mrs. Travers spoke again.

"Will you read to me?"

"What shall I read?"

"There is only one book," replied Mrs. Travers; "one book to which all must come, the wise with the simple, when they have found the vain wisdom of this world of no avail." She pointed to the heavy volume on the table at her side.

It opened in Mary Kennett's hands at an oft-read page, and she began to read: "'A certain man had two sons——'"

She read on and on for a long time. Whenever—as she could not help doing occasionally—she shot a quick glance at her companion, she saw her sitting in the same one moveless attitude, with her eyes upon the clock, which ticked on persistently with a step as steady and sure as Time's own tread.

And so, with that persistent accompaniment and the occasional light stir of the feathery ashes in the grate, she read on, until the words she read became meaningless to her tired senses, and the bare room, and the moveless figure, and the ticking of the clock, and her own ceaseless voice seemed like the accessories of some monstrous dream which had enfolded her for ages, and would last for ever.

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CHARLES DICKENS

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LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXX.

THERE could be no doubt about it; while Phil was away, enjoying his Christmas holidays, Ellinor had been in a perennial state of ill-temper, though Lucy, who could not see a fault in those she loved, would not admit the fact even to herself, and pleaded all sorts of plausible excuses for her benefactress. Among these were the dreariness of the house in Grafton Street; the fussiness of the ancient Sir Peter and his wrinkled wife; the prevalence of the east wind; the sharp attack of influenza Ellinor had had to endure—any and every cause, in fact, except the right ones, of which she was as ignorant as though she lived in another planet, and could only catch sight of Ellinor's orb, when the moon was at its full, through a powerful telescope.

The causes of Ellinor's ill-temper are easily told. They were two-fold. Cause number one was a visit from Uncle Hugh, in which he fussed and fumed a great deal, asked her if she had yet consulted a London doctor, expressed his willingness to escort her to a man in whom he had the very greatest confidence, arched his brows at her when she flatly refused to be so escorted, as there was another "lung-man" she infinitely preferred to the one he had named, and whose address had been given her, but, unfortunately, had been mislaid.

Uncle Hugh was more "put out" with his beautiful niece at this interview than he had ever been before. He went away that morning, saying it was high time she joined her mother at Mentone, and—he did not leave his customary cheque behind him.

Ellinor condensed a report of this interview for Lucy's benefit into a single paragraph, thus:

"Poor old Uncle Hugh is afraid I shall get a chronic red nose if this cold hangs about me so long. He actually wants me to see a doctor. I suppose I shall have to humour him."

She did not think it necessary to mention the fact, that the consultation of a physician had been the whole and sole pretext for her visit to London at this unseasonable time of year.

Cause number two was an irritating item of news which came to her in round-about fashion from Stanham. Since Ellinor's visit to the Fairfaxes, her maid Mélanie had kept up an intermittent correspondence with the housekeeper at the Hall. From that worthy had come tidings of Lord Winterdowne's flattering attentions to Miss Edie, coupled with the assurance that there could be little doubt but what the young lady might become Lady Winterdowne, of Winterdowne Castle, if she chose to throw over Mr. Wickham, as people at Stanham were inclined to think she would.

This news was in due course communicated to Ellinor during one of her elaborate toilettes.

"Taisez vous, vous babillez comme une fille de village," was all the acknowledgment poor little Mélanie had for bringing to her mistress what she imagined could not fail to be an interesting item of gossip. She did not know—nor did anyone else in the house—that, for twenty-four hours after, little Edie in the Winterdowne diamonds was the one vision that filled Ellinor's thoughts. Poor Esau's state of mind when he railed at his brother and called him a supplanter, was mild compared with Ellinor's during that twenty-four hours.

"These two times—these two times she

has supplanted me," in effect she kept saying to herself all day long; "without an effort this little country girl wins the love of a man who has nothing but indifference or scorn for others far more beautiful and distinguished than she; and then when that love seems slipping away from her, secures for herself the offer of wealth and position far beyond what she is entitled to in common-sense and reason."

Ellinor's thoughts grew very bitter against Edie just then. She translated them, however, into a phraseology which might have been dictated by the purest Christian charity to Lucy one afternoon, as they sat chatting together over the drawing-room fire.

"I have heard of my little cousin at Stanham," she said; "she is leading on another man now just as she has led poor Mr. Wickham for the last two years, in fact ever since she has been out of short frocks." Then she paused a minute and added in a thoughtful tone, as though the idea had just come to her: "It's a thousand pities she hasn't a mother, or some kind, sober-minded friend, who could tell her the mischief she may bring about with her heedless flirtations."

Then, having set Lucy's brain working in the direction she wished, she set her own going on a series of possibilities, probabilities, and practicabilities, having for their issue the solution of the question: "Why must I marry the man I love—this man, Phil Wickham, whom I have so nearly brought to my feet? Why may I not do as some half-dozen girls I know have done already—marry the man who can give the diamonds and the dresses, the horses, the town and country houses, and befool, and hoodwink, and blind him and 'society' at large, and keep my heart free all the time for the man not so favoured by fortune and who has little more than passion to offer for passion."

It was in effect going over once more the ground she had gone over, as she had thought, finally at Stanham; with this difference. Then the question to be answered had been, "Which of these two lots in life shall I keep, which let go?" Now it was, "Why may I not keep both for my own—the lot that carries with it wealth and distinction, and the lot that, by comparison, has nothing but love to recommend it?"

It seemed to her now that this question might be answered in the affirmative. At any rate, after hours of protracted thought, thus she answered it. And having thus

answered it, there remained naught to ruminate upon save "the means, the manner, and the end" of her twofold design.

It is plain that Ellinor Yorke compounded with her innate selfishness of disposition an indomitable will—a certain amount even of heroic capability which, had it been turned into another channel, and had her gender been masculine, might have won kingdoms for her, or at least would have placed her on a pinnacle as a prince of diplomatists, or as a distinguished tactician.

She arranged her plan of campaign, her whole line of march, step by step, at one sitting.

Step number one was to renew the intimacy she had formed a year ago with Lord Winterdowne at Florence. Here her thoughts naturally flew to Uncle Hugh, who had been on fairly intimate terms with Lord Winterdowne for some years past. Well, in that case, Uncle Hugh must be kept in a good humour, and made to undertake a certain amount of social hospitalities which would conduce to the desired end.

Step number two of course would be the bringing of Lord Winterdowne to her feet. That would be simple and everyday work enough to her.

Step number three would be most difficult of all to accomplish. It involved the keeping Phil her admiring, devoted slave, while she toyed and trifled with Lord Winterdowne and eventually married him.

But, though willing to admit that difficulties enough stood in the way of her wishes, the possibility of reversal and final defeat never once crossed her mind. Why should it? Up to the present she had played any game in life she had chosen, and had invariably won. What was there in this little simple game to make her heart quail?

So far as she could see, little Edie was about the bitterest, the strongest, and the cleverest foe she had to encounter. Yet, take her at the best, she could not magnify her into anything very bitter, very strong, very clever. She was little more than a child in years, her attractions were of the simplest, the freshest, the most unpretending order. Her easy winning of lover after lover was, no doubt, due to a fortunate combination of circumstances; it proved nothing as to her power of keeping them. To think that little Edie Fairfax could keep a lover whom she (Ellinor Yorke) had decided to win would have been, to her

way of thinking, quite the other end of absurdity.

"Give her the crown of England at once—why not?" said Ellinor, smiling to herself at the thought. "She, to hold, to keep, when I say let go! All her strength is in her smiles and her tears, and even those she hasn't the wisdom to keep in reserve and use with discretion!"

It can scarcely be wondered at if Ellinor, with such a train of thought set going in her brain, gave her answers in monosyllables, and showed herself generally uncompanionable to those around her.

Lucy, however, aroused her at last, in a measure that surprised herself, by spreading the letter from Mrs. Thorne's lawyers before her, and asking a word of advice as to what had best be done.

Ellinor awoke to sudden energy.

"Mr. Wickham ought to know of this. I will write to tell him at once," she said; and there and then she gave orders to Gretchen to pen the neat little note which had prevented Phil's visit to Stanham.

There are some birds which can be caught in a net, others with a handful of corn. There are others, also, who must be winged before they can be brought down. Phil Wickham belonged to this last order, and assuredly Lucy made the most willing and best trained stalking-horse imaginable, in whose shadow Ellinor could load her gun and take her aim at her leisure.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PHIL brought a whole list of lung doctors for Ellinor to choose from. It took him the greater part of a morning to hunt up these names, and effectually prevented that "run down to Stanham" which he had thought so easy of accomplishment on the previous day during his up-journey. Somehow—the exact "how" he could not have explained to himself—this visit to Stanham seemed retiring into the distance; did not seem to stand out in such clear and brilliant colouring as it did some two days ago. He could not see quite so distinctly "in his mind's eye" Edie's bright little flush of welcome, the gleam of delight in her brown eyes, nor hear the sweet vibrating voice whispering tremulously—as once or twice in fancy he had heard it during his stay at Dartmoor: "Oh, Phil dear, this is heavenly! Don't go away any more."

Ellinor ran her eye lazily, sleepily over the doctors' names, then tossed them across the table to old Lady Moulsey, who, by

a rare chance, was present when Phil came in.

"What is it, my dear?" asked the old lady in her shrill, weak falsetto. "A charity subscription? Has there been another colliery accident—or is it for the Deceased Wife's Sister's Association?"

Ellinor only moved her lips in reply. Then she turned to Phil.

"Old people have so little in life to interest them," she said by way of explanation. "It may amuse her to wonder over the names for half an hour. Lucy will explain all to her when she comes in."

"It is delightful to see young people showing kindly consideration to their elders," said Phil sarcastically.

He never entered this young woman's presence without being in some way ruffled, troubled, grieved for her, and for her womanhood. He never left her presence without having given utterance to sarcasm or bitter speech of some sort. It was so with most men of Ellinor's acquaintance; yet for all that they never forsook her society until chance, circumstance, or the imperative mandate of the beauty herself compelled them to do so.

"Is that meant for a cut at me, or a compliment to Lucy?" asked Ellinor with a laugh. "Really, Mr. Wickham, if I were not bound to be very grateful for the trouble you have taken for me, I should feel inclined to say you were in a disagreeable frame of mind this morning."

"They are all doctors, my dear. Are they on the committee?" broke in Lady Moulsey's shrill treble once more.

Again Ellinor moved her lips, and Lady Moulsey, feeling, as she always did in Ellinor's presence, that her hearing was getting worse and worse every day she lived, laid the list of names on one side, and went back to her newspaper.

Ellinor took up the list.

"What a number of names you have managed to get together! What a multitude of wretched, miserable, croaking, sickly people there must be in the world!" Then after a pause: "It seems so odd for me to be going to a doctor."

"But you are not ill; why do you go?" asked Phil, surveying her superbly rounded form, her brilliant, shining eyes, the dainty colouring of lip and cheek.

"Ill!" laughed Ellinor; "I have never had a day's illness in my life; I am even shaking off my influenza without so much as a cup of gruel. It's only to set old Uncle

Hugh's mind at rest, that I am going to have my pulse felt and the stethoscope applied."

"Ah, I see. More consideration for old age and infirmities," murmured Phil.

"Exactly. How well you read me! And if you only knew how I hate the very name of doctor, you would appreciate my self-denial to its fullest extent. Doctors never come into a house without upsetting it from top to bottom. When they used to come (in sets of twos or threes) to see Juliet, they always left my mother in tears, and there was always a packing up of boxes, and a setting off to some wretched seaside place, the next day."

Ellinor did not often deal in such long speeches; she was, however, for some reason or other unusually animated that morning. The plans laid with such precision a day or two previously would certainly not fail for lack of energy in their execution.

A white frosty sun, shining in through the grey dulled window-panes, fell in scattered beams athwart a face which might have been that of the goddess of eternal youth itself for the fresh young life that coloured hair, eyes, cheek, and lip. "I have a score or so of years before me, not a doubt," that young face seemed to say, "wherein to hold court and receive taxes, condemn, punish, pardon, and release at will. Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years—eat, drink, be merry."

The same white sunlight went flowing over sofas and chairs to where, on the other side of the table, an old head in muslin-cap crooned over a Times newspaper, and showed up with merciless exactitude scant grey hairs, blurred eyesight, wrinkles which might be counted by twenties. "I shall soon be tenant of the house the sexton builds," this face might have said; "it can matter but little to me what goes on in this. Soul, drug thyself, and deaden thy senses now in the twilight as fast as possible, so that when the night comes thou wilt not know it."

Yet, perchance, had that old common arbitrator, Time, in person stood there between the old head and the young one, and appraised with his usual brutal frankness the days that remained to each, he might have said that there was not a pin to choose between them.

Lucy Selwyn, however, coming in from a morning's walk, would not have echoed old Time's dictum. To her, as she entered the room, the picture of Ellinor in wide,

high-backed chair (Ellinor invariably selected large, throne-like seats), with Phil on a low chair at her side, was sweet, fascinating, alluring. It brought back thoughts of her own young love-making days, which seemed now, alas! so far away in the dim distance. If only those two could be bound one to the other as she and Rodney had been! Ah, that unfortunate little girl in the country who was playing the game of fast and loose!

She went over to Lady Moulsey's side and offered to read her paper to her.

"Then they can talk," she said to herself, "or look or be silent just as they please. And if that Mr. Effingham comes this afternoon, I'll contrive somehow or other to see him alone, and I'll speak out plainly to him, and tell him that it does not follow, because a lady is good enough to let him paint her picture, therefore she has a special liking for him. Ridiculous—such an idea would frighten all charity out of one!"

As though in response to Lucy's kindly intentions, before she had got through her second column of Law Reports this Day, the servant entered, and announced the fact that Mr. Effingham had come, and had been shown into the room upstairs where his palette and easel had been left from the preceding day.

Phil jumped to his feet and took his hat. There came an unmistakable look of annoyance to his face. He had never before in his life spent so pleasant an hour in Ellinor's society, never before found her—after their first slight passage of arms—so womanly, so ductile, so winning. This was a sorry ending to it all.

"Why must you go?" asked Ellinor, looking up at him with soft eyes. "What objection can you have to my poor little artist friend?"

"I object to the whole genus, they are coxcombs to a man!" answered Phil, brusquely, savagely.

"So do I," chimed in Lucy, laying down her newspaper; "they invariably think that permission to paint a lady's face gives equal right to say any amount of ridiculous things to her."

"Then why does the lady grant the permission in the first instance," said Phil coldly, still holding out his hand to say good-bye, "when she knows the inevitable consequence of her kindness?" and when he had said this he could not for the life of him make out how the words had found their way to his lips, any more than he

could account to himself for the queer thrill of annoyance that went through him at the mere mention of this young artist's name.

"Why, indeed?" murmured Ellinor in slow, thoughtful tones, and taking no notice of Phil's outstretched hand. "Lucy, ring the bell, please."

And when the servant came in answer to the bell, the order given was:

"Tell Mr. Effingham I cannot see him this morning. I will write to him in the course of the day."

Phil's hand fell to his side. Why—why—what did this, could this, mean? He threw at Ellinor one long, searching, questioning look—a look which she answered with another, soft, assuring, penetrating.

Lucy, from behind her newspaper, saw the look and the counter-look, and interpreted both according to her own hopes and wishes.

"He loves her—she loves him. Ah, that little girl at Stanham, who is playing fast and loose!"

Ellinor's voice broke in on her thoughts. Only four words, but spoken with an emphasis that gave them the weight of forty.

"Now, will you go?" she asked, never once lifting her gaze from Phil's face.

Phil made one desperate effort.

"I must go—must go," he said hurriedly, "and at once."

And with an energy and swiftness that would have done credit to a Queen's Messenger, he said his adieux, and made his way down the stairs and out of the house.

With seven-leagued steps he strode back to his hotel, sat down to his luncheon, and got up from it, leaving it untasted. Then he strode out again—up Piccadilly, down Piccadilly, round all three parks in succession, went into a friend's house, collared him just as he was sitting down to dinner, and carried him off to one of the Strand theatres. Then he astonished the said friend by starting up in the most thrilling part of the performance, leaving the box, and setting off on his peregrinations once more. This time he made the circuit of Bayswater, coming back by way of the Marble Arch, and returning to his hotel somewhere in the small hours of the morning.

The cause of Phil's perturbation may be stated in one sentence. He believed himself to be false in heart to little Edie Fairfax.

Like many men with tolerably clear consciences, he exaggerated the contemplation of a false step into the actual taking of the step itself.

"She looked at me with eyes of love. How did I look back at her?" he kept saying to himself with every tread he made on the frosty ground. "Oh, Edie—Edie, how shall I ever look you in the face again!"

Six o'clock that morning found Phil seated at a writing-table, penning some half-dozen lines.

"EDIE, EDIE"—this was what he wrote—"For the love of Heaven, say I may come back to you, and let us be married right off at once. PHILIP WICKHAM."

Someone else beside Phil was busy with pen and ink that morning before breakfast, and that was Lucy Selwyn.

After Phil had so abruptly left the house on the preceding day, from the extreme of animation Ellinor had passed to the extreme of taciturnity.

Lucy, absorbed in her own thoughts, did not observe the fact till at night, when she went, as she generally did, into Ellinor's dressing-room for a five minutes' chat before going to bed. Then she noted the weary look of Ellinor's eyes, the languid pose of head and arms, the slow, reluctant speech.

"Are you ill?" was her first question, to which Ellinor vouchsafed no reply.

Then Lucy curled herself about Ellinor's knees and feet in front of the low-burning fire, and looking up in the sad, beautiful face, cried out passionately:

"Oh, my darling, my darling, I wish I could make you happy! I would lay down my life for you!"

Ellinor looked down on her wearily, and there fell a pause between the two girls.

"Does she love him, do you think?" whispered Lucy at length, knowing there was no need to mention names, as their thoughts must be flowing in one channel.

Ellinor opened her lips with energy.

"She love him!" she said bitterly. "Is a heartless flirt capable of love? I tell you she loves him no more than he loves her!"

Lucy crept away to her own room in silence, her thoughts very busy, her heart very full. She passed as restless a night as Phil. And the post the next day, with Phil's few hurried lines, carried also a letter from her to Miss Edie Fairfax.

PURITAN DISCIPLINE.

MANY people who go to church on Ash Wednesday and listen to the Communion Service, feel very doubtful — when the minister reads the reference to a certain “godly discipline” which prevailed in the primitive Church, “when such persons as stood convicted of notorious sin were put to open penance and punished in this world” — whether it is, as the minister goes on to declare, “much to be wished” “that the said discipline may be restored again” and most of us, looking at the list of offences for which the transgressor was put to open shame, feel, no doubt, that for our own sakes it is better that the said “godly discipline” should remain in the limbo of things departed.

Public penance was not a punishment to be despised even in the earliest days. It was such an open avowal of guilt that, although everyone might have known all about the sin before, the penitent was deprived of what scraps of comfort he might have enjoyed in fancying that those of his friends, who politely avoided the subject, were ignorant of it. Many men were deterred from peccadilloes of which the law declined to take notice, by the dread of the white sheet; but, at best, it contained only the deterrent without the reforming element which social economists tell us that all penalties ought to combine.

Among the enthusiastic nonconforming sects which flourished during the Commonwealth, “godly discipline” was in high favour. The sturdy Puritans did not trouble themselves about the ideal constituents of punishment, but they were very clear that discipline meant shame, and that shame was an effective deterrent. The discipline was of various kinds, varying according to the offence or the customs of the sect, or, occasionally, the whim of the pastor. Sometimes it consisted in the offending member being placed in a conspicuous position in full view of the congregation and solemnly rebuked, and sometimes in a more or less protracted suspension from the membership of the sect. Occasionally it took the aspect of a fine, or even the wearing of a particular dress, but these cases were rare. The white sheet was dispensed with among most Nonconformists, as savouring too much of Romish ceremonial, not to say “idolatry.”

In some respects many of the Puritan sects were modelled upon the idea of a family. The members had “oversight” of

each other, and were held, in great measure, responsible for each other's conduct. The Quakers, for example, made rules for the guidance of their fellows in every possible condition of life. If a man could not control his unruly children, he was to bring them before the “monthly meeting” to be reprimanded. Only fancy an obstreperous Eton boy of fourteen before such a grave sanhedrim! How much he would be awed by their gravity! How he would appreciate their censures, and lay their advice to heart! With what dread he would hear the sentence, “That he be cut off from the meeting for six months!” However much such a boy would despise this kind of discipline, the Quaker children were of different mould, and looked upon the ordinances of their society with profound veneration, for they had a real love for it. Thus in Bristol, when, in 1659, nearly all the adult Quakers were in prison, the children kept on the “meetings for worship” on Sunday mornings, and persisted in attending, though way-laid and beaten in the streets. More than once we find Town Councils at this period gravely considering what steps should be taken to wean these young Quakers from the error of their ways. Stripes and imprisonment were the usual means tried, seldom with much success. To such children the “godly discipline” held far more terrors than the stoutest birch-rod, perhaps because they had had experience of the worst the latter could do, while the power of the former was still problematical.

“Godly discipline” commonly took no note of such offences as the law punished — not, of course, that an unfortunate who was thrown into prison for, say, theft, would be permitted to remain a member of his “church;” for such offences the ecclesiastical penalty was usually excommunication—but no social offence against the laws of the sect was too small. At one place we read of a man being subjected to discipline for not ploughing with sufficient care, in another of a woman for going a milking when she ought to have been at meeting.

Some Quakers were once subjected to a very severe “discipline” for singing at a meeting, and in one instance a poor woman was refused admittance into a community because, in the one she had left, singing had been permitted.

Love of dress was frequently a cause for the exercise of discipline. Among all sects of the Puritans a weakness for “outward

adorning of the body" was considered a sign of an exceedingly unregenerate nature. In his epistles to the sect he had founded, George Fox very frequently lays down sumptuary laws for the guidance of his followers, and does not hesitate to express a very decided opinion upon those weak brethren who took a more than necessary pride in their appearance. "Away," he writes upon one occasion, "with your long peaks behind in the skirts of your waist-coats, and your great needless flying scarves like colours on your backs."

In truth, honest George was much exercised in mind regarding the dress of the younger Friends, and at one time seems to have got as angry as his pacific nature admitted at a certain vestment which he calls a "skimming-dish hat"—a becoming head-gear to which pretty Quaker damsels did much incline. It was very rarely that Fox required any to be personally disciplined, he wisely preferring general admonitions. Some of his followers, however, were not so particular, and the records of the early society abound with the names of offenders who were brought to book.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century those Quakeresses who proposed to attend the York meeting were summoned to a preliminary gathering, and were required to wear thereat the clothes in which they intended to appear at York, so that their apparel might be approved or disallowed. The Irish and Scottish Friends carried matters a step farther. In 1686 the Quakers in Dublin appointed committees of tailors "to see that none did exceed the bounds of truth in making apparel according to the vain and changing fashions of the world," and instructed them to report cases in which this was done. In Scotland the Friends kept books containing minute details of what they considered "godly apparel," and even inspected the houses of the members to see that they contained nothing that had been disallowed. Among the things disallowed were costly furniture, instruments of music, and "light books." If such were found, the owners were, of course, subjected to discipline, and, in aggravated cases, turned out of the society, or, as it was termed, disowned.

Love frequently brought upon many young Puritans, both male and female, the dreaded discipline. From the records of the Independents at Rothwell, we find that one young man was disciplined "for stealing away a maid's affections, leaving

her, falsifying his word, and going to others." Another Lothario was punished for "professing to love one sister when engaged to another," and one unfortunate man suffered "for having no conjugal affection." One Damaris Lenton was disciplined "for dealing deceitfully and unjustly with a young man."

If these Puritans were unable to make man and wife live in "peace and concord," they did their best to keep the scandal quiet. In the records of the same church there is an entry relating that Sister Barnes was disciplined for "disobedience to her husband." A man at Warboys suffered because he "did not love his wife as he ought," and another at Fenstanton because he showed "such an ill carriage to his wife as to beat her in the street."

Entries of discipline for "idleness," "foolish football play," "nine-pins," and the like are very common, as are also those for "vain conversation," "dancing," "fiddling," "flaunting apparel," "back-biting," "pride," and "conforming to the fashions of the wicked world." An amusing account of these is given in *The Baptists and Quakers in Northamptonshire*, a tract from which several of the foregoing instances have been taken.

Servants who neglected their employers' interests came in for their share of reprobation. Men were disciplined for "unfaithfulness in their master's service," for "idleness in their calling," and even, in one case, for "riding over new-mown grass."

Punishment was inflicted upon one unhappy Baptist for being married in the "national way"—presumably at the parish church. Going to church or to a Quaker's meeting the Baptists thought an offence worthy of public admonition. The Strict Baptists once went so far as to admonish one person "to leave off going to the General Baptists," another for "keeping company with a carnal man and a professed Quaker," and a third for "speaking against dissent."

"In 1700," to quote from the before-mentioned tract, "Brother Warner's case in regard to his practice of music was considered by the Church in College Lane (Northampton), and it was judged to be unlawful and not allowable for him to practise it in any company, civil or profane, because of the evil attendances and consequences that might arise thereupon, but only in the service of the town, according as allowed him at his first admittance into

ye Church." One poor woman was refused her "dismissal" from the society at Walgrave to that at College Lane, because "the Church in College Lane practised singing publicly, and admitted Sts. as Sts. without respect to Baptism."

Can we wonder that, when discipline was so freely used for such small and fanciful offences, and a spirit of such narrow-minded bigotry so proudly exhibited, the records of the early Churches should be so full of notices of members who have left to join other denominations?

There can be no doubt that "discipline" had its advantages, and fittingly filled an otherwise vacant space in the early Non-conformist organisations, but it is equally certain that its application to such paltry uses as have been recorded in this article, hastened the downfall of Puritanism.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

ESSEX.

A MARSHY and a plashy land is Essex, at least in the parts best known to the multitude. Alike from sea and river its shores appear low and uninviting, with spongy islands, all wash with the sea, and muddy rivers crawling forth amid shallows and sandbanks. And the county owes little but disparagement to its great neighbour, London, which uses it as an outfall for its sewage, for a general rubbish-heap and dépôt of odd lumber, and as a site for anything especially unpleasant or noxious in the way of manufactures.

But beyond the metropolitan area lies a green and pleasant country singularly quiet and secluded, even although visited at times by swarms of London excursionists; a country intersected by bridle-paths and green lanes, while the wide and tranquil highway leads by quaint little settlements and quiet roadside inns. For, though no longer cut off from the rest of the world by thick forests and deep, miry ways, Essex is still more or less inaccessible from the great wilderness of London which lies in the way. To reach Essex, we must pass through Stratford-atte-Bow, with its mingled fumes from chemical works, match-factories, and muddy flats; and although the name of Stratford recalls the fact that the great Roman way to the colony of Colchester here crossed the river Lea, there is nothing in the place itself that tempts investigation. But modern highway and railway alike follow pretty

closely the track of the old Roman road, and the towns and villages strung along their course are pleasant country towns on the sites of ancient settlements which existed when the rest of the county to the northward and westward was a wild and savage forest.

Colchester itself can claim a history more ancient and distinguished, perhaps, than that of any other town in the land, for we have full evidence in the Roman annals of its existence as a great British city before it became a Roman colony. It was the chief town of the Trinobantes, a British tribe whose internal dissensions gave Julius Cæsar a pretext for interfering in their affairs. The British city, with its grassy entrenchments, with ample room within for the huts of the tribesmen, and space for their cattle and waggons, may still be traced in a wide circle about the later Roman town.

On beginning in earnest the conquest of Britain, one of the first cares of the Romans was to establish a colony at Camulodunum. The Trinobantes, who at first had been friendly to the men of Rome, and who had allotted them lands for their settlement, became, in the course of events, suspicious, and, finally, hostile. Caractacus, whose Celtic name was, probably, Caradawg, was, according to some accounts, the son of Cunobelin, king of the Trinobantes, the Cymbeline of Shakespeare. The Welsh give him another pedigree. According to their triads, Caradawg was the son of Bran the Blessed, who first brought the Christian faith into the land; but, anyhow, he was a prince who commanded the allegiance of the scattered British tribes. Under this brave chief the war of independence was carried on against the Romans, and we find Caractacus sometimes making head against them with his own tribe, and sometimes at the head of the men of Siluria, in the west. The story of the final betrayal of this bravest of the Britons, of his appearance in the streets of Rome, and of his surprise that people should come from such a city of palaces to fight for the hovels of Britain, is what every British schoolboy now knows, and yet may eventually forget. But, according to the Welsh account, the actual betrayer of Caradawg, and the cause of the eventual conquest by the Romans, was a woman—Voedawg, the princess who is better known to us as Boadicea.

And here the chronicle of Colchester comes into the broad light of undoubted and trustworthy history. The Emperor

Claudius had made of Camulodunum a colony of veteran soldiers—of the second, ninth, and fourteenth legions. All was quiet among Iceni and Trinobantes, while the Romans were pushing their conquests into Wales, and driving those mysterious Druids into a corner. Things were probably as quiet then at Camulodunum as they are to-day at Colchester, with a camp in the neighbourhood, and a small garrison in the town; and drill and parade, and a saunter about the town, made up the soldier's day, while the veterans grumbled over their allotments as their wives at home did over the little British slave-girls who could be made to do nothing properly. Such mutterings as were heard of the coming tempest were of the superstitious order. Strange portents were in the air; strange noises were heard in the court, howlings resounded in the theatre, and an apparition of a colony destroyed was seen in the estuary of the Thames. The sea looked bloody; and in the ebb the effigies of human bodies were left upon the shore.

The native princes of the tribe lived still, it seems, in their capital—just as some Indian Rajah may now reside under the walls of the English fort—and these British chiefs were probably aware of what was brewing among the neighbouring tribes. In a similar rising against the English power in Wales, chiefs and people were roused to madness by a grey-headed bard, who, pointing to the sculptured form of stern Edward over the castle that was the token of their subjection, demanded if the blood of men flowed in their veins or they were but leaden puppets. In the same way, when the real or fancied wrongs of Boadicea and her daughters had set the people in a ferment, the bards and sooth-sayers pointed to the proud walls of Camulodunum and the temple of the vile Emperor which insulted the deities of the land.

The Iceni rose as one man; the city was assailed on all sides. The garrison was feeble, the fortifications were hastily run up at the last moment; the troops which might have defended it were in remote quarters; and on the second day of the siege the stronghold was stormed, and all who had sought refuge in it, armed or unarmed, were slaughtered.

The Roman general, recalled in haste from the west, was unable to stem the fierce onset of the Britons; he saw London fall and then Verulam. Britain seemed

lost to the Roman power, when the triumphant tribes launched themselves in the open against the serried ranks of the Roman legions, and were crushed in the encounter. Then the mutiny was quelled as quickly as it had arisen.

Camulodunum rose from its ashes, and resumed its place as the chief station in that part of Britain. The museum of Colchester displays a rich collection of antiquities discovered in every part of the entrenched area. Coins and urns without number, elaborate pavements, extensive hypocausts, attest the long-continued prosperity of the favoured colony. Legends rather than history bring in Camulodunum as the royal seat of Coel, who may be the original of the King Cole of the nursery-rhyme. When the legions revolted from the Emperors of Rome, and established Carausius as a district Cæsar of their own election, Constantius, who was one of the legitimate Cæsars, landed in England from Boulogne, and invested Colchester, which held out against him. But Coel had a beautiful daughter, Helen, who undertook to arrange matters with the Roman Cæsar, and he, at once a slave to her beauty, married the fair Helen on the spot. And hence, in due time, sprang an heir to the purple in Constantine, hereafter to be known as the Great. That Helen, the mother of Constantine, was a British princess there is some evidence to show, though the Welsh claim her as theirs, and even show you her father's house, and are acquainted with his pedigree. But whether Colchester may not rightly claim her, after all, is a point which, perhaps, will never be determined.

As to what befell Colchester when the Romans left the land, there is no evidence to show. Probably the town, which owed its prosperity to its civil and military establishments, became almost depopulated when these were withdrawn. Nor is much to be said about the place under the dominion of the East Saxons, who have made such a very small splash in the troubled waters of history, that nobody knows much about them. But about the tenth century the town became the chief stronghold of the Danes in Eastern England, and they patched up the old Roman walls, and held them stoutly, till Edward the Elder stormed the town, and put all its defenders to the sword.

There was a considerable vitality about this old town after all, for it cuts a very respectable figure in Domesday, with two hundred and seventy-six burgesses and

three hundred and fifty-five houses, and, as the East Saxons took the Conquest quietly and without struggling, the town suffered no hurt, except, indeed, from the archaeological standpoint. For when Eudo Dapifer, the Conqueror's steward, fixed upon the acropolis of Colchester as the site for his new castle, it was occupied by remains of the old Roman world that would have been of vastly greater interest than even the really fine Norman keep that now occupies the site. For Colchester Castle is built, in great part, of the bricks and stones of old Camulodunum, as, indeed, are the foundations of most of her churches and older buildings.

Henceforth, Colchester suffered, every now and then, from quarrels with which she had little concern. As a walled town commanding one of the great highways to the north-eastern part of the kingdom, she became of importance in the wars of John with his barons, and was taken and retaken according to the fortunes of war. But it is interesting to find the town carrying on a private war of its own with all the rest of one of the free cities of the age, when a neighbouring baron tried to rob the town of its fishery—the fishing-rights of the river Colne confirmed to it by royal charter. The assailer of the privileges of the town, one Lionel de Bindenham, actually ventured to attack and besiege the place—this was in the reign of Edward the Third—but he was beaten off, and eventually expiated his offences against the King's peace by a heavy fine. From that time Colchester escaped all perils of siege and battle till the days of the civil wars.

In the reign of Elizabeth a considerable number of Flemings settled at Colchester, where they established manufactures of "saves and bayes," which flourished for a while, but declined during the seventeenth century, and finally died away in the eighteenth. It needed not this addition to make Colchester a stronghold of Puritanism. Essex has always been a nursery of strange sects and strong individual opinions. The strange tenets of the sect named the Family of Love, whose chief apostle was Christopher Vitale, the disciple of Henry Nicholson, of Delft, found many adherents at Colchester a few centuries ago, just as at the present day the Latterday Saints and other novelties in the way of religious bodies find ready disciples in the neighbourhood. With this strong feeling on the part of the townspeople, it must have been

doubly vexatious to have had to undergo all kinds of hardships and trials on behalf of the royal party, and to be banged about by the guns of their own friends. Yet just this was the fate of Chelmsford. She had escaped all the troubles of the civil wars to the very end, when, Charles being a captive and all resistance on his part at an end, the Royalists of Kent, who had not bestirred themselves much before, rose in rebellion against the Parliament.

Finding the Parliamentary army, led by Fairfax, the Black Tom of the Yorkshire legend, likely to prove too many for them, a portion of the Royalist forces broke off and crossed the Thames at Greenwich to join the Royalists of Essex, who were also in arms. These last had already captured the committee of Parliament sitting at Chelmsford, and now joined their forces with the Kentish men at Brentwood. The joint forces then marched against Colchester, but found the gates of the town shut against them by the inhabitants. With a little resolution on the part of these last the Royalists had been lost, for they were in no way prepared to undertake a siege, and overwhelming forces were gathering on all sides to crush them. But the town capitulated without making an effort at defence, on condition of respect for person and property, and the Cavaliers marched in just as the vedettes of the pursuing force began to come in sight. Fairfax himself came up ere long with the bulk of the army, and encamped upon Lexden Heath. At once he delivered an assault upon the town, and succeeded in gaining the suburbs and the old abbey of St. John, which was now the residence of the Lucas family. But his men were repulsed from the walls of the town, and Fairfax sat down before the place and began a regular siege. This lasted eleven weeks, and at the latter part of the siege garrison and townsmen were driven to feed on horses, dogs, and cats, which diet was embittered to the Colchester people by the thought that it was endured for a cause they detested. In the end the garrison capitulated, under the hard conditions of quarter only to privates and officers under the rank of captain—the lives of all the superior officers being left at the discretion of Black Tom and his council of war.

The inn is still shown where the bold Cavaliers awaited the result of the council, whiling away the tedium of expectation with songs and sack. Then the decision was made known. The three chief officers,

Sir Charles Lucas, Sir George Lisle, and Sir Bernard Gascoyne, must suffer death, the rest to be detained as prisoners of war. It was presently discovered that Gascoyne was a Florentine, and, therefore, not to be classed as a rebel, so that he was respited, while the other two were taken to the green on the north side of the castle, where a stone still marks the spot, and shot. The tomb of the two victims is to be found in the vaults of St. Giles's Church, with a monument recording the death of these valiant captains on the 28th of August, 1648. "By command of Sir Thomas Fairfax, then general of the Parliamentary army, in cold blood barbarously murdered." The letters are deeply cut, as if to preserve the inscription as a record for the avenging angel. It is probably unjust to Black Tom, who was not in any way a bloodthirsty man, and it is recorded that after the Restoration, Fairfax's daughter, who had married the Duke of Buckingham, coming to hear of the inscription, moved her husband to apply to Charles the Second to order its erasure. The King was inclined to comply, but asked Lord Lucas, the brother of one of the victims, if he had any objection. To which Lucas replied, not at all, if his majesty would permit the following to be substituted: "Barbarously murdered for the sake of a King, whose son directed the record to be erased." Charles upon this, so the story goes, ordered the original inscription to be cut still more deeply.

Of this Lucas family was that eccentric and literary Duchess of Newcastle, whose fame is preserved in the diaries of Pepys and Evelyn, and whose monument—a florid, sprawling affair—exists in Westminster Abbey. It is a monument to her husband also, that gallant Cavendish who so gallantly sent back Tom Fairfax's wife in his own coach when that lady had been taken prisoner, as related in our Yorkshire Chronicles; but the monument has most to say about the lady, who perhaps helped to compose the inscription: "Her name was Margaret Lucas, youngest sister to Lord Lucas, of Colchester, a noble family, for all the brothers were valiant, and all the sisters virtuous."

A little apart from the main line of communication—modern as well as Roman—between Stratford and Colchester, half-way or thereabouts between Chelmsford and Dunmow, lies the once notable Castle of Pleshy, of which little is left but the fine earthworks and

some scattered fragments. The grand entrenchment which surrounds the Norman keep is probably Roman; but the castle itself was noted once as the chief residence of the De Bohuns, and as conferring on its holder the proud title of High Constable of England. Here, in the reign of Richard the Second, lived Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, who had married the eldest daughter and heiress of the De Bohuns, and through her possessed this princely castle. The Duke of Gloucester was the youngest, and, perhaps, the best of the seven sons of Edward the Third. At any rate he was the most popular; and, as the weakness and want of character of the reigning King became more manifest, many eyes were turned to him to redress the balance of the State. Already, when the King was yet a minor, the Duke had joined with other great lords in driving away the young King's favourites, and remodelling matters in the old-fashioned direction. And had the Duke but had a son, it is highly probable that he—the Duke, that is—would have been called by general acclaim to depose Richard, and assume the crown. As it was, the Duke was elderly, possessed of a good deal of family loyalty, and not likely to prove dangerous to the ruling monarch. Still, Richard suspected him, at any rate, of a design to curb his power, and so determined to remove him. But to arrest the High Constable of England in his own strong castle was no easy task—the men of Essex were devoted to their good Duke, who might easily have set the eastern part of England aflame. And thus King Richard was driven to dissemble, and himself to undertake the office of decoy.

Froissart tells the story in graphic simplicity. How the King rode over from Havering-atte-Bower, where he had been hunting, all in the fine warm weather, and rode into the great court at Pleshy, about five o'clock, when the cry was raised, "The King is come!" And the Duke, who had just risen from supper—he was a temperate man, and not given to long sittings over the wine-cup—came forth in all haste with the Duchess to greet their unexpected guest. The King was all warmth and cordiality, and, having eaten in the hall, explained the purpose of his visit. He bade the Duke ride with him presently, with two or three men, leaving the rest of his train to follow at leisure, for he, the King, had to meet the men of London on the morrow,

and he must have his uncle's advice in the matter. The Duke, nothing loth, had horses saddled, and rode away with the King towards London; the princes conversing cordially and amicably together. When they neared Stratford, and the marshes by the River Lea, and the bridge across the river that Saxon Matilda had built for her well-beloved nuns of Barking, the King rode on in front as if to give some orders to his train, and the Duke found himself suddenly surrounded by horsemen who had been concealed by the bridge, and from among them rode forth the sinister form of Thomas Mowbray, Earl Marshal, who laid his hand upon the Duke's rein, and arrested him for high treason. The Duke cried to his nephew, who was just within earshot, but whether the King heard him or not was doubtful; anyhow, he rode on, and took no notice. Then the Duke was carried secretly on board ship, and taken over sea to Calais, where he was privily murdered.

O sit my husband's wrongs on Hereford's spear,
That it may enter butcher Mowbray's heart,

cries the widowed Duchess, on the eve of the famous wager of battle at Coventry, made famous by Shakespeare in *Richard the Second*; and in the same breath she sends a message to her brother, Edmund York, to bid him

With all good speed at Plashy visit me.
Alack! and what shall good old York there see,
But empty lodgings, and unfurnished walls,
Unpeopled offices, untrodden stones?

And thus Plashy has remained ever since, gradually falling to ruin and decay.

But while it was yet a strong castle, one more dramatic incident took place within its walls, closely connected with the foregoing. The deposition and imprisonment of Richard had occurred soon after, and old Gaunt's son was now upon the throne, and thus Richard's punishment had followed closely on his crime. But another victim was doomed, and this the late King's half-brother, John Holand, Earl of Exeter, who had engaged in an unsuccessful rising against the recently-crowned king. This rebellion was extinguished practically by the Mayor of Cirencester, who surprised the leaders of the rebel army unattended in the town, and cut off the heads of two of them, while their army, encamped outside the town, took flight in panic at the disturbance within. John Holand escaped, and rode for his life into Essex, where he hoped to take ship for France. But the people of

the county rose against him and caught him, and knowing him for an enemy to their late Duke, they brought him to Plashy, and struck off his head in the same courtyard that had witnessed his royal brother's deceitful visit. And so the old place was left to the bats and crows, and an evil reputation still clings to its deserted precincts.

Another old feudal fortress is Headingham Castle, with its square Norman keep, of the same age as Gundulf's Tower at Rochester and the White Tower of London. This was long the stronghold of the De Veres, the great lords of the district, and stewards of the ancient forests of Essex. As late as the time of King Stephen, the greater part of the county was a royal hunting-ground, and subject to forest laws, but the work of clearing and settlement had already begun, and in the reign of King John all the part north of Stone Street was disafforested. Still, the powers and privileges of the steward were great, and as the royal forests shrank in size, the broad lands of the De Veres increased in like proportion.

The De Veres had suffered much for the House of Lancaster. Father and son had died on the scaffold, and another son had suffered long imprisonment and penniless exile, but lived to lead the van of Richmond's army at Bosworth Field. The event of that battle restored to him all the ancient possessions of his house. In his prosperity he was visited by Henry the Seventh at Headingham; where, proud to entertain his royal master, he assembled all his retainers to do him honour. Not long before had been passed the Statute of Retainers, intended to increase the power of the crown by limiting the private armies of the great lords, so when the King saw before him a long line of the Earl's servants in their livery coats and cognizances, he turned with his chilly smile to the Earl, and suggested that surely these handsome gentleman and yeomen were his menial servants. The Earl smiled in turn at the notion of keeping up such a costly array of household incapables, and explained that these gentlemen were his retainers who came to do him service, and chiefly to see his grace the King.

Then the King's artificial smile turned to a very genuine frown, as he muttered that he would not have his laws broken in his sight, and so set Mr. Attorney at him, while the Earl was glad to compound with a fine of fifteen thousand

marks for his offence, which kept the poor Earl in financial hot-water for the rest of his days. Still, the De Veres continued to hold their own in the ranks of the great nobles without coming into any great prominence till a spendthrift earl—the seventeenth of this long line—dissipated the family estates, and sold the castle to his father-in-law, Lord Burleigh, when the castle was mostly razed and dismantled. The old Norman keep proved too tough for the work of demolition, and so remains, a solitary monument of the existence of the once lordly dwelling.

Another grand old mansion is New Hall, in Boreham parish, not far from Chelmsford, of which the remains are now occupied as a nunnery, originally the refuge of sisters from Liège, who fled from the violence of the Revolution. Originally this was a semi-fortified house, a perfect quadrangle, all the principal windows facing into the inner square, while, without, only blank walls presented themselves to the unfriendly visitor. The house formerly belonged to Thomas, the father of Ann Boleyn, who exchanged it for another with King Henry the Eighth, with whom it became a favourite seat. Then the Duke of Buckingham had it for a time, and after him, Monk, Duke of Albemarle, the restorer of the monarchy. The restorer's son, Christopher, married Elizabeth, one of the heiresses of the great Newcastle estates—the beginning, seemingly, of great honour and glory for the Monks. But the soft young Duke had but an evil time of it with his proud, half-crazy bride, and when he died, Elizabeth married another Duke, and from half crazy became wholly so—went mad with pride, says Horace Walpole—and fancying herself Empress of China, lived to a great age at Clerkenwell, keeping up her mad grandeur to the last, and being served always on the knee. In the time of this poor mad creature New Hall was abandoned, and became ruinous, and was at last sold to one Mr. Olmius, who pulled down the greater part of it. A fine painted window, that once adorned the splendid chapel of the Hall, was sold to the parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster, when the chapel was destroyed, and is still to be seen in the parish church.

Other points of interest can only briefly be noticed—Ongar, with the keep of Richard de Lacy's castle, and Greensted close by, with its wonderful wooden church, the nave formed of the split trunks of chestnut-trees, where tradition has it that

the corpse of a King once rested, though we must go back to the days of St. Edmund the Martyr to find a likely subject for the legend. Then there is Otes, once the seat of the Mashams, where John Locke found a congenial home, and where he died and was buried. And the grand old gateway of Nether Hall suggests curiosity as to its former owners, the Colts, of whom nothing particular is known.

Much, too, might be said of the forests of Essex, of Epping, and the wood and deer-stealers of old times, of the squatters and gipsies, and of the old forest-lore that is now passing away. What a pleasant glimpse you get of the old life in the custom of the manor of Corringham, and the fat buck and doe that the manor owed yearly to the great church of St. Paul on the days of the conversion and commemoration of its patron saint! The dean and chapter received the tribute in full canonicals, and afterwards formed a stately procession about the cathedral till they issued at the great west door, "when the keeper that brought it bowed the death of the buck" on his great twisted horn; "and then the horns that were about the city answered him in like manner."

And with the echoes of the hunter's horn dying away in the distance, we may fitly take our leave of Essex, its marshes, forests, old manors, and castles, and still older relics of yet more ancient worlds.

ABOUT THE DOCKS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

SOME years after the visit recorded in a former paper, I made a second pilgrimage to the docks. On this occasion I had to see a young man off to a distant colony, and having to go down beforehand to the ship, which was lying in the Albert Docks, I took a river steamer to North Woolwich. Arrived at Woolwich, I had to wait some twenty minutes for a train, and, after two changes and some further twenty minutes to half an hour's travelling, I arrived at the station near which they said the steamer was lying. After some time I found her lying against a wharf, and made my way on board. Finding nobody on deck, and the companion-door open, I went below, where, in the cabin, I found the captain enjoying the luxury of doing nothing, and his wife sitting by him, writing letters. She had come down to the docks to be with him

during the short time he was at home between one cruise and another, and seemed to spend most of her time on board her husband's vessel.

On my next visit, when I took my young colonist with me, I was received with the cordiality of old friendship by the captain and his wife, and when the day arrived for my young man to go on board with his baggage, these good-hearted people were vying with each other in doing kindnesses for the passengers. The wife was going to leave her husband that afternoon, but that did not prevent her spending most of her time in doing the honours of the cabin to the one lady who was going out in it, and to those who came down with the other passengers. Already, lying against the quay-side, that little world had taken its individual character, and its inmates, with only an acquaintance of a few minutes, were trying to increase its comfort for each other.

Round the steamer there was the usual energetic life of the docks proceeding in its usual undemonstrative way. Tons upon tons of merchandise was constantly being brought by train and barge, and piled up in mountains in the sheds, from which, by some magical process, it almost immediately melted away into the holds of the various ships. Having to enquire for a small package, which had been sent up from a distant part of the country for conveyance by the steamer, I was referred to a cabin in one of the sheds. The civil man I found there turned to a register, and told me, not only that my package had been put on board, but when it was put there, and the part of the vessel in which it was stowed. I certainly was not able to verify his statement, but he made it with an air of assurance that convinced me.

Leaving the ship we walked towards the pretty little hotel, which quite startles one by its appearance in that grim, gaunt marsh. To get to it we had to cross a swing-bridge over one of the locks that give entrance to the basin, and arrived there just as the bridge was being swung back to admit a splendid Peninsular and Oriental ship. The passage through which she had to pass seemed to be about two feet wider than the ship herself. A vessel of that size—she must have been about four thousand tons—has an impetus when she moves that is formidable in so confined a space. Her movements have consequently to be cautious, and so slow that her own rudder is of little or no use to her. Her

guidance, therefore, has to be entrusted to tugs, one ahead and one astern, and so skilfully is this done, that the mighty vessel crept through this narrow passage without scratching an inch of paint off her side.

She was an interesting sight as she moved slowly and majestically by. She was carrying troops among her passengers. The men in their red uniforms stood about in groups, forward; the sergeants and orderlies bustled about with order-books in their hands and looks of importance on their faces; the officers walked up and down the deck talking to the friends who had come to meet them; ladies sat about in deck-chairs, looking as if the ship was their natural home. On the bridge conning the ship were the captain and dock-master; on the fore-castle, in the chains, and at the stern, the officers of the ship watched the passage of that dangerous point with anxious eyes. Round the funnel the native crew sat chattering to each other, crouched up in that most uncomfortable-looking position that black men affect; and astride of the extreme end of the spanker-boom a carefully-dressed ebony gentleman sat, holding in his extended hand a small flag—the signal that the ship is under way in the docks. I had seen him in exactly the same position more than an hour before, and as he passed me he showed no sign of fatigue or any other emotion. He might, indeed, have been carved out of ebony.

Our last view of the ship in which we were particularly interested, was not altogether pleasing. She was to sail at an early hour the next morning, and lots of things that had come down late were piled about, cumbering the deck. Berths were being knocked up, forward, for some second-class passengers, who all looked miserable enough in still water—what their state would be a few hours after I did not like to think. Aft, on the quarter-deck, two butchers were hard at work hacking, sawing, cutting at carcasses; chucking the pieces down on the deck as they cut them off, much as if they had been chunks of wood. Below, boxes and packages tripped you up at every turn—nothing was in its place, except in the captain's cabin, and nobody knew where to look for anything. As you came on deck again a bigger pile of most unpleasant-looking masses of meat met you on either hand. It was rather a depressing condition in which to take leave of a boy who was being suddenly turned loose upon the world.

When work is going on, the docks have a certain beauty and interest of their own; but it is only from the evidence of concentrated life and energy, and when work ceases the dreariness is in proportion to the previous energy. Outside the dock-gates the dreary sameness is overpowering. Endless miles of streets, each one exactly like its neighbour; streets neither rich enough to throw off care and be gay, nor poor enough to be careworn; merely staid, featureless respectability, without one spark of imagination to relieve it.

On week-days in bright weather there is movement that to some extent mitigates this awful sameness; but if fate ordains that you should walk through those streets on Sunday at mid-day, you pray that something may happen—no matter what, even if it be fraught with danger to your own life and limb—to ease you of that insufferable monotony.

That is in the respectable parts, however—the West End of the docks, as it were. There are other parts where the monotony is that of squalor. It is terrible to think of human beings living under such conditions; but in truth the whole country is pestilential. During a hot summer the smells that come from the river, and those that the sun draws up from the unwholesome marsh in which all that succession of towns that come from the river, and those that the sun draws up from the unwholesome marsh in which all that succession of towns is built, are enough to poison the inhabitants. The country is all reeking damp. People who can ill afford it have to keep fires frequently burning all over their houses if they would even keep the paper on the walls. Keen, biting winds sweep across the country in winter, but in summer you sigh in vain for a breath of sweet air; and, as if the inevitable smells were not as much as human lungs and noses could endure, chemical works have been started there, the fumes from which have killed all vegetation within a radius of half a mile from them.

In such a country as this children dwindle and die, and even strong men droop and fail. It is far away from authority; there are no wealthy people to be annoyed by the smells; nobody, therefore, to check nuisances that would not be tolerated for a month in richer districts.

When we arrived at the river, however, all previous smells seemed to be as nothing. The tide was low, and it was difficult to tell where the oily black ripples ended, and the oily black mud began. The evening was intensely hot, and the smell

that came from the foul stream as the paddles of passing steamers churned it up was simply nauseating. And yet as we crossed the river we saw boys bathing in this black ooze, laughing, and playing, and splashing it about over each other.

Another visit I paid to the docks was in a larger company. A special train was drawn up in Liverpool Street Station to convey the passengers of the good ship Adriatic and their friends to Tilbury, from which a tender was to take them on board. The train was about thirty carriages long.

The platform was crammed with passengers and their friends, and groups of curiously diverse nature were constantly forming and passing each other. There was a very smart young man with very shiny boots and a very shiny hat, attended by a party of friends who also had shiny boots and still shinier hats. Each of them had a cigar, and their tone and accent as they talked corresponded sufficiently well with their dress. Getting into the next carriage was a party of nuns. In the distance was a tall, graceful girl, carrying a basket of flowers and ferns, as graceful as herself. She was looking about for someone, and making enquiries of guards and porters. Presently she saw the nuns, and swimming up to them gave one of them this pretty but rather cumbersome farewell present. In another carriage was a sad-eyed woman, and three young girls who were evidently to be left behind. The children were not beautiful, it must be confessed, but there was a terrible pathos in the mother's hungry looks.

At last we were all stowed away, and, leaving the station, crawled through a most desolate country—a land of utter squalor. Through stations with unknown names the long train slowly wound its way, till sheds, and masts of ships, and eventually the picturesque hotel on the edge of the marsh that I remembered of old, made their appearance. Instead of our having to go down to Tilbury, we found that the ship was still in the docks, lying within a hundred yards of the place where the train stopped.

The long train disgorged its freight of passengers, who streamed in a long line through the adjacent shed to the quay, and from that over the "brow" to the vessel, and down into the saloon. Then began the usual hunt for cabins; the confusion from passengers having taken possession of the wrong cabin, and the difficulty

of convincing them of their mistake; the enquiries as to when the vessel would start; when the train would return to town; how much time there was to say "good-bye" in; all of which the officers, stewards, and stewardesses of the ship answered with the most perfect good-nature over and over again.

Then on deck a gang of swarthy Lascars—lithe and graceful of movement—began laying out a cable, the leading hand blowing every two or three minutes on a silver whistle elaborate flourishes of which, as far as I could see, nobody took any notice whatever. The officers threaded their way through the crowd of passengers, looked over the side, gave orders to the Lascars, and so the work of unmooring went on, while the last leave-takings were being transacted.

Down below things had got a little sorted, people had found their cabins, and had deposited their hand-luggage in them. The young man and his friends with the shiny boots had discovered the bar, and were having a farewell bottle of "fiz" there. The nuns had taken leave of their party, and had gone on deck to receive and return last salutations between the quay and the ship, making a curious picture as they stood there, those quiet, sweet-faced women in the dress of centuries ago, on the deck of a steamer, with a background of masts, and steam-cranes, and puffing tugs, and a foreground of screeching locomotives.

The pale-faced mother, having found her cabin, had taken her children in there for the final parting, and we saw her no more. The little ones presently came out, hanging on to the hands of an old man who accompanied them, and weeping as if their hearts would break.

"How much time have we got before the ship starts?" I heard someone asking of a ship's officer, shouting to make himself heard above the bellowing of the steam syren that was disgorging white vapour and sound.

"Only another minute or two," the officer shouted back.

"I suppose they will give us notice when we are to go ashore," said the questioner.

"They've been giving you notice ever since you've been aboard," replied the mariner with a grin, pointing in the direction from which the hideous bellowing yell reached us from out of the mist. And, indeed, this most unpleasant sound had

made verbal communication difficult all the time we had been on deck.

Presently the visitors left the ship and assembled on the quay.

A young officer ran along the margin of the quay, shouted a few directions to the men on deck, and went on board again. Then the "brow" was swung ashore; the ship began in some mysterious manner to move away from the quay; a couple of grimy, snorting tugs took possession of her, and she was dragged, stern foremost, towards the dock-gate; the inevitable nigger sitting astride the spanker-boom and holding the flag in his extended hand, while he gazed upon the world around him with an impassive air, as if he thought that the people who didn't sit astride spanker-booms, displaying a small flag, were of little moment.

Gradually we saw the ship bearing this strange and motley collection of travellers, nuns, traders, soldiers, priests, sailors, Lascars, vanishing from our sight. We waved them a last farewell from the quay, this crowd of people the steamer had disgorged, who had never met before, and would probably never meet again, joining—many of them with flushed faces and tearful eyes—in a pantomimic "Good-bye"; and then we turned and got into the waiting train, and in another minute were discussing the morning's news.

A quarter of an hour afterwards we were back in the crowded, bustling London streets, and the scene we had just witnessed seemed like a strange and unreal vision.

THE THUGS.

IN the year 1807 a band of Indian rascals was accidentally detected in the act of dividing what turned out to be the clothes and other property of some murdered travellers, and by laboriously following this clue, that great mystery of iniquity—Thuggee—was eventually dragged into the light.

Some years later, Dr. Sherwood, an old resident in India, published a pamphlet about the Thugs which sent a thrill of horror both through the Anglo-Indian and the British public. According to him the sect seems to have originated ages ago in the north of India, where its members were called Thugs, or Deceivers, and thence spread south under the name of Phansigars or Stranglers.

Thuggee was not only a profession, but a religion as well, and so close and secret were its principles that little was really known of it even among the natives themselves. To speak of the Thugs, or even to think of them, was held to be unlucky. No good could, and much harm might, come of it.

From different Thugs, who, when arrested, turned informers to escape capital punishment, was obtained the following account of the origin of the mysterious brotherhood.

Coeval with the creation of mankind existed a huge giant, who was so big that when he took a walk in the sea his head rose above the deepest waves, and the highest mountains were but as ant-hills in his path. A good-sized river could have run down his throat, dashing itself against his rocks of teeth, and his roar resounded from one end of the earth to the other. As for the loftiest and strongest forests, he crushed through them like grass. He lived on human flesh, and his appetite was so voracious that man would soon have been exterminated, but for the merciful interposition of the goddess Davee, who, having obtained a sword of enormous size, attacked the giant, and at the very first thrust ran him through. He fell dead before her, but from his blood, which ran in rivers—here we seem to have an Indian version of Hercules and the Hydra—sprang legions of new giants as formidable as the first. The goddess, wielding her gigantic sword like a beam of light, slew and slew, but each monster as he fell gave birth with his blood to a thousand more, and the task was interminable.

Feeling herself almost done, Davee stopped to wipe her face, and from her perspiration as it fell upon the ground sprang two men—and then she saw the way out of it. Tearing a piece from her robe, she divided it into two handkerchiefs, which she gave to her sons, and showed them how to tie the slip-knot. Under Davee's instructions they went boldly to work, and being now able to kill without shedding blood, soon strangled all the giants.

Their occupation being gone, the two men felt dull for want of employment, and besides, their cherished handkerchiefs were useless, as Indian necks and noses required neither to be muffled nor blown; so they poured out their grief in prayer to Davee, who took pity and gave them leave to strangle their fellow-creatures, and make

at the same time a livelihood out of the plunder of the victims, not forgetting their dues to Davee. So these two men became the founders of the sect of Thugs.

The good Davee showed in many other ways her consideration for her children. Whilst they were few in numbers, and the work hard, she buried all the dead herself. They only had to strangle and hide the bodies in the bushes, and by morning at latest they were sure to be gone. Perhaps jackals had as much to do with this as Davee.

But when there were many Thugs, and they could not all be stranglers, the goddess instituted the order of grave-diggers, and gave up conducting funerals herself.

However, she did them one more good turn, by giving them one of her own ribs for a pickaxe. Other Thugs said that Davee was angry because a strangler, having despatched his man, hid to see how she would bury him, which the goddess had expressly forbidden. To his surprise, instead of burying the corpse, she began to eat it, which was nearly as bad as the giant. As the Thug peeped through the bushes Davee saw him, and with a gesture of rage flew away, and has never been seen since. So the Thugs had to dig graves themselves.

But all agreed that there was no mistake about the rib, which served as a pickaxe for centuries, until, in anger probably at the falling away of the sect from the ancient purity of the faith, it miraculously disappeared.

The profession of Thuggee was kept strictly in the Thug families, descending from father to son. If a stranger wished to enter, he had to get some holy old Thug to agree to become his gooroo, or spiritual parent. After years of apprenticeship, and having passed creditably through the inferior offices of scout, gravedigger, and holder of hands or shamshea, he was fit to climb to the top of the professional tree as a bhurtote or strangler.

Having been ordered to purify himself by prayer and fasting, and to have as much silver money about him as possible—the chink and smell of silver being particularly grateful to Davee—the candidate and his gooroo, with a shamshea, started off disguised as ordinary travellers.

If possible, they joined company with some solitary, poor wayfarer, and waited patiently for the time when, after the mid-day meal, he lay down to sleep in the shade; but, before proceeding to actual

business, it was necessary to withdraw and watch for a good omen.

If it came shortly, they turned their faces westward; and the gooroo, taking the handkerchief, tied at one end the goor khat or holy knot, with a rupee inside it. He then delivered it to the disciple, who, leaving the gooroo to pray to Davee, crept stealthily with the shamshera to the unconscious slumberer, whom they awoke. Then in an instant his hands were pinioned, the fatal noose passed round his neck; then came a stifled cry, a choking gurgle, a convulsive struggle, and the sleep of the grave settled on his eyes for ever!

The work being done, the murderers, leaving the corpse to the grave-diggers, who were not far off, returned to their friends, to whom the gooroo presented his son in triumph as a full-blown bhurtote or stranger. He then took back his own rupee, as well as getting all his son's money, for the purchase of what was wanted for the solemn feast, to which all friends were invited, and the chief dainty at which was the dish of goor or holy sugar.

A sleeper, said the Thug informers, was always aroused before being strangled, because their religion expressly forbade the killing of one who slept.

The reason of this probably was a fear lest an attempt to slip the noose round the neck of a person lying down might be a failure, and result in an alarm and detection.

"Never to be found out" was a cardinal doctrine of the Thug creed, and so skilfully and craftily were their plans invariably laid that such a thing as a failure was, the Thugs averred, never known. It was, in fact, impossible that a pious Thug whose heart was right towards Davee and his gooroo should fail. The goddess would not let him.

A Thug who was once another's gooroo was his gooroo always; the tie between them was the closest and holiest on earth. A man might strangle his father, or even his wife, and yet remain a respectable Thug, but such a monster as one wicked or unfaithful towards his gooroo had never been heard of.

To the extreme and serpent-like caution of the Thugs was due, no doubt, the fact that though they had flourished in India from time immemorial, neither the Government nor the European community had the slightest notion of their existence.

The Thugs thought very much of signs and omens, the due observation and in-

terpretation of which formed an important part of the mystery of their craft. Without a favourable omen no expedition was ever undertaken.

September, December, and July were unlucky months, and Wednesdays and Thursdays unlucky days on which to set out. To hear cries of mourners for the dead, or to see a hare on the left, or to meet a woman carrying water, or one about to become a mother—these were all good omens. One of the best was to hear an ass bray on the left, and then another on the right, for this meant strangling many people, and both hands full of money.

The 'Lodaha and Jumaldecree Thugs kicked the back of the first "piece of business," on the same principle that a London crossing-sweeper spits for luck on the first copper he gets in the day. But if at the beginning of an expedition, the jemadar, or leader, happened to drop the sacred waterpot, which he carried along with the holy pickaxe, wrapped in a white cloth, with roots of turmeric and coins, it was an exceedingly bad omen for all concerned. So it was to meet a potter or a blind man, or a funeral, or a dancing-master, or a seller of oil. A woman with an empty pitcher was bad. Two jackals were worse.

It was bad, too, to sneeze—which is what the modern Italians say. But the very worst sign of all was to hear the cry of a hare on the right at night. This, a Thug informer said, meant a special warning from Davee that the expedition should be abandoned, for, if persisted in, it would end in disaster and death, and the hares would lap water out of their skulls.

After Davee took away her rib, they had to use iron pickaxes, and the making of one was an important religious ceremony. The time and omens being all right, prayers and fastings were made, and then the blacksmith and a Thug priest were shut up alone together till the job was finished. Here we seem to have the root of an old tradition among smiths that none but the initiated should witness the forging of a masterpiece.

When the pickaxe was made, great precautions were taken that no shadow might fall on it before it had been consecrated, and render it useless.

To consecrate it, they first buried it, and then dug it up and put it into a brass box; then it was taken out and washed in holy sugar-and-water, in milk, and in rice-spirit. Seven crimson spots were then put on it. Lastly, a fire was

made of mango-staves, and the pickaxe placed in a dish with coconuts and spices. Then it was passed seven times through the flame, and the rite was complete. It only remained to ascertain the goodwill of the goddess, for which the chief priest put a coconut on the ground, and taking the pickaxe in his hand, loudly called on Davee, and then struck the coconut.

If he broke it, it was a good omen, and all present bowed towards the west; if he failed, it was bad, and no more could be done for that time.

The pickaxe was a fetish, or holy thing. When buried in the earth, it would turn and point in the direction an expedition ought to take. An oath sworn on it was inviolable. If any man failed to keep it, a Thug told Captain Sleeman, Davee would twist his neck round and round till he died.

This Captain Sleeman was an Indian magistrate who was very active in discovering and rooting out Thugs. His reports to Government, between 1830 and 1835, are, in spite of their horrible disclosures, highly interesting. He also compiled a vocabulary of Thuggee. All his information was obtained from Thug approvers, some of them persons of superior intelligence and polished manners.

In winter, Thugs pretended to follow different occupations, and in summer set out on their strangling expeditions. Sometimes they travelled in small parties, at other times in bands of a hundred, or even two hundred strong. If a solitary passenger was overtaken, his fate was sealed. Several Thugs would creep up behind him, seize his arms and legs, twist the handkerchief round his neck, and throw him to the ground a corpse.

They often disguised themselves as merchants, artisans, soldiers, and pilgrims.

Their scouts, going on in advance, entered the towns, and learned what travellers were on the road, their numbers, apparent wealth, and whether armed or otherwise. With them the Thugs would mingle like harmless wayfarers; gradually, and without exciting suspicion, each traveller would be placed between a shamshah and a bhurtote, who, at a given signal, would seize upon the victim and draw tight the deadly noose. Not unfrequently, a company of thirty or forty persons, men, women, and children, who had banded together for mutual safety, has been thus in a few minutes destroyed.

In burying the dead, the Thugs first broke all the joints, and then ripped open

the bodies, lest these, by swelling, should crack the earth above, and be scented out by the jackals. If possible, they dug the graves in the jungle, but, if the ground was open, they would encamp and light fires to dry the damp, freshly-turned earth. Nothing was ever left to chance. The travellers' graves were often dug beforehand in some lonely jungle near which they had to pass.

There was no instance on record of Thugs having been seen at their work. If any ever did so see them, they shared undoubtedly the common fate.

It was the first article of their creed to shed no blood; the swift, silent noose alone did the work. Another rule was, never to kill anyone near his home.

Besides the land Thugs, there were the Pungoos, or water Thugs, who plied their trade in boats on the rivers, pretending to convey passengers—generally pilgrims—or to take up tired wayfarers out of mere charity. At night they would arise and strangle them, and throw their bodies overboard to be devoured by the crocodiles.

There seems to be something peculiarly malignant and devilish in this waking people up to be strangled. In the house, they would shake the sleeper, and shout in his ear that a scorpion—or, if it were out of doors, that a snake—had crept into his clothes: any sudden, fearful alarm, to terrify and confuse him; and the next instant he was gasping for the breath of his life, and the next was a corpse.

A chief Thug was once asked if he never felt remorse for his deeds. "Does anyone," he replied, "feel remorse for having worked at the calling which God has assigned to him? It is, in reality, God who kills all, and no one dies before his time."

Another said that the taste of the goor or holy sugar changed man's nature—it would change a beast. This man had left Thuggee and got on well in the world, but he could not forget the taste of the goor, and returned to be a Thug.

Many Thugs, especially one Zolfukar, a chief leader among them, ascribed the evils which had overtaken the sect to impiety, to the neglect of Davee, and to the killing of women, a thing never done by the ancient Thugs.

"Ah," he said, "once we had religion, now we have lost it, and must suffer the penalty of our sins. But Davee never forsook us till we forsook her."

Another kind of Thugs selected their victims from the poor, murdering them for

the sake of their children, whom they afterwards sold, especially beautiful girls, for good prices in the large cities. The two centres of their operations were Delhi and Bhurtpore. Besides Davee, they had a prophet Megpunna, who had been a hermit of extraordinary sanctity, and a great worker of miracles.

A notorious Thug chief was Feringhea, who was arrested at Sangir in 1830. This most atrocious scoundrel confessed to so many murders that his statements were in a great measure disbelieved, especially with regard to the strangling of three parties of travellers by himself and his comrades some years before. At his request the ground at three different spots which he carefully pointed out was dug up. It was then covered with grass and bushes of old growth, but on reaching a certain depth the skeletons were found just as Feringhea had said.

At the beginning of the present century there were supposed to be ten thousand Thugs in all India, who annually murdered thirty thousand people. Between the years 1826 and 1837, more than nineteen hundred were hanged or imprisoned in Bombay, Madras, and Bengal. Thuggee is considered, then, to have received its death-blow, and to have become within ten years afterwards quite extinct.

But ancient customs die hard in the East; and it is not impossible that in the remote parts of India, especially in the native principalities, it may linger even yet.

Of the thousands of persons who disappear annually in India, there are many of whom their friends only know that they were and are not. Wild beasts they suppose have destroyed them; but it may be that on some lonely road they have encountered a savage more crafty and relentless than even the man-eater or hooded snake.

RUSSET AND GREEN.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

MENTION was made, at an early stage of this veracious chronicle, of Mr. Samuel Bunch, a gentleman of artistic tastes, who occupied Mrs. Perks's first-floor, and was by her consulted as to the presentation to Miss Kennett of the Rev. John. Miss Kennett came to see a good deal of Mr. Bunch, in one way or another—more, indeed, than she ever saw of the other lodgers with whom the house was packed, collectively. She passed him on the stairs,

or in the street, in the near neighbourhood of the house, pretty nearly every morning, as she betook herself to her daily interview with Mrs. Travers; and it was rarely the case that she got back to her own room, when her day's labour was over, without seeing him a second time. This circumstance, to one a little more sophisticated in the ways of town life in general, and of such quarters as William Street in particular, than was Miss Kennett, would certainly have aroused suspicion. And when the suspecter is a young lady of considerable personal attractions, and the suspected a young man of artistic pursuits, and, therefore, with a faculty for the admiration of the beautiful, the character of the suspicion is not far to seek. But it never entered Miss Kennett's mind to conceive that it was by any other cause than accident that Mr. Bunch found so many opportunities of momentarily relieving his head of the weight of the soiled white deer-stalker which so constantly decorated it. For Mr. Bunch shared his landlady's faculty of knowing a lady when he saw one, and the "coup de chapeau" with which he never failed to greet her was beautiful to see. It spoke a respectful, artistic admiration, a recognition of social superiority, while the familiar jerk of the head and encouraging smile which always accompanied the action, softened its more dignified attributes. About this time, too, Mr. Bunch began to pay more attention to his person than it had hitherto been his habit to do, and to indulge in such cheap sartorial splendours as were within the purchasing power of his meagre purse. He sported a tie of a beautiful arsenical green, and had his boots blacked twice a week. These outward and visible signs of moral perturbation would not have been lost upon any native damsel of Paradise Street as they were upon Miss Kennett; but the sad little smile and bow which Mr. Bunch's magnificent salute received as its sole answer was all the recognition it and his new-born splendours of costume received.

"It can't be the parson," said Mr. Bunch to himself. "He ain't been round here for a fortn't." Mr. Bunch was perplexed. It did not accord with his scheme of things that so much beauty should walk the world unclaimed and unprotected. "And there's nobody in that 'ouse in Beatrice Place but two old women. Old women! Yah!—what's she want to waste her time like that for?"

Mr. Bunch was wroth at this inexplic-

able folly. At first the little smile with which Miss Kennett had replied to his salute had comforted and encouraged him, but were things to stop at that pass for ever? Surely any young lady, unhampered by a prior attachment, must have read the meaning of his smiles—must have known better than to fancy that a man with work to do had no object in thus persistently throwing himself in her way. Mr. Bunch was quite willing to allow that advances should first be made from his side, but he sorely felt the need of a little encouragement.

There were ways and means, he argued with himself, by which the most modest of young women could express her willingness to "keep company" with a young man whose desires that way were evident as were his own. For Bunch was a bit of a Don Juan in the eyes of Paradise Street, and had had many innocently amorous experiences of the ladies of that quarter; and he contrasted Miss Kennett's bearing with those of his former flames, finding no encouragement in the comparison. Had not Miss Price, the comely barmaid at The Wellington, now the proud bride of an opulent young stockbroker, mingling with the titled of the land at her husband's mansion at Tulse Hill—had not she, the circumspectness of whose conduct might be upheld as an example to all possible barmaids, entrusted Mr. Bunch with letters to post for her, and rewarded his attachment with other small commissions expressing recognition of and confidence in his as yet unspoken affection? Had not Miss Turner, the greengrocer's daughter (a less shining example, certainly, for she had only married the baker at the corner, but yet a most discreet young woman), entrusted to him the quelling of a distasteful suitor from the neighbouring barracks, and, on one blissful occasion, sent him a valentine? Miss Kennett gave him no letters to post, no commissions to execute, no despised or unwelcome follower to vanquish, and had sent him no valentine. He had received but that sad little smile and bow in recognition of all his labour and expense, the time wasted at the street-corner, waiting for her morning and evening, the boot-polish, and the beautiful cravat. Did she think cravats cost nothing, and that boot-blacks dispensed Day and Martin and elbow-grease gratis? And if a lady wouldn't give a cove the tip, what was he to do? Mr. Bunch, driven to extremity, cleaned his nails and mounted false cuffs and a homicidal collar, and still the fair one was coy.

Mary Kennett went her own quiet way, unwitting of all this, and so untroubled by it. The days slipped by, almost unmarked in their monotonous likeness one to another. The salary she received from Mrs. Travers for her daily attendance upon her, small as it was, was still more than enough for her exceedingly simple needs, and, with all her sordid care for the future, some little of her habitual melancholy had passed away, and left her with a settled content which was almost cheerful—which was, at all events, as far removed from sadness as from gaiety. She made no new acquaintances, and apparently desired none, living her life of barren routine from day to day. What thoughts of a brighter and more easeful existence, experienced or imagined, she may have had, remained unexpressed. To whom, indeed, might she have confided them? Mrs. Travers—sitting in stony resignation by her dismantled hearth, waiting the wished-for end, dreaming again the hopes and disappointments, joys and sorrows, of a life which to Mary was but one of the million of sealed mysterious histories which go to make up London—gave no confidences and asked none. She was kind, with that cold kindness which her age and life of solitary, troubled thought permitted. She spoke of resignation, never of hope, except it were in the life to come; of prayer, of patience, never of love, of joy, of a happy future upon that world which had fallen away from her and left her there, a ghost of flesh and blood, with but the spectres of her own troubled past to bear her company while still she bore the burden of the flesh. That Mary should be pale and quiet, that, with all the wealth of hope, and love, and joy in expectation which belong to youth, she should yet be companionless and unloved, were to her things which asked for pity and tenderness, but which seemed to her stern thought no subject of surprise or wonder. Trouble was the lot of all, and all that young or old might do was to bend in resignation to the burden, and pray for strength to bear it to the end. So confidence between her and Mary was impossible, and of all her meagre present acquaintance there remained only the Rev. John, a clergyman, certainly, and, according to Mary's views, a most admirable one, but one in whom, from his age and the shortness of their knowledge of each other, she shrank from confiding to too great an extent. And, for his part, he asked no confidences, and, in fact, tacitly avoided

them, preferring to offer what practical kindness lay in his power to prying, in his quality of spiritual adviser, into misfortunes which he would probably have been totally unable to relieve. Such services as he could render once performed, he left the girl to her own devices, leaving with her the knowledge that in all contingencies in which a man's hand or head could be of any avail to her, she had but to call him to her side.

It befell upon a certain summer evening that a somewhat singular event came to pass, which, slight in itself, was yet a link in the tangled chain which I have made it my task to unravel. Mary had passed the day—as she had passed many previously—in that bare room in the house in Beatrice Place. It was warm summer weather now, but the fire still burned sullenly beneath its hood of grey ashes, and the bent figure before it still bore the heavy envelope of shawls and wraps which it had worn on the day when Mary had first beheld it. Everything was unchanged; the swift foot of Time, which left such deep imprints elsewhere, seemed here to have disarranged no speck of dust upon the floor, to have shaken not so much as a cobweb in the empty and neglected corners. The dreamy atmosphere of the place, in which all seemed strange, weird, and unreal, was unchanged, and for hours the only sound which had varied the monotonous ticking of the clock had been Mary's voice as she read from the heavy Bible to that silent and unlistening figure on the hearth. It was close upon four o'clock, and her daily task was nearly done, when suddenly she was startled by a cry, and, rising quickly from her seat, beheld Mrs. Travers standing erect with outstretched hands, and eyes fixed with a wild stare on empty space.

"Roland!"

There was no mistaking the word, and the voice and accent with which it was spoken were those of agony and shame. And while the girl stood looking at her, frozen with fear beyond the power of speech or action, Mrs. Travers fell back heavily into her seat, and turning her face towards her companion, spoke again:

"A jealous God, visiting the sins of the children upon the fathers."

The face and voice with which she spoke that travesty of the sacred words were terrible to see and hear. There was a long pause before she spoke again, and then her voice had regained its own changeless accent, monotonous and hollow.

"Go," she said; "leave me to myself. If I have said anything you could not understand, forget it. Go now, and come again to-morrow."

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Mary arrived that evening before the door of Number Eighty-nine, Paradise Street, she discovered Mr. Bunch there before her, in the act of admitting himself with a latchkey. The artist's appearance, since she had last beheld him that morning on leaving the house—he had been posted, as usual, at the corner of the street, and had bestowed upon her the invariable salute, with the invariable result—had undergone a marked improvement. He had on a new and complete suit of tweed, obviously, from the obstinate creases which decorated the legs and arms, of the "reach-me-down" variety, but better fitting, and of a quieter cut and pattern than the vestments he had hitherto patronised; and he had a new tail hat, white, with a broad black band, perched, like the predecessor it had replaced, at the extreme back of his head; and he carried an unframed picture enveloped in brown paper under his arm. His expression did not betray that satisfaction which his newly-found sartorial grandeur might have justified one in expecting, but was at once disdainful and aggressive, and he carried the short wooden pipe, which decorated his countenance, upside down at an angle which imitated the elevation of his nose, and expressed scorn and contumely. Beholding Miss Kennett, he left the door open behind him, and proceeded her upstairs as far as the first landing, where he turned and addressed her.

"I say," he demanded, with no preface or exordium, "do you know anything about pictures?"

Mary responded cautiously that she had seen a good many.

"Do you know a good one when you see it?" he asked. "Because if you do, now's your time, so don't neglect it, or you'll never know what you've missed. Come along in here."

He kicked open a room door, and entered, Mary following. The room was carpetless and unfurnished, save for a miraculously small bed in one corner, a washstand in imitation maple, two chairs, a rickety deal table with red legs, a rheumatic easel; and two fly-blown silhouettes of somebody's deceased relations hung upon the wall. There was a

sickly scent of paints and varnishes in the air, and the windows were less clean than they might have been. The young man planted one of the chairs at an angle with the light with a quite unnecessary amount of noisy energy, and having freed the picture he carried from its envelope of brown-paper, placed it on the chair, and demanded :

"There! what do you think of that?"

It was a picture of somewhat peculiar character. It represented a table spread with a green cloth, upon which was set a plate of green earthenware, and on that were piled green apples, green filberts, green pears, and a green lettuce, which gave the too-sensitive beholder colic, tooth-ache, and goose-skin to look upon. They looked about as eatable as tin, and their tints had apparently been studied from variations of the colour of Mr. Bunch's necktie. The artist had a right to claim distinction on one score. He had invested common objects with colours quite unknown to nature. The picture had one good point, however. Its drawing was laborious and a little hard, but careful and accurate.

"There!" repeated the young man approvingly; "what do you think of that?"

Mary did so much violence to her conscience as to say that she thought it was very nice.

"Then," demanded Mr. Bunch, with even greater irritation than he had yet evinced, "why the deuce don't they buy it?"

The query was of such a character that Mary could only look hopelessly at its propounder, and could find no answer. It was the first opportunity she had yet had of observing him closely. He was the type of that kind of man of which, in Charles Reade's fine phrase, crowds are made. His features were commonplace, and somewhat harsh, but the eyes and chin were good and resolute. His figure was stunted and ungraceful, but broad and straggling as to build.

"I've carted that picture about for three months," he went on. "There ain't a dealer in London as don't know it. I've sent it to every gallery and exhibition I could hear of, and they've all chucked it. My uncle offers five-and-six on it. Five-and-six! My eye! Why, I put three weeks' good work into it, five hours a day, and the frame cost fifteen bob. I got eight on that," he added, with a gleam of happier remembrance, which went as rapidly as it came. "What do they mean

by it? Talk about your Turnerses and your Millaises! Look at that bit o' colour there. Did you ever see a green like that in a Millais, I should like to know?"

Mary replied, truthfully, that she never had.

"You never will," replied the artist, not at all soothed by her ready admission. "There ain't one of the lot of 'em as knows anything about colour. It's enough to make a man turn atheist to see how he's treated in this world." He spoke as if he had already travelled through several universes, in each of which he had received better treatment than in the present. "A cove might as well not work at all—just as well not—better, in fact. It's just like Oliver Cromwell said: 'Slog away till all's blue, and what do you get for it?'"

This appropriate and authentic quotation seemed to soothe him. He looked at his production with a softened eye, and shook his head with the air of who has hit the right nail fairly for once.

"Never mind, old lady," he continued. Mary thought for a moment that he was still addressing her, but it was the picture. "Never mind! we'll beat 'em yet—hollow as a drum! Let 'em try all they know to keep us down; we're ready for 'em. Pour on, we will endure! Yes, sir! It'll take 'em all their time to beat Sam Bunch, and more. Sam'll get his look in one of these fine days, and then we'll see things. Sam'll roll in his carriage yet, and wobble in the spondoolieks with the best of 'em. Lord! what does a bit of hardpness matter now, to a man as has got a future before him? Nothing at all. It helps him. Opens his eyes, and teaches him his way about. 'Pour être grand, il faut souffrir.'"

The accent was hideous, but the quotation was recognisable, and Mary looked at him in some surprise. He caught the glance, and laughed aloud.

"Didn't think I knew French—eh? Perhaps Sam knows more than he gets credit for. A cove can be a gentleman—and well-educated, too, mind you—for all he lives in Paradise Street, W.C. Or a lady, either!" The complimentary intention was obvious, in spite of grammatical confusion. "Don't you be afraid o' me, miss," continued Mr. Bunch; "there's no harm in me. Only when a gentleman meets a lady, a bit—a bit off colour like," he insinuated this with great delicacy, "when he's a bit off colour himself—why, they should be neighbourly, shouldn't they?"

Mary assented, wondering what was

coming next. Mr. Bunch was beginning to be amusing.

"There's many a lady and gentleman met afore now, in Queer Street—hard-up, I mean, miss, you know—as have got on wonderful well together, as—as have lived to be proud of each other afterwards. Why, there was Flaxman—though he was only a sculptor, of course—met his wife when they was both so hard up as they could hardly feed 'emselves; and see what a couple they was!"

Mr. Bunch was progressing at such a rate now, that he was fast ceasing to be amusing, and getting rather terrifying. Mary owned not only a tender heart, but, a rarer quality in women, a sense of humour. The latter gift had had few opportunities of cultivation or display lately, but it existed, and it and the desire to stay Mr. Bunch from his evident intention as kindly and with as little unnecessary cruelty as possible, played, between them, sad havoc with her feelings.

"There is another picture here," she said, turning to the easel. "May I look at it?"

"I'd rather you didn't," answered Bunch rapidly, with a restraining hand upon the cloth which covered it. "It's a hospital subject."

"A what?" asked Mary.

"A hospital subject," repeated Mr. Bunch. "When they get an interesting case, anything peculiar, they like to have it painted. One of the surgeons at St. Thomas's is a pal of mine, and he's given me a job or two in that way. Took one 'ome this morning. Two pun ten I got for it. Bought these clothes with some of it. Treat—eh? Nobby? What do you think I give for 'em, now? You'd never guess. Twenty-five bob for the lot, hat and all, and six and a kick for the boots." He was really a surprisingly vulgar young man. "Lor bless you, a chap as knows the ropes can dress like a toff for next to nothing. And I'm a steady chap, too. No larks—never drink. Always at work. Why, though I say it, there's heaps o' gals as'd jump at me."

"Mr. Bunch," said Mary with creditable gravity, "I'm afraid you are approaching a subject on which we shall not agree." Mr. Bunch took off the tall white hat and scrutinised its lining with intent interest. "Neighbours should avoid disagreement if possible, if they wish to remain good friends."

"Well," said Mr. Bunch, not by any means with all his old fluency, "I—I don't mean, as a man may say—immediate. I don't expect that. How could I? Of course we should keep company a bit first, so as to see a bit more of each other. Because—well, I might be mistaken, and you might not suit, after all."

"I am very much afraid I should not suit," replied Miss Kennett.

"And, besides," continued Mr. Bunch, "a cove—I mean a gentleman—can't marry on two and fourpence and a latch-key. And then there's furniture. No. It couldn't be done yet. But you might think about it, miss."

"I should seriously advise you not to think about it, Mr. Bunch," said Mary. "Please say no more," for he opened his lips as if to speak. "I hope you will find a girl to suit you—a good girl, who will understand your ambitions and be worthy of the position you will win for her."

"Do you think as I shall knock 'em, some day, then?" demanded the artist eagerly.

"Who knows?" asked Mary, "averaging" the meaning of the unfamiliar phrase. "But you must work."

"Oh, I'll work," responded the artist. "Never you fear that. And there's big prizes in art, mind you. There's men making thousands a year out of it."

"I hope you will become one of them some day," answered Mary quickly. Mr. Bunch's vivid imagination already pictured him to himself as one of the Forty—the President, perhaps; and Mary saw that this golden dream was emboldening him to a second attack. "And now I must say good-afternoon, Mr. Bunch."

"Good-afternoon," returned the artist sorrowfully.

"She's a stunner!" he said to himself, as he sat down upon the little bed and filled the short pipe. "She ain't like the gals hereabout. Wonder if she's a lady—a real lady—a swell. She talks like it, she looks like it. Knows French. What brings a gal as knows French in Paradise Street? I know it, but then I've lived in Soho. She's a lady, I believe. She's hard-up, or else she's—no, she ain't done anything; she's hard-up—that's it. Well, I haven't got my answer yet. One 'no' ain't much to a man as is a man. She'll be Mrs. Bunch yet, some day, or I'll know the reason why."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
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PRICE TWOPENCE.

LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXII.

WHILE all these young people were thus running riot in their youth and freshness, shedding floods of tears over every nettle that stung their feet, and calling the little bunches of weed-flowers they had gathered amaranth from the eternal plains, a sad old heart, behind closed shutters, in a room in Jermyn Street, was gathering together her dry leaves and memories of the past, and saying to herself, as she laid them in her bosom, "Here lies all that is left to me of hope and life."

Mrs. Thorne, alone in the dimly-lighted room, sits at her dead son's writing-table, sorting, destroying, or setting on one side, as a sacred treasure, every scrap of written paper she finds therein.

The room has not been opened and aired, nor have the others which compose the suite, since Rodney's death. Only Mrs. Thorne comes daily alone with the key in her hand, lights the candles on the writing-table, and sits there some four or five unbroken hours, steadily going through her dismal task. Not a soul beside herself has crossed the threshold since that awful night when they bore the poor, disfigured, white-swathed form to his mother's house.

Just as she sees the room now, seated at Rodney's desk, in the half-gloom, so was it when Rodney looked his last at it. There, on that sofa in the farther corner, lies his fur-lined dressing-gown; beside it, on the floor, stand his embroidered slippers, just as he threw them on one side before he set off to see his mother on that fateful evening. Here, on a corner of the mantelpiece, lies his half-smoked cigar in a silver ash-tray. On the very writing-table at which his

mother sits, there is a dark, ugly stain at one corner, which has eaten into the wood itself, and which "no fuller on earth" will be able to whiten away, let him try as he will.

Sometimes, as the mother sits unfolding and folding the dead man's papers, her eye rests momentarily on this stain. Then her lips tighten, her brows draw together, and her eyes flash as might the eyes of some starving leopard in search of prey, or some jungle-tiger bereft of its young.

The room is furnished in lavish style. That painting hanging over the secretaire cost upwards of a thousand guineas; the jewelled inkstand and candlesticks, between four and five hundred pounds. The secretaire itself, with its inlaid woods, lapis lazuli, and onyxes, was worth a small fortune, and every one of its carved drawers, when Mrs. Thorne sat down to it, had been crammed to overflowing with bills and divers memoranda of luxuries, works of art, jewellery, and bric-à-brac generally, enough to stock a shop in Bond Street.

But mixed with these divers bills and memoranda is manuscript of another sort, correspondence of a multifarious kind, closely-written diaries—for Rodney had ever been as diffuse with his pen as he had been with his silver and gold.

Sometimes, in spite of herself, the mother's lip would curl over the pages of some of these diaries, written with an almost feminine effusiveness, and describing passages in the young man's life for which she could not have the slightest sympathy. Although, to herself, she would not even have owned the fact, certain it was that, in fancy, Rodney stood before her now with less of the god and more of the mire about him than in days gone by. Most of these diaries—in fact, the greater portion of Rodney's MSS., she had one by one con-

sumed with a taper in the fireplace. A whole heap of ashes lay there—the only record of futile virtues, puerile vices, crushed hopes; desires, longings, and aspirations come to naught.

Mrs. Thorne thanks God that she is drawing near the end of her weary task. Yet, even as she does so, she asks herself what other task has she to set to work upon when this is ended. None, save that of counting the slow-creeping weeks and months till the great night comes which puts an end to all labour.

Two things only remained now to be done at that writing-table: one was the scanning of a packet of letters, all in Lucy Selwyn's writing, and tied carefully with a silken cord; the other was the piecing together of some tiny fragments of paper which she had found scattered about the floor and writing-table when she had first entered the room. They were evidently the last morsels of writing from Rodney's hand before he dealt his death to himself.

Mrs. Thorne had carefully collected them and placed them on one side. They would take hours to piece together. No one but a mother, hungering and thirsting for a last message from her dead son, would have undertaken such a labour.

Again and again had she taken up the packet of Lucy's letters, and again and again had laid them down. Now, should she scan them—the feeble, wicked things that they were!—or should she commit them, unread, to the flames? She could picture to herself exactly of what fabric they were composed—fustian to their very last thread, of course, with just that sickly odour of romantic sentiment hanging about them which girls in that class of life have perpetually oozing from their finger-tips. Yes, better burn them. By-and-by, time or chance might give her the opportunity of rewarding this girl according to her deserts. It was the one thing in life to which she looked forward with any—the faintest—glow of anticipation. Nothing these letters could contain would weaken this purpose of hers, nothing add to its strength; so let them burn for the worthless trash that they were!

They were a thick, goodly packet of letters; they would take a long time consuming with a taper, for fire there was none on the hearth. Mrs. Thorne cut the silk cord, preparing to toss them one by one into the grate. They fell apart in a loose heap. At the same moment, there fluttered out from beneath the flap of one envelope

a tiny scrap of paper, apparently torn from a lady's purse-memorandum-book, on which was scribbled in pencil the following sentence:

“Why were you not at Lady Cotswold's last night? I have something to say to you. Don't forget—the Park to-morrow morning—near the Magazine. E. Y.”

Mrs. Thorne had picked up the scrap of paper and mechanically read it before she realised what she was doing. Then she sat staring at it, as one might who, counting over his bank-notes and telling to himself his riches, comes suddenly upon an unpaid bill which swamps the whole amount.

Lucy Selwyn, then, had not been the only woman who had held this poor weak heart in thrall. Great Heavens—what revelations were at hand now!

Who was E. Y.?

And here Mrs. Thorne ran mentally over all the names beginning with a “Y” she had known or heard of in society.

There were the Youngs, and the Yelvertons, and the Yorkes—all in Lady Cotswold's set. Plenty of girls among them, plenty of good looks, plenty of “E.s” too, no doubt, if she only knew their christian-names. There was an Emily Young, and—Great Heavens!—an Ellinor Yorke, the débutante of two seasons back, whose beauty and grace had been on every lip, as well, also, her coldness and coquetry.

Mrs. Thorne sat mutely staring at the slip of paper for full five minutes. Then, with a new light breaking into her brain, she took up Lucy's letters, and began slowly in their order to read them. With a sigh and a heavy heart she took them up, with a deeper sigh and a heavier heart she laid them down, as, all unwelcomed, the truth forced itself upon her that this young girl whom she had looked upon as a Delilah, to be lightly won and lightly cast on one side, had been nothing less than her son's good angel till his own weak, wayward hands had pushed her out of his path.

They were letters that any mother might have been proud to call of her daughter's writing, that any wife, looking back in middle life to her girlish days, might have rejoiced to say: “These were of my penning.” Letters which breathed in every line the truest, deepest devotion, which expressed the girl herself, her simple pure womanhood, as faithfully as photographer's camera or artist's pencil might have done.

Mrs. Thorne gave a long sigh, pushed the letters away, and drew the torn scraps of paper before her in a little heap. She looked at her candles, she drew out her watch. To piece that little heap of fragments into legibility and coherence meant hours of patient labour. So be it. Hours of patient labour she was prepared to spend over them. Who was there to say her nay if she chose to lose her eyesight in the task, and had to feel her way back to the dreary house in Eaton Square?

So the hours of patient labour were expended, and their result was some half-dozen consecutive lines of Rodney's delicate feminine handwriting.

They ran as follows :

"TO ELLINOR YORKE.

"My death lies at your door. Had we never met I might have led a happy life, or, at least, an honourable one. I pray that none other may have cause to curse you as I do now. RODNEY THORNE."

These, then, were Rodney's last words, words which he no doubt intended to leave behind to proclaim to the world the falseness of the woman he had so madly loved, and which a softer moment—the last before death—had induced him to tear into fragments.

The mother sat staring at it stonily, yet withal with a fire tearing at her heart that might have heated and cracked marble itself.

To her these torn fragments were Rodney's voice speaking from the tomb.

At last words came to her.

"As I do now," she said, repeating Rodney's words. "My boy, if you are anywhere near me now, hear me repeat your own curse upon this woman. As I do now curse her, as I ever will curse her till her life or mine shall end! Hear me, Rodney," and now the mother uplifted her face and raised her hand on high as though in very truth her son bent over her as she stood, "and let your curse a thousandfold multiplied fall upon me if I fail to pay back to this woman the bitterness, the misery, the desolateness, she has brought into your life and mine. Yea, and amen!"

SOME NOTABLE QUACKERIES.

ASTONISHMENT is often expressed at the success of quackery, not only in the past, but even in the present. This astonish-

ment, however, will be much lessened if one considers that quackery appeals to the ignorant, the foolish, and the invalid. The two first-named classes are, and always have been, largely predominant in number, and we can understand the feeling with which the invalid to whom the honest physician can hold out no hope of cure, turns in his despair to the boasting empiric who boldly and unblushingly asserts the infallible certainty of the remedy which he offers for sale. Then there is the large class of imaginary invalids whose fancy, as it has provided them with their ailment, can, of course, make it disappear, and it is by the lavish advertisement of the testimony of these idiots that other victims are drawn into the nets of the quack. Where there are fools to be plucked there will, of course, be knaves to perform that operation. Sir Richard Steele, writing at the commencement of the last century, says: "It gives me much despair in the design of reforming the world by my speculations, when I find there always arise, from one generation to another, successive cheats and bubbles, as naturally as beasts of prey and those which are to be their food." It is not only in the case of medicine that quackery has always flourished. All the desires of humanity in its pursuit of happiness have had their corresponding deceitful promises of fulfilment. The soul in its craving for a nearer knowledge of its creator, or for some communication with the unseen world; the body in its desire for the material pleasures of this life; have been alike eager in the pursuit of ends unattainable.

In all times we see mankind pursuing wealth, health, and long life. The warrior has desired immunity from wounds or a speedy healing; the old man has dreamed of perpetual youth; the young man of love; the woman of beauty. One man has thirsted for gold unlimited, another for unbounded knowledge. Quackery and superstition, therefore, have never failed to rule the minds of the majority of mankind, because they have held out the promise of the fulfilment of these desires.

The ancient quacks had their oracles and gods, who spoke by means of tubes or ventriloquial priests, and their wealthy dupes were gratified by wonderful visions, which probably had no higher origin than the magic-lantern. The jugglers of Chaucer's time were doubtless acquainted

with this toy, for the father of our poetry says in his Frankleynes Tale :

For oft at festes have I wel herd seyn
That tregetoures, within an halle large,
Have made come in a water and a barge,
And in the halle rowen up and down.
Som time hath seemed come a grim lyou ;
And som time floures spring as in a mede ;
Som time a vine, and grapes white and rede ;
Som time a castel al of lime and ston,
And whan hem liketh voideth it anon ;
Thus semeth it to every mannes sight.

Every discovery, great or small, of previously unknown powers or qualities in nature was carefully concealed from the vulgar, and used as a means of exciting wonder and awe. To quote from the Spectator : "The art of managing mankind is only to make them stare a little, and keep up their astonishment ; to let nothing be familiar to them, but ever to have something in their sleeve, in which they must think you are deeper than they are." On this principle was necessary the jargon of the alchemist, his lily brides, and red bridegrooms, green dragons, ruby lions, Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn ; the magic circle, the fantastic dress, and quaint hieroglyphs of the astrologer and wizard with his incantations, his chafing-dish, his stuffed alligators, and other curious rubbish. Even the poor starved Apothecary of Romeo and Juliet had

—in his needy shop a tortoise hung
An alligator stuffed, and other skins
Of ill-shaped fishes.

Of all the blessings of this world, perhaps the most coveted is long life. The rich man who would round off his fortune with another ten thousand pounds, or his estate with a few more meadows ; the author or the artist who has not yet finished his great work ; the philosopher who feels himself as yet only on the brink of knowledge whilst he feels old age fast overtaking him ; the statesman who would crown his fame with one more great feat of legislation or diplomacy—all these ardently desire long life.

The two great goals of the alchemist were the elixir of life, or universal remedy, and the philosopher's stone—that is, the power of securing immortality, or at least a lifetime immensely extended, and the possession of unlimited wealth. A very long life accompanied by the decay and weakness of old age was, of course, seen to be a doubtful blessing, consequently perpetual youth, or the power of commencing life anew as a young man, was also part of this desire. In their search after these blessings, those ancient students were

continually melting, burning, separating, combining, dissolving, distilling, and filtering ; now imagining they had grasped the object of their lifelong search, now finding they had but the shadow. That wonderful old monk of the thirteenth century, Roger Bacon—who was acquainted with the use of concave and convex glasses, the telescope, and gunpowder ; who had studied most books existing in his time in the Latin, Greek, Arabic, and Hebrew languages ; who was learned in geography, astronomy, mathematics, and medicine—believed that potable gold, gold dissolved in nitro-hydrochloric acid, was the true elixir of life. He told Pope Nicholas the Fourth a wonderful story of an old man in Sicily, who, ploughing one day, found a golden phial containing some yellow liquid. The old man, believing it to be dew, drank it off, and was immediately transformed into a hale, robust, and highly-accomplished youth. He entered into the service of the King of Sicily, where he remained for the next eighty years. Raymond Lully, the friend of Roger Bacon, believed in spirits-of-wine as the elixir ; others had faith in antimony ; whilst the arch-quack, Paracelsus, gained money and fame for a time by the use of laudanum-pills. Sir Kenelm Digby, when visiting the celebrated Descartes, spoke regretfully of the brevity of life as compared with the time required for philosophical studies. The Frenchman replied that "he had considered that matter ; to render a man immortal was what he could not promise, but that he was very sure it was possible to lengthen out his life to the period of the patriarchs ;" and this opinion was so far from being thought ridiculous, that one of his disciples, when told of his death, refused to believe it, and only allowed himself to be convinced at last on the assumption that it was owing to a "mistake." The search for the philosopher's stone was based upon the idea that all the metals were composed of the same elements in varying proportions, and that if they could be freed from the impurities with which they were contaminated, they would at once assume all the properties and character of gold. The substance which was supposed to possess this power was called, "lapis philosophorum," or philosopher's stone, and was described by those who pretended to have seen it as a red powder having a peculiar smell. An ancient formula for making the philosopher's stone concludes with these words : "Thus, friend, you have a

description of the universal medicine, not only for curing diseases and prolonging life, but also for transmuting all metals into gold. Give, therefore, thanks to Almighty God who, taking pity on human calamities, has at last revealed this inestimable treasure, and made it known for the common benefit of all."

There is little doubt that many spent years of their lives in a genuine belief and hope that they would find the secret. Some in this vain search made many noble and useful discoveries, others degenerated into quacks and swindlers, who used such chemical knowledge as they possessed to extract gold from their credulous victims. It may be thought astonishing that a man who professed to have the power of making gold, should be able to find people foolish enough to give money to him who had "the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice," but we may assume that a plausible story was always ready, such as his having exhausted all his own funds just as he most wanted money to carry out the final operations. Suffice it to say, such victims have been found for hundreds of years, and we believe could easily be found now, if any enterprising rogue should care to revive this imposture. The trickery of one of these scamps is described by Chaucer in his *Chanounes Yemannes Tale*. His first deception was to hollow out a piece of charcoal, fill it up with filings of silver, and cover the hole with wax. This, of course, burned in the crucible, would ensure a result in precious metal.

Out of his bosom took a bechen cole,
In which full subtilly was maad an hole,
And therein put was of silver lymale
An unce, and stopped was without fayle
The hole with wax, to keep the lymail in.

In his second deception he stirred the crucible with a hollow rod containing filings of silver as before. Finally, after getting forty pounds, on a promise to show his victim the secret, he disappeared. Sometimes these cheats had a solution of silver in nitric acid, or an amalgam of gold, which they slyly introduced as occasion served. Sometimes they made nails half of gold and half of iron, neatly soldered together and coloured to resemble iron. This dipped half-way into the transmuting liquor made it appear that iron was changed to gold. It is not surprising that dupes were made when such splendid temptations were held out to them. What visions of splendour and happiness must be in the mind of a man who could listen

with believing ears to such a speech as Ben Jonson, in his *Alchemist*, puts into the mouth of Mammon :

This night I'll change
All that is metal in thy house to gold :
And early in the morning will I send
To all the plumbers and the pewterers,
And buy their tin and lead up ; and to
Lothbury
For all the copper.

Jonson also gives a notion of their jargon and their pretensions in the following lines of the same play :

I can assure you
He that has once the Flower of the Sun,
The perfect Ruby, which we call Elixir,
Not only can do that, but by its virtue
Can confer honour, love, respect, long life.
Give safety, valour, yea, and victory
To whom he will. In eight-and-twenty days
I'll make an old man of four-score a child,
Restore his youth, renew him like an eagle.

Sir Humphry Davy believed that the art of making gold might possibly be discovered, and at the end of the last century it was predicted that in the nineteenth century the transmutation of metals would be generally practised, and that even our kitchen utensils would be made of the precious metals.

In connection with these quackeries, there came into notice, about the end of the sixteenth century, the brotherhood of the Rosy Cross. That such a fraternity as the Rosicrucians really existed is extremely doubtful, but the name was used as a means of inspiring the credulous with awe, and, doubtless, formed a convenient cover to many impostures. Many who assumed to be Rosicrucians professed to have travelled throughout Europe, collecting wisdom and grand secrets from the various brothers they met with. They adopted the jargon and pretensions of the alchemists, and gave their order such titles as "the Immortal," "Invisible," "Enlightened." It was pretended that their founder brought from Palestine all the secrets of nature and art, including the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone. Rosicrucianism was introduced into England by the learned physician, Robert Fludd, who wrote several volumes on Rosicrucianism and the occult sciences, explaining, among other mysteries, the nature of angels and devils, of the Divine Being, and of sympathies human and divine. He found some scriptural authority for most of his theories, and even claimed Moses as a Rosicrucian.

The desire for knowledge, though not so strong as that for wealth or youth, has yet always been one of the ruling passions

of mankind. And what man wanted chiefly to know was the fate in store for him, or his, in the future; if any harm had befallen him, who had done it; if any danger lay before him, what was it, and how might he avoid it. Many quackeries and superstitions pretending to supply this want have flourished, and still do so. The greatest of these is astrology. The reading of the future from the stars has been practised and believed in by all nations in all times, and in comparatively modern days Kings and Queens had their astrologers. In the civil wars, the Roundheads had their astrologer — Lilly — whilst the Royalists pinned their faith to Wharton. Butler, in his Hudibras, refers to Lilly's prophecies :

Do not our great Reformers use
This Sidrophel to forebode news ;
To write of victories next year,
And castles taken yet i' the air ?
Of battles fought at sea, and ships
Sunk two years hence, the last eclipse ?
A Total overthrow giv'n the King
In Cornwall, horse and foot, next spring ;
And has he not point-blank foretold
Whats'er the close committee would ?

Butler also gives, in the following lines, an idea of some of the "baser uses" to which these astrologers lowered themselves :

Quoth Ralph, "Not far from here doth dwell
A cunning man, hight Sidrophel,
That deals in Destiny's dark counsels,
And sage opinions of the Moon sells ;
To whom all people, far and near,
On deep importances repair,
When brass and pewter hap to stray,
And linen shirks out of the way ;
When geese and pullen are seduced,
And sows of sucking-pigs are choused."

Another quackery founded on the love of gold was that of the divining-rod, or "virgula divina," which was a forked hazel-bough. The bearer holding the two ends, the rod was supposed to bend towards the earth when over buried treasure or a spring of water. It was only certain people who were gifted by nature with the power of being the medium by which the qualities of the divining-rod could be manifested. Burleigh received from Dr. Dee, the learned alchemist of Queen Elizabeth's reign, a proposition to search for mines and hidden treasures by this means. Disraeli quotes from the Life of Lilly, the Astrologer, how David Ramsay, his Majesty's clockmaker, having heard of a great treasure in the cloister of Westminster Abbey, came at midnight, accompanied by one of the elect, with the Mosaical rods, and—"on the west side of the cloyster the hazel-rods turned over one another." Ramsay had brought a

great sack to hold the treasure, when suddenly all the demons issued out of their beds in a storm, that "we verily believed the west end of the church would have fallen." The torches were suddenly extinguished, the rods would not move, and the treasure-seekers returned home faster than they came.

Among the minor quackeries trading on the desires of mankind, we must not omit to mention those pretending to inspire and secure love. Love-philtres were always much in demand, especially among the Greeks and Romans. There is little doubt that very powerful and even poisonous drugs and herbs entered into their composition, and they often caused the madness or death of the person to whom they were administered. A similar cheat was the "Powder of Attraction," which was supposed to draw all men after its possessor.

Of the quackeries in connection with health, perhaps the most extraordinary is that of sympathetic cures. The idea of this "Doctrine of Sympathy" was that, in consequence of some mysterious sympathy subsisting between men and things, a curative influence could be transmitted to a person at a distance from the supposed healer. Anything that had the blood of the wounded on it, if anointed with the sympathetic powder, would suffice to work the cure. Nay, even the weapon that had given the wound might be anointed, with the like curative result.

We find this belief satirised in Hudibras :

For by his side a pouch he wore,
Replete with strange hermetick powder,
That wounds nine miles point-blank would solder,
By skillful chemist with great cost
Extracted from a rotten post.

And again :

'Tis true a scorpion's oil is said
To cure the wounds the vermin made ;
And weapons, dressed with salves, restore
And heal the wounds they gave before.

Sir Gilbert Talbot, in the time of Charles the Second, related to the Royal Society his sympathetical cure of an English mariner, at Venice, who had been stabbed in four places, and bled for three days without intermission. Sir Gilbert sent for some of his blood, dressed it with the sympathetic powder, and sent a man to swathe the mariner's wound in linen. Before he reached the house, a mile distant, all the wounds had closed, and the patient was much comforted. In three days the mariner came to thank his preserver, but

he appeared like a ghost—"noe bloud left in his body."

Sir Kenelm Digby's remarkable garter cure, so often referred to, is related in so quaint and circumstantial a manner, that it may be worth while to quote part of it in his own words. Mr. James Howel had received a very severe wound in his hand endeavouring to part two friends who were fighting. Sir Kenelm having been requested to heal the wound, "I asked him then for anything that had the blood upon it, so he presently sent for his garter, wherewith his hand was first bound, and having called for a bason of water, as if I would wash my hands, I took a handful of powder of vitriol, which I had in my study, and presently dissolved it. As soon as the bloody garter was brought me, I put it within the bason, observing in the interim what Mr. Howel did, who stood talking with a gentleman in a corner of my chamber, not regarding at all what I was doing; but he started suddenly, as if he had found some strange alteration in himself. I asked him what he ailed. 'I know not what ails me, but I find that I feel no more pain; methinks that a pleasing kind of freshness, as it were a wet cold napkin, did spread over my hand, which hath taken away the inflammation that tormented me before.' I replied, 'Since you feel already so good an effect of my medicament, I advise you to cast away all your plasters, only keep the wound clean, and in a moderate temper 'twixt heat and cold.'" Sir Kenelm gives further details, and states that "in five or six days the wounds were cicatrized and entirely healed." He also informs us that the King and the Duke of Buckingham were both very curious to know the circumstances of this business.

This sympathetic powder made great progress in public opinion, and was credited by the most learned men of the age. Eventually some curious investigator tried the effect of keeping the wound closed up without using any of the powder, and this plan was found equally efficacious.

Robert Fludd prescribed, in his *Mystical Anatomy*, a Cabalistical, Astrological, and Magnetic Unguent, to heal the wounds of a person at any distance. This unguent, mixed with a drop of blood from the wound, and applied to the instrument which inflicted it, would, however distant the patient, act and heal by the virtue of sympathy. This was commonly known as the *Weapon Salve*.

Even the great Lord Bacon believed in the sympathetic curing of warts, which wasted away as the lard that had rubbed them rotted away on the post to which it was nailed. Hudibras's conjuror could

Cure warts and corns with application
Of med'cines to th' imagination;
Fright agues into dogs, and scare
With rhymes, the toothache and catarrh.

These last two lines allude to the belief in the charm, a form of words, sometimes in verse, supposed to possess some power of healing, hurting, or protecting; sometimes recited, sometimes written out and worn on the person as an amulet. The word *Abracadabra*, written in the form of a triangle, on paper or parchment, and hung about the neck, was considered a cure for all kinds of fever. Among Asiatics the wearing of charms is universal at the present day. Much-prized amulets in the Middle Ages were coins of St. Helena, mother of Constantine, marked with a cross, and perforated for hanging round the neck; they were thought specially good against epilepsy. The Hon. Robert Boyle attributed the cure of a hæmorrhage to wearing "some moss from a dead man's skull." Wren—father of Sir Christopher—says: "I have heard it avouched by persons of great quality contemporary to the old Lord Burleigh, Lord Treasurer of Englande, that he always wore a blue ribbon (next his leg, garter-wise) studded thick with these shels of the grey anayles, to allaye the heate of the goute, and that he profest that hee found manifest relief in it, and that if by chance hee left itt off, the pain would ever return most vehementlye."

An amulet which has its believers even in the present day, is the caul. It is by no means an uncommon thing to see one advertised for sale. Children born with one are supposed to turn out fortunate, as are also the purchasers. It is believed to make the possessor eloquent, and is considered a certain protection against drowning. Sir John Offley, of Madeley Manor, Staffordshire—whose will was proved at Doctors' Commons in 1658—devised a caul—which had covered him when born—set in jewels to his daughter, thereafter to her son. The caul was not to be concealed, or sold out of the family.

A loadstone worn as an amulet was said to cure headache, whilst one held in the hand gave great relief in the gout, and it was anciently believed that powder of loadstones was good for dropsies and

ruptures. Weapons touched with loadstones were supposed to give wounds unusually malignant and difficult to cure. We are told that an ancient King of Ceylon had all his food served in dishes of loadstone, conceiving he thereby preserved the vigour of youth. Powdered loadstone was also an ingredient in love-philtres, and was mixed in plasters to draw out arrow-heads, etc., from wounds.

Many remedies seem to have found credence principally because of their extraordinary or nasty nature. Sir K. Digby related that the calcined powder of toads reverberated, applied in bags upon the stomach of a pestiferate body, cures it by several applications. Sir Kenelm married a most beautiful lady, and in order to preserve her beauty dieted her on capons fattened with the flesh of vipers. One is not surprised to find that the fair subject of his experiments died at an early age.

Powdered mummies being difficult to procure, were, of course, considered most valuable in medicine. Sir T. Browne, alluding to this, says: "Mummy is become merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams." Unicorn's-horn, powdered, was an antidote against poison; but this remedy must have been very scarce. Another antidote which fetched a great price was bezoar, a concretion found in the stomachs of goats and antelopes.

After such remedies as these, it is quite refreshing to turn to the belief in May-dew. Ladies used to go out on the 1st of May, we are told, to gather the dew, which was supposed to give a beautiful bloom when applied to their faces. Early rising and country walks are no bad recipes for this; but the custom could not have been confined to the 1st of May, for Pepys, in his diary, under date of May 28th, 1667, says: "My wife away down with Jane and W. Hewer, to Woolwich, in order to a little ayre, and to lie there to-night, and so to gather May-dew to-morrow morning, which Mrs. Turner hath taught her is the only thing in the world to wash her face with; and I am content with it." Can we wonder that a later generation should believe in the nostrums of the quack who advertised that he "by the blessing, cures the yellow-jaundice, green-sickness, scurvy, dropsy, surfeits, long sea-voyages, campaigns, etc., as some people that have been lame these thirty years can testify."

AFTER THE WRECK.

WHAT of the ocean's roar?
The sea lies smiling in the sun,
The sparkling wavelets leap and run
To kiss the pebbled shore;
Where are the waves that, mountains high,
Engulfed last night a goodly bark,
And drew her down through waters dark,
Beneath a sullen sky?

How soft the west wind blows!
We, sitting, watch another ship,
Whose sails, wide-spreading, seem to dip
And curtsy as she goes;
And sailing outward from our sight,
How strong she looks, how trim and gay!
How safe the water seems to-day,
For all the wreck last night!

Here, by the dawn tide tost,
Already doth the driftwood lie;
Already fades some mother's eye,
With anguish for the lost.
Yet earth rejoices and is gay,
And yet, though tolls the village bell
For strangers dead a deathly knell,
The sea looks safe to-day.

Give me thy little hand,
Rise up, dear heart, and let us go
Through some green lane where May flowers
blow,
And sweeten all the land;
Come, let us wander out of sight
Of this fair-seeming, treacherous sea,
That speaks of wreck to thee and me,
For all to-day's delight.

It smiles beneath the sky,
As though its foamy, dimpling waves
Danced o'er delightsome bowers, not graves
Where dead men's bones do lie;
It looks as life looked, dear, to us,
In that glad morning of our days;
When we went forth in sunny ways
The world was smiling thus.

Ah, love! we suffered wreck;
What angry winds and waters dark
Blew over and engulfed our bark,
And swept us from her deck!
There was no life-boat to put out,
No spar to cling to, no frail raft
As refuge from our drowning craft,
By storm-winds dashed about.

No harbour from the storm,
No friendly hands stretched out to lift
Our drowning fortunes from the drift,
To shelter safe and warm;
The world forsook us, love; our cries
Died on the wind of sordid strife,
And we looked helpless, husband, wife,
Into each other's eyes.

Then from despair was born
A fonder love, a deeper trust,
A treasure safe from moth and rust,
A scorn of the world's scorn;
I lost my gold in port and mart,
I lost my heritage of land;
I found a treasure in thy hand,
And love's gold in thine heart.

Lean closer, closer, dear,
Now let the tears drop if they will,
The sun behind is shining still,
We bid a truce to fear;
The night of wreck is overpast,
And though we trust life's sea no more,
We watch the vessels from the shore,
Together to the last.

We have no argosies,
 No stately ships to come and go,
 From lands of sun to lands of snow,
 No chance of worldly prize;
 But I have thee, beneath the sun
 Of all God's creatures dearest—dear,
 And thou, lovè, hast thy refuge here,
 Till all our days be done!

PLAYING WITH FIRE.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

To those guests who were in the secret, Mrs. Featherstone's dinner-party on May 3rd, 188—, was a matter of no small amusement and interest; whilst even to those who were mere outsiders, and unacquainted with more than the superficial aspects of society, the occasion was no ordinary one. Leonard Dalzell was to be present, after more than a year's absence from London, and was to introduce his wife—a bride of two months' standing—to that small portion of his friends who were dining with Mrs. Featherstone.

Those who were not behind the scenes were yet a little excited at the prospect of meeting a man whose History of Italian Literature had, by a rare combination of beauty of style and depth of learning, managed both to captivate the general public and satisfy the learned critics, whilst the presence of his bride lent a certain air of romance to the successful author's reappearance. But to the initiated the occasion was rendered doubly piquant by the presence of a lady whom surely no one but Mrs. Featherstone would have asked to meet the bridal couple. Sydonie Marvel, who was sitting so quietly and composedly in the low armchair, talking with Sir Joseph Towers, had been, as everyone knew, engaged for some months to Leonard Dalzell. Everyone knew this fact—that is, everyone who knew anything, amongst whom must not be included the hostess, who was only conscious of extreme delight at having secured two such eminent personages for one dinner-party.

More than one pair of eyes glanced furtively, but none the less curiously, at Sydonie as the Dalzells were announced, but without result, for she went on unconcernedly in her talk with Sir Joseph, and only looked up when Leonard Dalzell made his way to her side.

She put out her hand cordially, and spoke with a certain suppressed enthusiasm which marked her more emotional utterances.

"I am so glad to see you in England

again, and to tell you in person how much I have rejoiced in your success."

He bowed gravely in answer; his tongue was not so ready as hers, and besides, she had been expecting and preparing for his arrival during the whole time that she had been listening to Sir Joseph's common-places, whilst he had not had more than a moment in which to compose himself to meet her.

Perhaps she guessed what kept him silent, for she went on, changing her tone to one of delightfully easy friendship:

"I hope you are going to stay, now that you are back in England. You have been very much missed. I must own that I could not bear to hear of your going away again."

Sir Joseph, overhearing the friendly, almost affectionate, tone of the little speech, thought to himself how absurd people were in talking as if these two had ever been engaged. Why, it was obvious that Miss Marvel cared nothing for Dalzell—which possibly was the impression Miss Marvel intended to create.

It was a strange experience for Leonard to feel her hand once more upon his arm as they went down to dinner together—still stranger to look down the staircase to the large hall across which Mr. Featherstone was leading the bride in her trailing white gown. The situation was one which, a year ago, he would have declared to be a hideous impossibility, but which now seemed bearable and even enjoyable. What words of passionate love, of angry reproaches, had passed between him and this woman, who was nothing to him now but a chance acquaintance!

"You were so quick to congratulate me that I am obliged to appear as a mere copyist," he said, as soon as they were seated; "but I incur the risk in order to tell you that I have seen and that I appreciate Psyche."

"She is well hung, is she not?" asked his companion with a pleased smile; "but tell me, did she satisfy you?"

Her voice was eager with anticipation, perhaps he felt a certain delight in answering her in a half-jesting way.

"Do our own ideas ever satisfy other people?" he asked.

"Ah!" she sighed. "Don't wander off into general statements! I am as vain and egotistical as of old. I want you to talk about my picture, not about pictures in the abstract."

Something in her appeal touched a chord

in his memory, and he dropped his half-bantering tone, and spoke to her in a simple straightforward way.

"Well, if I am to find fault with Psyche, it is the old fault that you try to show too much. Everything in your works has some hidden meaning—you can't paint a butterfly on a rose, and be content with the effect of beauty you have created. You must paint them to represent some allegory—every flower and every insect under your hands becomes a vehicle for a sermon. You ride the nineteenth century hobby-horse of symbolism too hard. Take care you do not ride it to death."

Miss Marvel listened very patiently to his criticism, and seemed to consider carefully what he had said :

"It is Swedenborg, is it not," she asked at length, "who declares that the world is built by correspondences, and that all outward things are but types of spiritual ones?"

"I have no doubt that he has maintained that or a similar absurdity," Leonard made answer dryly; "and you had best beware, Sydonie, or your passion for mysticism will land you in Swedenborgianism—or whatever may be its modern substitute."

The name once so familiar and so dear had slipped involuntarily from his lips. At the sound she looked up at him quickly with a pair of grey eyes thrilling with meaning; but she dropped them again before he had finished speaking, and, when she answered him, her long black lashes lay upon her pale cheeks.

"I forgive you this time, but never speak to me again like that."

Her tones lingered upon the word "never" with warning emphasis. Mrs. Browning speaks of an "apocalyptic never," and Leonard, recalling the phrase, felt that there might be cases in which the expression was not overstrained. He had time to consider its meaning and application, for Miss Marvel did not speak to him again during dinner.

In the drawing-room afterwards one or two of the ladies were amused to watch Miss Marvel's introduction of herself to Mrs. Leonard Dalzell, and to compare the two women as they sat talking together.

Sydonie managed the whole business, as she did everything which fell to her lot, with perfect self-possession and grace, and without any betrayal of a consciousness that she was observed—a fact of which she was, however, fully aware.

"I do not know if your husband has mentioned my name to you as that of an old friend, Mrs. Dalzell?" she said, holding out her hand to the bride. "I have known him for a great many years, but it is quite possible that he has never had time to tell you of all his former acquaintances, so I must introduce myself—I am Sydonie Marvel."

Her name created less effect than she expected. The young bride rose and took her hand shyly, and rather awkwardly.

"I don't think I have ever heard it," she made answer, evidently divided between truth and courtesy. "But I am very glad to know you."

"There is a foolish belief," said Sydonie, gathering courage from the other's evident ignorance and embarrassment, "that wives invariably dislike and distrust their husbands' old friends. I always deny the truth of those general statements, and I am sure they do not apply in your case."

Beatrice Dalzell said that she hoped not, and then relapsed into silence. She had been brought up in a happy but conventional home, where society talk was limited to certain safe subjects, and where a discussion of general principles would have been considered as being in very bad taste—almost as much so as a discussion on religion or politics.

Miss Marvel at once understood her companion's state of mind, and altered her tone as she sat down by her side on the low sofa.

"I think you met Mr. Dalzell abroad last year; was it in Switzerland?"

"No; we were both in the Black Forest—at a little village where there was some very good fishing, which both my uncle and Mr. Dalzell enjoyed."

"Oh, he was always a devoted fisherman; and you—did you fish?"

Beatrice smiled, showing a row of teeth as white and regular as her companion's. She was as much amused as a child who is startled at the notion that you do not know his nurse's name, or some other fact of supreme importance to himself.

"No, I don't fish, but Alison and I used to work and read together. Alison is my sister."

"You are lucky to have a sister," sighed Miss Marvel; she felt sure that now she had found the note to which this quiet commonplace nature would vibrate, and she was a little startled when Beatrice bluntly asked :

"Have not you one?"

"Oh yes; but we are separated by many, many miles of sea and land."

Beatrice's face softened into sympathy; she had never dreamt that there could be a division between sisters, wider than the widest continent, deeper than the deepest sea, and Sydonie was not inclined to explain. She went on with her interrogative conversation which she had her own reasons for pursuing.

"I hope you enjoyed the Black Forest; did you stay there long?"

"We left on September 17th—just after we were engaged," Mrs. Dalzell replied, with a certain pride in her engagement.

"Ah, the country must have been looking beautiful then," and Sydonie made a rapid calculation. Her letter of September 13th must have reached Leonard two days later, and it must have been whilst he was still smarting from the effects of it—or rather when he was crushed by the suddenness and bitterness of the blow, that he had rushed into this engagement. Sydonie felt that her heart grew warmer to her rival.

When the men came up from the dining-room, Leonard paused near the door to look at the two women in conversation with one another. They formed a pretty picture as the light fell upon their graceful figures. No one would have denied the beauty of the younger lady. Beatrice could count at least ten years fewer than Sydonie; her features were more regular, her cheeks more rounded, her colour brighter; but the elder woman had a grace of expression always changing, a look of fragile delicacy, and an exquisitely-formed hand and arm, which gave her considerable advantages over her companion. She was not dressed in white—as she generally loved to be—Leonard noticed with surprise, but in some soft, clinging, black material, relieved here and there with bunches of exquisite half-blown, pale-pink roses, one or two of which had dropped their petals upon her dark drapery. He had never seen her look so strangely charming before. What a contrast she was to the stiff figure beside her, in its fashionably-trimmed skirts and its unrelieved white!

Sydonie had carefully studied her dress for that evening, having avoided the usual whiteness of her attire from a desire to escape comparison with a younger and fairer rival, who would have eclipsed her less brilliant charms. But whatever her motive, she had succeeded to perfection—in one man's eyes at least.

"I have been talking said in a low tone, when side; "I must tell you her. We shall see a; another, I hope."

"I hope so too. I gratification to me to I friends."

"And in return will for me? Will you let me friends again, as we used ago?"

Her voice sank lower he heard her words and ing. There had been in a short space of time w been lovers, and she mea to return to those days ness of passion had dist neither too cordial nor t was honest in what she honest in his promise th friends—with an empha —as of old. But there wilful blindness, even w! really shuts out all objec

CHAPTER

MR. and Mrs. Mill were satisfied with their nie Beatrice had told her a hurry, that Mr. Dalzell h then paused for words bad marriage for a gi small fortune, and, besi sure to make his way i for the girl herself, she of his worldly position only knew that he was a one of the best and nob lived.

"Do you think yo Beatrice?" he had ask tender look on his expre angry, bitter spirit had in her answer.

He did not pretend loved her, but he mean quiet, gentle, pretty cr failing tenderness was varying moods of the jilted him, and upon w! to revenge himself.

His motives do not see set down in black and be sure that they were complexion when seen t sphere of his own mind him, and he meant to m her happy. She should

ungratified that he could fulfil; it would be an easy task to satisfy the claims of so simple and unexacting a nature. During his brief engagement to Sydonie she had claimed, if not every hour of his time, at all events an account of how every hour was spent. She had been jealous of his friends, his pursuits, his very work, whilst Beatrice, in her northern home, was satisfied with a short weekly letter, and the outline of his doings. He realised the vast difference between the passionate love of a woman of genius and the girlish attachment of a commonplace nature, and congratulated himself on the fact that Beatrice could neither give nor claim the deeper feelings of an intense emotion. From all of which it may be concluded that Mr. Dalzell, although a man of considerable literary power and increasing literary reputation, was not deeply skilled in the secrets of the human heart, or fully capable of discriminating between the closely allied effects of love and vanity.

The inevitable result which follows all selfish acts dogged Leonard's married life. He was disappointed in its effects upon his happiness and peace of mind, and as these were all that he had considered in the step he had taken, it is obvious that the matter was a failure. He was too generous to accuse his wife of anything but a passive share in the disaster, and he was genuinely glad that she showed herself so contented and comfortable in circumstances which became every day more wearisome to him.

"Does not Mrs. Dalzell find the time at Hendon hang very heavily on her hands?" asked Sydonie of him one day, as he was lounging on a divan in her studio, watching her painting.

He had fallen back into his old friendly habit of looking in at all hours of the day, to criticise her work and advise her as to its progress.

"Mrs. Dalzell," he replied with cheerful carelessness, "is occupied with her household affairs. There is not a single duty that she ever leaves undone, and these occupy her from morning till evening."

Sydonie was satisfied with his reply. It reduced her rival to dimensions of a comfortably commonplace sort, whilst seeming to acknowledge her merits.

Beatrice and she had interchanged calls, but there was little to produce intimacy or even friendship between them; as Sydonie put it, there was no rapprochement; different tastes, different interests, different habits, formed a wide gulf, which there was

no keen desire on either side to bridge over, nor was Leonard desirous of promoting a friendship which might involve painful complications both for him and for his wife, who could only suffer at any explanation of the former relations between him and Miss Marvel. Meantime he saw Sydonie often; he came to London every day to his club or to the British Museum, as Beatrice quite understood, and as was the case—only his club was within a half-hour's walk of Sydonie's studio, and many of the hours he spent in the reading-room of the Museum were employed in looking out some detail of architecture or costume for his artist friend, to whom he must then pay a hurried visit for the purpose of explaining the result of his researches. To both of them these meetings became the most important part of the day; now that he was married he felt that he was incurring no risk either for her or for himself, and she fully enjoyed that liberty of action which the last quarter of the nineteenth century has allowed freely to women with a career. There was a piquancy given to Leonard's visits, by the very fact that they were unknown or unwelcome to his wife, and Sydonie could not resist the triumph of finding herself, at thirty, more seductive than a rival ten years her junior.

As to Beatrice, she would as soon have suspected her husband of paying too much attention to another woman as of smothering her in her sleep, or stealing and pawning her few jewels. If she sometimes felt that married life was wanting in that perfectness of confidence of which she had dreamt, she sternly repressed the thought, declaring to herself that any failure must be the result of her own want of power to understand her husband's wider views and aims.

When he stayed away late into the night she would never own even to herself that the hours were long and lonely, and she always met him with a smile of welcome which might well have won his heart if he had not grown to consider it mechanical—a word he was fond of applying mentally to her actions. She was very busy during his absence; she spent long hours in her little garden, which bloomed like a small Eden under her efforts; she paid and received the numerous duty-calls which were expected of her, and she learnt to know some of her poorer neighbours intimately. She was not a clever or a cultivated woman, but she was never an idle one.

One confession which she had made shortly after her marriage had at first annoyed her husband. She owned to him that she positively disliked music—a fact sufficiently lamentable in itself, as proving her deficiency of intellectual sympathy, but one which became doubly pitiable when openly avowed, as proving her absolute ignorance of what the world expects from the wife of such a man as Dalzell. He grew, however, to regard her weakness more complacently as the summer rolled by, and he would leave her to go to the opera or some of the concerts in which he passionately delighted.

“Shall you go alone?” she asked sometimes with the fearlessness of absolute confidence. “I am afraid you will find it dull.”

“I am going to meet Mrs. Marshall and her cousin,” he would reply carelessly, without explaining that her cousin was Sydonie Marvel.

The inevitable result was delayed by the general rush from London in the month of August, but the delay did nothing to open Leonard's eyes to the peril of his position; it only proved to him how absolutely necessary Sydonie's sympathy and Sydonie's society was to his life.

He rushed back to London on some frivolous pretext, and then hurried to Devonshire, where he had heard she was sketching. He would only stay a day with her before he returned to the North; all the vague jealousies and uncertainties which had haunted him before having become living realities since he had seen Bowles, the landscape painter, in constant and welcome attendance upon her and her cousin. His jealousy was irritated and kept alive by his consciousness that he had absolutely no right to the feeling, which yet served to bring Sydonie perpetually to his mind. When he met her in October he was indignant because she spoke enthusiastically of her holiday. She enjoyed the tribute involved in the dark looks and depreciatory words with which he answered her outbursts of delight about Devonshire and its beauties, but, as time went on, she began to be alarmed at the evident strength of his feelings, and decided to bring matters to a crisis. She was wanting neither in sense nor generosity, although her vanity had for a time prevented her from deriving any benefit from either quality, and she was resolved to bring to an end a complication which threatened to become painful and com-

promising. The conclusion was not, however, exactly according to her programme. It was one November evening as they were chatting together, that she suddenly rose and said to him, without any warning:

“Now, Mr. Dalzell, you are to go, if you please. I never get any work done while you are here, and besides——”

He stood up in his turn, and spoke in solemn answer to her flippant words:

“So you are going to send me away again? You did it once before—do you remember? Have we not both had cause enough to regret that the process must be repeated?”

She did not answer; her face turned whiter than its wont, and her hands trembled a little.

“Sydonie,” he went on, forgetful of everything but the woman before him, “you know you loved me then—you know you love me now—just as I have never loved, and never shall love, any woman but you.”

The silence which fell upon them was very hard to break. If life be regarded as a drama, there are moments when the actors must long for a curtain to fall and bring their scene to a creditable close. Both the man and woman felt that credit far from them as they stood together in that accusing silence.

“Go,” she said at last; “go at once! I will write to you to-morrow.”

He obeyed her, and went out into the darkness.

It was the next evening when he was at dinner with his wife that the letter was handed to him, but it was not until Beatrice had been long in bed and asleep that he opened it as he sat by the fire in his study. What he had hoped or feared he hardly knew, but the letter was one to quicken his sense of shame and his desire for better things.

“I might dare much to remain your friend,” wrote Sydonie: “the slander of the world and even my own accusing conscience. I would bear both one and the other if I felt that I made your life a brighter and happier one by allowing you to come and see me—by giving you that sympathy and help which you seem to need so sorely. But there are other considerations which must outweigh even my yearning to fulfil in part all that I once hoped to be to you. In this unhappy affair of your marriage there is only one really innocent actor. I, by my impulsive letter;

you, by your equally impulsive engagement; have both deserved to suffer—although not so deeply as we suffer now—but your wife has absolutely nothing with which to reproach herself. The more I am convinced of the truth of your statement that you do not love her, that you never have loved her—and I do believe it absolutely—the more urgently do I feel that we both owe her a terrible debt, and that we must spare her at any cost of additional suffering to ourselves. For that reason I bid you go away for a time, and keep away from me until you feel that you can look upon me as what I am and always shall be till death—your friend,

S. M."

As he finished the letter he groaned aloud. Every word he read seemed to prove the worth of the woman he had lost, and to show the generosity and beauty of her soul. It never occurred to him that the very opportunity for generosity may be a proof that its finer forms are lacking, or that one woman could wish for no sweeter vengeance upon another than thus to plead her successful rival's claim to pity and forbearance.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Leonard stated his suddenly-formed determination of a solitary three weeks' walking tour in Yorkshire, he was careful to suggest to his wife that she should have her sister with her for a few days, as he was afraid she might be lonely; but she answered him with a smile:

"Oh no! I have plenty to do, Leonard. I shall be all right, but I am afraid you will find it very dull."

She knew little of the companion which tramped by her husband's side along the sea-cliffs and across the dreary Yorkshire moors. A man must, when he finds himself alone with Nature, think out those personal problems he has been shirking or avoiding; and Leonard, at the end of his three weeks' tour, was healthier in mind and body than he had been before. He wrote two or three times to his wife, but he was careful to give her no address where she could communicate with him—he was resolute in his determination to be alone.

When, at the beginning of December he let himself into his little hall in the early twilight, his heart was full of the many hours of suffering and endurance which yet lay before him, but he did not shrink from the future, for he was conscious of a certain subdued pleasure in the struggle, and, besides, he was resolved that nothing

should separate him finally and entirely from Sydonie. He opened the drawing-room door gently and looked in; the fire was low in the grate, and for the moment he was unable to distinguish his wife; then he saw her leaning back in her arm-chair, her felt hat on her lap, her head thrown back, and her eyes closed. Something in her attitude was unfamiliar to him, and he said gently in a startled voice:

"Beatrice!"

She woke suddenly with a sound between a sob and a scream, and then sat upright without speaking.

"Beatrice dear, have I startled you?"

She rose to her feet as she answered him:

"Oh no, no. Is it you, Leonard—have you come back? Are you better for your trip?"

Was it only the surprise that made her voice so unfamiliar to her husband?

"Beatrice, what is wrong?" he asked as he took her hand in his. It burnt his fingers as it lay there passively.

"Nothing, Leonard—nothing. You would like some tea, would you not?"

As she spoke she moved towards the bell, but, before she reached it, she swayed and fell to the ground. Leonard was not in time to catch her, but he knelt in an agony of terror beside the prostrate and motionless figure. How the servants and the doctor came he never knew, but he suddenly was aware that the room was brilliantly lighted, and that busy hands were bringing Beatrice back to life.

"A touch of low fever, caught in some of her visits to the cottages," was the doctor's verdict next morning. "Mrs. Dalzell is so young and strong that the matter is not likely to be a serious one."

But as the days went on his tone altered; he had never seen so little power of rallying in any young patient; there seemed to have been some terrible shock to the nervous system—could Mr. Dalzell give him any information?

With a sinking heart Mr. Dalzell made his enquiries of the servants, who were, however, not able to give him any intelligence, further than the fact that ever since his departure, Mrs. Dalzell had complained of terrible neuralgia—had eaten little or nothing, and had spent whole hours of the night pacing up and down the room—"to quiet the pain, sir, as she said," the respectable middle-aged housemaid had added with tears in her eyes; "although it stood to reason that she

couldn't get better as long as she didn't eat or sleep, and kept taking those long walks, for she would go out every day, and, judging by her boots, must have walked miles."

Leonard's conscience left him no peace. He sought anxiously for some token of that which he dreaded to discover. He questioned the servants as to his wife's visitors and the letters she had received—the doctor's enquiry justified him in making the closest inquisition—but he was unsuccessful in his work, although he gave up to it every moment he could spare from the sick-room. He was a most tender, watchful nurse, and Dr. Giles was almost justified in his remark to his wife that Leonard was the best husband he had ever seen, and that he only hoped Mrs. Dalzell had appreciated him. For Beatrice showed but little consciousness of his presence, sometimes smiling faintly when he spoke to her, but generally lying in a stupor, watching the leafless vine-branches which beat against her window-pane.

She was a most obedient patient, never complaining, and always ready to carry out the wishes of those about her—only she would not speak. It seemed as if speech was an effort beyond her powers.

"Beaty dear," asked her husband one day as he sat by her side, "has anything happened to alarm or grieve you whilst I was away?"

She only shook her head, nor could his searching enquiries win from her any word or any sign but that.

At last he could bear no longer his own agony of doubt. He decided to discover the truth. Kneeling by her side, where he could see her colourless face and closed eyes, he asked her (so cruel may a man become under the consciousness of his own misdeeds):

"Beatrice, you seem very lonely and dull with no one but me. Would you like someone to sit with you? Shall I ask Sydonie Marvel to come?"

His dry lips would hardly form the name, but its utterance did not affect that impassive face for a moment.

Beatrice gently shook her head, and then said, after a pause:

"I should like to have Alison."

Leonard was deeply thankful for the calmness which exorcised his haunting dread, and felt, too, with a little throb of self-justification, that the only wish his wife had expressed was one in relation to her sister, not to himself.

Alison came, and Beatrice was contented; but her content did not show itself in words, only the smile came a little oftener to her lips. She spoke once:

"Love me always, Ally dear—even afterwards."

And this was the only consciousness she showed of the swiftly approaching end, which those around her expected day by day.

Once, indeed, Alison heard her murmur, "It is better so—it is better so;" but when she bent closer over her sister, Beatrice opened her eyes, and looking at her, said distinctly, "Always be good to Leonard, Alison, for he has been very kind to me," as if she feared that the murmured words might have done him wrong.

This protest was the last her faithful heart brought to her trembling lips. In a few more days the sisters were separated by a veil which Alison could not pierce.

"You must comfort yourself, Leonard, by feeling that you had made her happy," sobbed Alison through her tears, "and remember it was the last thing she said to me."

And so strange a contradiction is human nature that the very fact which ought to have been the sharpest sting to his grief was, in fact, a consolation to him.

He turned his back at once upon England and his past. He did not even attempt to see Sydonie, for the dead Beatrice was a restraint upon him, which the living wife had never been. Only he wrote a few lines, and posted them on the day he started for Marseilles. The contents were simply these lines:

"I am leaving home for a year. In twelve months I shall return."

CHAPTER IV.

THE conventional year of mourning was nearly over, and Mr. Dalzell was back in England. His first visit was to Sydonie, and, that over, he returned to his own home, which he had left on that walking-tour, just twelve months before, under the shadow of a hopeless and desperate love. As he paced up and down his study, there was no thought of his dead wife in his heart. His whole being was occupied with Sydonie. He still felt the clasp of her hand in his; her eyes still looked into his; her words still lingered in his ears.

I tell you I pace up and down
This garret crowned with love's best crown,
And feasted with love's perfect feast.

He began quoting the words almost

unconsciously, and then broke short with a happy laugh.

"My Sydonie! So far from killing 'body and soul, and hope and fame,' you will help me to the perfection of all—my dear, dear love!"

He was too much agitated to write or read to-night. He would look over her letters—those letters which had lain untouched since he had received and shut away her last words, bidding him forget his love for her. With a happy smile at the contrast between now and then, he unlocked his writing-table drawer, and opened it. But his mood suddenly changed, for the letters, instead of lying in an orderly heap, were loosed from their band, and were scattered about the drawer. One lay open, as if it had been thrown down half-read. With the terrible consciousness of a man who feels the first cold wave from a rushing tide which will ultimately swallow up and destroy him, he rang the bell. The housemaid who answered it was startled at his look, and still more at the imperious manner with which he pointed to the drawer.

"Who has touched this during my absence? The papers have been disturbed."

"No one has been near it, sir. I have never left the house—no, not for an hour—since you went away."

"Someone must have touched it, I tell you."

The maid looked puzzled; then her brow cleared.

"Oh, sir—yes. I beg your pardon; it was Mrs. Dalzell. One day, whilst you was away, she said she was going to put your papers tidy for you, and I saw her begin at that table."

"It could not have been so," he said, struggling with his deadly sense of certainty; "the drawer was locked."

"She said one of her keys opened it, sir, and I dare say she forgot to put the things tidy, as she was taken ill just afterwards."

He signed to her to leave him—he knew she spoke the truth—there was no need for him to search for the little bunch Beatrice had carried about with so much housewifely pride; no need to fit one of her keys and turn it in the lock; for he knew all that had happened as clearly as if he had stood at her side and seen her frozen look of terror as she read those words of his. There they all were—Sydonie's love-letters, with the last which she wrote to him two days before he had spoken his first

words of love to Beatrice, bearing the ill-fated witness of its date. He seemed by the exaltation of his feeling to realise what she must have suffered when she stood where he was standing now. A distant footstep roused him; he remembered how she had paced up and down her room "to quiet the pain," and he knew now against what pain she had struggled—what pain she had carried with her into the silence of the grave.

Sydonie's last letter lay open, as if the reader had closed the drawer upon it, unable to finish or to touch it; but those words, "The more I am convinced of the truth of your statement that you do not love her—that you never have loved her," stared him in the face, and he could guess with what terrible significance they must have blazed out to his wife. He fell upon his knees with his head upon his hands, for he realised, or thought he realised, all the suffering he had inflicted upon an innocent heart, whose only fault had been its love for him. He thought he realised all; but to appreciate the possibilities of suffering which lie in a human soul one must share something of its purity and singleness of purpose. Nevertheless his agony was a sharp one; he seemed to look at the past in a different light—to see his conduct as it must have looked to her whose heart had broken when she understood it. He pushed the drawer suddenly and roughly away; as he did so something round and glittering rolled from amongst the papers and fell to the floor. He picked it up mechanically and laid it in the palm of his hand. As he did so he saw it was his wife's wedding-ring, for which he remembered he had instituted a vain search. He knew how it came there: before Death had pronounced its final and irrevocable decree, Beatrice had separated herself from him. And then, remembering the smile on those pale lips—silent now for ever—which had never opened to accuse or to reproach him, he cried aloud in his anguish for some sign of forgiveness from one who could not answer him.

There is a second Mrs. Dalzell now, who occupies her position far more worthily than her predecessor, whilst from the world's memory the fact of Beatrice's existence has almost faded. It knows much, however, of Leonard's successes, and more of his disappointments than he imagines; but it does not guess the real bitterness of his life or the readiness with which he

would sacrifice alike his success and his happiness to hear three words from lips that were once indifferent to him.

REFORMED WRITING.

THE admission of a system of phonography into the already plethoric curriculum of the London School Board, together with the deep and abiding interest evinced by the youth of our great towns in the acquirement of the art of shorthand, point most clearly to a swift advance of public opinion in regard to the reform of the present mode of writing. The first of these two signs is a forcible illustration of the attitude of a great authoritative body towards the movement; the second will be at once evident to those who have the habit of observation, apart from the mere perusal of statistical information in connection with the subject, and by many will be considered of much greater weight and far higher importance than the first.

We will take the instance of London as an unerring mirror of the provinces.

A knowledge of shorthand is fast becoming an essential in the mercantile service of London. Without it a young man, however capable in other respects, stands at a serious disadvantage; with it he commands an ampler salary, and occupies an immensely superior position in the great race. It is astonishing, nevertheless, that of the many thousands who make the art an object of study, so few are really competent and trustworthy writers. Speed is, beyond all cavil, the sole and guiding desideratum of the art; but where we have one man qualified to follow every syllable articulated by such a notoriously "easy" speaker as the Premier, there are crowds who, though approaching the task with "every confidence," would discover that they had not enough of that wholesome commodity, backed up by a modicum of ability, to carry them through. If, as is insisted, the average rate of public speaking is one hundred and twenty words per minute (and this is under the mark), two-thirds of that figure about represent the record of the fourth estate. Verbatim reporting is manifestly on the decline, chiefly by reason of its not being required except for private and official purposes; and to some extent on account of forensic incapacity. It is allowed that shorthand, whatever its perfection as an art, has not kept in the front in the matter of speed.

The accusation is a painful one to make, and the sin a sad one to admit, but the English, as a nation, are wholly behind Continental peoples in ordinary longhand writing. In fine, we have not a sufficiency of manual dexterity; in this electric age, the grand old accomplishment of good penmanship is accorded a cold shoulder. The "hand" of an Eton lad is an emphatic disgrace to him and his teachers; that of a board-school boy poor enough to call up a tear. Doubtless this will remain so whilst the present iniquitous fashion of illegibility flourishes in the van of the community. Mr. Gladstone's writing is bad enough, but he was wholly eclipsed by the late Dean Stanley, who enjoyed the melancholy distinction of being the absolutely worst writer of his day. What kind of figures these two eminent men would have cut as shorthand writers—or rather writers of shorthand—it is impossible to tell. One's longhand is a sure indication of stenographic power; legibility and speed in the former invariably characterise the latter. But as the combination is rare—as a good plain long hand mostly means loss of speed, and legibility is oftentimes sacrificed to speed—the average is bound to remain poor in both long and short hands.

Passing by the theory that the reformation of our spelling should and must go hand-in-hand with that of our writing, and in the conviction that under the ægis of Professor Skeat and Mr. Max Müller the controversy will not be allowed to slumber for want of ventilation, we are content for the present to confine ourselves to the question of the writing reform. At the outset it should be distinctly and unequivocally held, that in so drastic a change as the revolution of a national orthography, the proper pasturage of first principles is at the side of the cradle. The boy of sixteen, having been taught that t, h, o, u, g, h, t, spells "thought," and finding that the vast mass of his fellow-countrymen have been moulded in the same groove, is tacitly content to go down to his grave supremely ignorant of Fonotypic monstrosities and spelling reform. Equally the matured man, though laudably anxious to ameliorate the condition of himself and his fellow-creatures as the opportunity arises, is far too conservative to appreciate the beauty of "Dher ar meni artikelz in Magna Karta ov dhe grêtest valu tu Ingglishmen; but the thirty-ninth and fortieth ar lukt upon az dhe most

yúsfal tu dhe kúntri, and az dhe kórnerston ov dhe reits and libertiz ov Ingghliashmen."

From the days of Cicero downwards men have given anxious attention towards the abbreviation of the cumbersome methods of transferring thought and speech to paper. In this country alone some hundreds of systems of shorthand have at times seen the light; treatises without number have been written in furtherance of the reform, and every day inventors are busy and the popular Press clamorous but sceptical. And yet the visible result of all this is by no means worthy of the ages of research and groping after the hidden stone, which, unlike the philosophic pebble, is most certainly at this moment snugly hidden away in some obscure cranny of the mighty firmament of human discovery. Is there still any possible reason why the monosyllable already referred to—the word "thought"—should monopolise seven distinct parts of our alphabetical system? None at all. Should not the motions of the hand correspond with those of the tongue? The average speed of longhand writing is twenty words per minute—that is, it takes three seconds to record in common characters a word that was articulated in a sixth of the time.

In so far as the mere existence of the evil is concerned, a blissful accord prevails; it is in the administration of a remedy that unity falters and crumbles away and a new Babel is inaugurated. The battle of the styles rages furiously, and poor Mistress Knowledge sits in shackles and fetters. It is known that the work of the gallery-men in the House of Commons is arranged in what are called "turns"—that is, supposing Mr. Gladstone to be "up," the half-dozen or so representatives of a paper will follow one another in taking down the right hon. gentleman for a period of ten minutes each, so that by the time the retiring man has transcribed his notes, a fresh turn arrives, and so on throughout a debate. The Premier may possibly speak for an hour, and the oration, as it appears in the Morning Telephone on the following day, will have been divided amongst six reporters, each writing a different system of shorthand. Until we get unanimity where unanimity should find a natural home—namely, in the working of a great newspaper—it seems quixotic to nail the colours of reform to the mast.

The dexterity of our ordinary penmanship is at a low ebb. Can it be said that in the

place of this important loss we can turn towards any aggregate advantage in the direction of reform? Hardly. The most successful (commercially) system of phonography ever invented has now been before us a generation and a half; its primers still sell by thousands; but what has been done to convey the elements of abbreviated writing to the child just making his first blots? The real gist of the matter lies in the hereinbefore expressed sentiment that writing reform should, practically, attend the cradle. The crux of the reformers is to be found in the heart-breaking difficulty of teaching their would-be disciples how to unlearn their errors. Strokes, circles, curves, and dots, which in themselves represent the foundations of every system of shorthand extant, should take the place of the time-honoured pothooks and hangers. Early impressions and methods are the most lasting and the most difficult to eradicate. In childhood only do we behold the human intellect in its plastic state. The Russians, than whom no finer cigarette-makers are to be found, are trained to their delicate occupation from an infantile epoch, as the manipulation of the ingredients with sufficient celerity is one demanding considerable skill; and a good worker, irrespective of sex, will turn out fifteen hundred or two thousand per diem, but only after long years of apprenticeship. An adult beginner, however painstaking and persevering, can never hope to succeed. He may do his work thoroughly, and with exemplary exactitude, but never with the requisite speed. So, too, it is with children in regard to reformed writing. The immense majority of men and boys who adopt new systems, having lost the pliancy and tenderness of touch of early youth, seldom get beyond a speed of eighty or ninety words per minute. Often, indeed, the task is relinquished at a very early stage, on account of its seeming impossibility of attainment. Success—by which any speed between one hundred and two hundred words per minute, easily read immediately afterwards, may be reckoned—is due to exceptional application of individuals to study, and the exercise of an unwearying patience and persistence.

The action of the London School Board is hailed with delight by the more ardent spirits of the reform. Whether the system of systems be already in existence, or is awaiting exhumation, is a question we have endeavoured to avoid. Our sole purpose has been to insist that the time

for collective effort is ripe; that, in an age of speed and abbreviation like the present, our clumsy and unphilosophical mode of writing demands wholesale reform. The matter should be pressed to the educational authorities throughout the kingdom with no uncertain emphasis. The axe should be laid at the root, for measures that are not radical are incomplete. So long as our children are taught our existing ponderous method, and then when they are "grown-up" permitted the option of acquiring a more or less complex system of shorthand, so will the advance of the reform be spasmodic and halting, and the day when the entire community writes and speaks with equal readiness be the further delayed.

RUSSET AND GREEN.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER V.

THE Rev. John Barton was troubled in his mind, and although he did his best to keep the trouble at bay, and to go upon his daily round of duties in his old fashion, it increased upon him, and engrossed more of his thoughts in his spare hours than any subject outside his general work had ever yet had power to do. It was ridiculous and absurd, he told himself a dozen times a day, it was unmanly—but so it was, and his anger at the persistency with which the image of Mary Kennett's face dwelt upon his mental retina could not dispel it. The Rev. John had, in his nonage, gone through the experience which is common to us all. There are pretty girls elsewhere than in Paradise Street, and when, after his first emancipation from school and college, he had found himself thrown into the graceful and indolent society in which most men of his caste are content to pass their lives, he had known those fugitive fancies which help us all to recognise the great and final passion which comes to all men and women worthy of the name sooner or later. That period of idleness had been a short one, his ardent nature had never been at home in it, and he turned gladly towards the first opening which promised the hard and useful labour in which it had since spent all its forces.

Love, declares the sage, is the child of idleness and of fulness of bread, and the unremitting struggle which John Barton had waged with sin and poverty had left him little enough time for the cultivation of tender fancies, or opportunity

for their provocation. From month to month he never saw a woman with whom a man of his class could by any possibility have fallen in love. Paradise Street is not a likely hunting-ground for future wives of men of family and culture, and it was in such places that he passed ninety-nine per cent. of his waking hours. His strong sense of immediate duty kept him from much participation in the higher social pleasures which he had renounced when he took up his present walk of life. He had made his choice with open eyes, and had foregone the bright life of art and culture, the society of beautiful and accomplished women and intellectual men, which might have been his own by right, because he had clearly recognised the impossibility of leading a double existence, in which Paradise Street and Belgrave Square should have equal parts. He was no dilettante in charity—not at all the man to serve two such very different mistresses as fashion and philanthropy. If in the last ten years he had ever given a thought to the possibility of marriage, it had been to recognise the strong probability of his never entering into that state at all.

He had renounced love as ardently as most men seek it, and love had come to him, unsought and uninvited. The pity and interest which had moved him at the spectacle of youth and beauty unfriended and alone had been inevitable. He could acquit himself of all but the manly chivalry and friendship which had made him Mary Kennett's champion and helper in the hard fight on which she had entered; he had aided her as he would have aided any fellow-creature so solitary and so helpless. And as, with such natures as his, the strongest of all possible claims upon his goodwill was the circumstance of his having already rendered service, friendly interest had blossomed into friendship, and friendship into love, before he knew it. Such men as he are no willing captives in the earlier days of their slavery to the tyrant Love. They resent rather than invite the strange symptoms by which they are first made aware of the presence of the enemy in the citadel; they rebel against the seeming cowardice of confessing to themselves that another creature is necessary to their existence; the intrusion of a new interest, utterly apart from such as have so far influenced their lives, disturbs the even tenour of their way, and is unwelcome to them. Mr. Barton worked harder than ever, rose

earlier and lay down later, avoided as much as possible any chance of being thrown in Miss Kennett's way, but all to no avail. He was fairly taken, and kick as he might, the toils closed round him only the faster.

Despite this distrust of the passion of love which he shared in common with all men of action, there were other considerations which troubled him gravely. He knew nothing more of the woman he loved than a few hours of intercourse, spread over as many weeks of acquaintance, could teach him. She had the air, manners, and language of a lady. So strange a circumstance as her residence in the neighbourhood in which he had found her demanded some explanation, which he recognised his powerlessness to exact. Their fast-ripening friendship had as yet been marked by no confidence in this direction, and Mr. Barton, ardently as he longed for it, had been scrupulously careful to avoid the slightest appearance of wishing to pry into passages of her life, respecting which her desire for continued secrecy was unmistakably shown by her complete silence regarding them. He had been content to enjoy her society on such occasions as offered themselves, to treat her with the same perfect courtesy which he would have accorded to any lady who had become known to him in the most ordinary fashion, and to wait the time—if that time should ever come—when she would voluntarily explain why a woman possessing her beauty, culture, and distinction of manner should have chosen Paradise Street for her dwelling-place. The longer their acquaintance lasted the more assured he left that it must have been by misfortune, and by no fault of her own, that she found herself alone and friendless in London. He was too old a man, and had grown too familiar, during his two years of labour in the secret places of a great city, with the terrible possibilities of existence, to unquestioningly accept as an angel every woman who owned good manners and a pretty face. Stern experience had taught him that there are thousands of women in the world who have nothing of innocence but its outward seeming.

He believed her to be as pure and good as his own mother; but if—if—if he were mistaken in his estimate! Or if there were a stain upon her life of which she herself were innocent, but which yet had left its mark upon her? Clergyman as he was, he had yet enough of the old laic

element to have knocked down any man who had suggested to him the doubts which tormented him, but they were there all the same, and perplexed him cruelly. Like all men of the heroic stamp, he worshipped feminine purity, and the bare shadow of doubt or mistrust regarding the woman he loved was torture to him. His wife must be above suspicion.

The spring had worn away into summer; the torn trees had reached that hopeless, dusty stage of semi-decay which is their substitute for the gorgeous tints of early autumn of their brothers of the country; and his love had struggled with his doubts and conquered them, making them but food for its devouring appetite, and strengthened daily by their influences until his heart became too narrow to contain them both, and love held supreme possession. He had taken the great resolution before which he had trembled so long. He would ask Mary Kennett to become his wife. If she accepted, she would surely repay his confidence by voluntary confession; if not, he would be content to take her as he knew her—to ignore the past, and to feed his faith in her purity by his knowledge of her present. He felt strangely calm and strong that autumn evening, as he stood within her little sitting-room awaiting her, and watching the noisy children playing in the dusty street.

"You were good enough, if you remember," he said, when she had entered, and the usual greetings had been exchanged, "to express some interest in my work in this district. I have an hour or two to spare this evening, and if you will allow me to pass it so pleasantly, I should like to show you something—a night-school which I helped to start. It is not far from here, and a walk will do you good after your day's confinement."

She accepted the invitation, and they set out together. His mind was so full of the question he had determined to speak that evening, that for some time they walked together without a word passing between them, until Mary spoke.

"You have known Mrs. Travers a long time, have you not?"

"All my life. She is a relation of my mother's."

"She interests me very deeply," said Mary. "It cannot have been any common misfortune which made so good and generous a nature as hers contented with such a life as she leads. I am certain that she has one of the tenderest hearts in the

world; she has proved that by her kindness to me; and yet she never sees anyone—she has no friends, takes no interest in anything. It seems so strange.”

“It was not a very uncommon misfortune,” answered her companion—“the misconduct of a son. He was her only child, and she loved him very dearly.”

“Was his name Roland?” asked the girl. He felt her arm tremble in his, and her voice was unsteady as she asked the question.

“Yes,” he answered in some surprise. “Has she spoken to you of him?”

“No—never. But I have heard her muttering the name, and once she frightened me terribly by crying it out aloud while I was reading to her. Did you know him too—this Roland?” she asked with the same hesitation with which she had before mentioned the name.

“Yes. We were at school together, and at Oxford at the same college. He disgraced himself—I will not tell you how, but very deeply—and has not been heard of for the last twelve years.”

“Do not think me impertinent or inquisitive,” she said after a pause. “I am so deeply interested in all that affects Mrs. Travers. Do you remember the words she spoke to you that morning when you first took me to her house? ‘Full forgiveness,’ were they not? Was that for him?”

“Yes. I have been looking for him ever since he ran away, but I have never found the slightest clue. I am seeking still, but with little enough hope of success. If I ever should find him, that is his mother’s message. But here we are at the school.”

Mary would willingly have continued the conversation, but their arrival at the school rendered that impossible. They entered together into a low-ceilinged room, occupying the whole of the ground-floor of a dingy house in a dingy street. At various long desks arranged across the room were seated a company of boys, to the number of sixty, with here and there a full-grown man among them. At the farther end was a party of girls, varying in age from four or five to fifteen. Mary noticed that the teachers who presided over the male classes were all women, and those who ministered to the girls were of the other sex. Except for the subdued hum of study the room was silent. During a short interview between Mr. Barton and a young man who seemed to hold the chief authority in the school, and which was conducted in a whisper, Mary took her seat beside a class

of small boys, presided over by a girl of about eighteen, who was telling them a Bible-story. The interview concluded, the Rev. John approached her.

“Would you like to take a class for half an hour?” he asked.

“What can I do?” she asked in reply.

“Tell them some simple story. Anything will do, so long as they can understand it. It is our one great merit here that we are easily pleased. Will you let this lady take your place for a little while, Nelly?” he asked the teacher when her story was concluded. The girl rose with a smile of invitation, and Mary accepted the seat, and after a moment’s consideration, began the story of the Ugly Duckling. She was a little shy at first, for she was unused to address even so small and uncritical an audience, but soon the pleased attention evident in the face of every child present gave her confidence, and the sweet and simple character of the story, and the love of children which is one of the most beautiful characteristics of all good women, helped her greatly, and she got on famously. At the conclusion of the story the right arm of every member of her little auditory rose like a semaphore, and the children, with the unanimity of an army of Oliver Twists, demanded more. With better luck than that of their prototype, they got their desire, and at a kindly nod of pleased encouragement from the Rev. John, Mary plunged into the adventures of the Little Tin Soldier, and found herself established as a popular favourite. When the diminutive metallic warrior had been chronicled, it would have done good to that best of all child-lovers, Hans Christian Andersen, to have beheld the enthusiasm of that tiny crowd, and to have heard its unanimous invitation to Mary, in the very smallest English, to come again to tell them more stories next evening.

“Have you been teaching long?” Mary asked of the girl whom Mr. Barton addressed as Nelly, as she was putting on her bonnet and jacket to conduct the smallest of her charges to their homes.

“About a year—ever since the school began, miss,” said Nelly. “It was Mr. Barton who got me the place, and he started the school.”

“Everybody seems to be very fond of him here.” He was at the other end of the room, chatting pleasantly to a group of little girls which had gathered about him.

“So they ought to be,” responded Nelly. “He’s the best man in the world.” She uttered this panegyric with much

the air with which she might have told one of her small pupils, "Two and two make four," or "A noun is the name of any person, place, or thing." The statement was obviously as much a matter of faith to her as either of those propositions, a belief fixed and unshakable.

Mr. Barton rejoined Miss Kennett, and they left the school together, and walked on side by side until they came into the Regent's Park, in which their steps naturally tended. The shadows of the autumn evening were closing about them, but the golden flush yet lingered in the western sky, and all the east was rich with blue and rose.

"Your life should be a very happy one, Mr. Barton," said Mary, breaking silence for the first time since they had left the school.

"It has been, so far," he answered.

"It seems to me," she went on, "to be a perfect life—the life which all men would lead, if they knew it. Surely there can be no greater pleasure in the world than to feel that one is doing good, that no day passes without useful work; that every night you leave the world a little better—even ever so little better—than you found it in the morning."

"Yes; that is a very great pleasure," he answered simply.

"There is so much to do," continued Mary; "so many poor, and in trouble, and ignorant, and wicked, so much pain and so little pleasure in the world, that I often wonder that men like you are so few. I was reading the other day that there are twenty thousand people in London alone who get up in the morning without knowing where they will sleep at night, or where they will find their daily bread. Is that true?"

"Quite true. Rather an understatement than an exaggeration."

"And London is the richest city in the world! There are people who cannot count their wealth, who do not know how rich they are, or how to spend their incomes, and they do nothing."

"Yes, they do something, but very little—shamefully little, when we consider how much they might do. You see, Miss Kennett, human nature is only touched by what it sees, and the rich people know nothing of the poor. They know, vaguely and generally, that there are poor people, but that is all; they do not recognise what poverty really is."

"Cannot they be taught?"

"We must be patient. They are learning, little by little—slowly, but surely,

too, I think. Universal comfort and knowledge are far off yet, perhaps will never come at all; but things are improving. The rich are learning one great lesson—that sympathy and intelligent interest in the poor are more valuable even than money; the poor are being educated, and are leaving their old habits of drink and wastefulness, and beginning to understand that it is from themselves alone, and not from Government or from the upper classes, that their regeneration must begin. Ignorance is our great enemy. With the spread of education will come visions of better possibilities. Once teach the poor man that it is by his own fault that he is poor, and the battle is won. And he is learning that more rapidly every day."

"How long have you been at this work?" she asked. They had seated themselves on a bench under a scattered clump of trees, with the wide expanse of the open park before them, bounded by the distant mass of foliage, which cut clear against the fading flame of sunset colour in the west.

"Two years," he answered.

"And you have passed all that time among the poor?"

"Yes."

"Do you never long for the old life among your own people, for the pleasures you have given up?"

"I think of it as little as I can."

"And you have never regretted your choice?"

"Never for a moment," he answered with clear conviction. "I would not change my life for any other in the world."

"I cannot tell you," she said after a moment's silence, "how useless and insignificant I feel beside you. Oh, if I could do something—if I could help, ever so little. Women are useless creatures, Mr. Barton. They have nothing to give to any cause but their wishes, which cost nothing, and do nothing."

He smiled, half sadly, half admiringly, at this little burst.

"Don't undervalue yourself, Miss Kennett. For my own part, I think most of the good done in the world comes from women, and is done for their sakes and by their influence." He paused a moment. "You are interested in my work—you think it good?"

"I think it noble, Mr. Barton."

"Will you join it? Will you be my wife?"

The words escaped him, as such words will, half to his own surprise. Mary's face went white as she heard them, and she put

out her hand with a sudden involuntary gesture of frightened appeal.

"I have startled you by my abruptness," said Mr. Barton. "Forgive me. I have had the words on my lips so long that they escaped me unawares. I am willing to wait for your answer as long as you please."

"I must answer you now, Mr. Barton," said Mary with sad composure. "Don't think that I undervalue you or the affection you offer me. I know it must be very deep and very sincere to prompt you to ask for your wife a woman of whom you know no more than you know of me."

"I don't ask to know anything more," said the Rev. John. "I don't desire to. I know that you are good and beautiful; what do I want to know more?"

"You are very generous and good, as you always are," answered Mary, "but it is impossible. Believe me, Mr. Barton, impossible. I can never be your wife. I thank you—I cannot say how much—for your affection and your confidence, but it is impossible."

"I am answered," he replied, and bent his head for a moment in silence. Then he rose and offered his arm. They had scarcely made a step together, when Miss Kennett fell back with a stifled cry. There in front of them stood a man, hat in hand, bent in an ironical salute.

"Roland Travers!" cried Mr. Barton, dropping a heavy hand upon his arm.

"Jack Barton, begad!" said the new comer. He laughed, and flourished his hat back on to his head. "Quite a family party! What are you afraid of?" he demanded of Mary in a tone of savage banter; "do you think I want to bite you?"

"Do you know this man?" asked Mr. Barton of his companion.

Mr. Travers laughed again in noisy enjoyment of the question. He swayed a little as he stood there, regarding Mary with an air of evil waggery.

"He is my husband!" said Mary, and again the new comer laughed as if he found the joke almost unendurably comic.

"Deuced funny," he said when his laugh was over; "rather a sell for you, old man, though, ain't it? Feel as if I ought to apologise, somehow. A parson, too, by Jove! White choker, long-tailed coat. Bishop, some day, perhaps. You always were a good boy, John—I was always a bad lot, wasn't I?"

It was plainly evident that Mr. Travers had taken more stimulant than was good for him.

"I have a message for you, Travers," said Mr. Barton, ignoring his serious pleasantries; "a very important message."

"All right; what is it—good news—eh? Hope it's good news. Bad luck lately—beas'ly bad luck."

"Come and see me to-morrow," said Mr. Barton; "the old address. You will come?"

"Is it good news?" re-demanded Mr. Travers.

"Yes."

"Then I'll come, you bet. What time?"

"Two o'clock."

"All right."

"That is a promise?"

"That's a promise."

They shook hands upon it, and Mr. Barton raised his hat to Mary, who had reseated herself upon the bench, and went away, scarce knowing whither. He had not gone far when he felt a hand upon his arm, and, turning, beheld Mr. Samuel Bunch.

"We're both in the same box," said that worthy. "Hard lines, ain't it?"

The Rev. John's right fist tightened spasmodically, and he was conscious of a simultaneous tightening of the biceps muscle. But he repressed these sensations, and contenting himself with gripping Mr. Bunch's hand hard, he turned and walked away at a pace which the latter's shorter legs would have found it difficult to emulate. Nor did they attempt it. They merely carried their owner to the nearest bench, where he sat down, and rubbed his eyes with his wrists in unaffected woe.

Mary Travers rose from the bench, and looked her husband in the face. He tried to summon up the laugh again, but the attempt was a failure, and, snigger as he might, his eyes fell before her steadfast regard.

He stood for a moment, looking foolish enough, kicking at the gravel under his feet.

The silence became rapidly unendurable to him, and he spoke.

"Why did you leave me?"

"I told you in my letter."

She was quite calm and steady now. Her husband waited for her to speak again, but her continued silence discomfited him more and more; and her woman's instinct knew it, and her courage grew stronger as his weakened.

"Mary," he said at last, shamefacedly, "give a man a chance. If you had guessed what your leaving me meant to me, you would never have done it. And we were happy once."

"Yes," she answered with a little

sudden softening in voice and eyes, "we were happy once. But that was long ago, or it seems so to me now."

"Don't be so hard and cold, Mary. I know I went wrong, but I always loved you—always, Mary. And when you left me, I found out how much. Give me another chance."

She shook her head.

"No, Roland. I can never come back to you; or, if I ever could, not yet."

"When?" he asked, eagerly catching at any straw of hope her words seemed to offer. "What can I do to bring you back?"

"When I can be your wife and still retain my self-respect; when I can respect as well as love my husband; I will return to him."

Something of the old lowering look she knew so well came back upon his face at these words.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I mean that I will not again expose myself to the chance of living such a life as I led with you during our two years of marriage. I mean that the bread I eat, the clothes I wear, must not be paid for by the winnings from the gaming-table or the turf."

"If you'll come back, I'll never touch another card. I'll cut the ring—I'll do anything you like. I can't live without you." She shook her head again.

"You have promised too often, Roland. I must have something better than promises."

"You're still the same," he said with petulant anger. "The same distrust, the same coldness, the same hard, icy virtue that used to drive me mad before. If you had ever had a little faith in me, or a little love for me, you might have saved me."

"It fits you well," she answered with bitter and scornful sorrow, "to taunt me with lack of faith and love. Had I no faith, no love when, three years ago, you found me in that quiet little village, with no relations, scarcely even a friend, and I gave myself and all I had to you? Had I none when I sold every stick and stone of my father's property—yes, even my mother's jewels, down to the ring I took from her hand when she lay dead, to pay your gambling debts, and to save you from open shame? Was there no faith or love in that, Roland? I gave you all I had, all that I had a right to give. I left you

when nothing remained to me but my self-respect, and that you shall not have."

He looked at her with anger in his face, but his eyes dropped before hers.

"What have you given in return?" she went on. "The very name I bore as your wife was not yours to give. Faith and love! What faith and love can I have for you, hiding dishonour under a false name, and leaving the mother who loves you to die broken-hearted with your shame, without a word or sign from you?"

"Ah," he said, with a lowering voice, "Barton told you all that, I suppose?"

"Mr. Barton has told me nothing. It was through him that I met your mother; but he was ignorant of our relationship. He knows me as Mary Kennett. I have a better right to that, my maiden-name, than to the one you gave me."

He made no reply, but stared moodily upon the ground.

"I will give you a chance, Roland, to prove your love for me. Mr. Barton asked you to go and see him. Go—go with him and see the mother whose heart you have broken; give her one hour of joy before she dies. Make your promise of amendment to her. If you knew, Roland—if you could guess the sorrow which weighs her down! She thinks only of you, prays for you, passes her days and nights in prayer that she may see you once again before she dies. She has forgiven you all. I have heard her say so. That is the message which Mr. Barton has for you. You will go, will you not?" she asked with a pleading hand upon his arm.

"Yes," he broke out suddenly, "I will go—I will go! And, Mary," he seized her hand, "you will come back to me, and help to keep me straight? I've been worse than ever since you left me. You drove me mad by going. You will come back? Say you will come back to me!"

"I will not promise now," she answered. "Tell me in your mother's presence that you will amend, that you will do your duty to her, and I will promise then."

"But when—when will you come back to me?"

"When you call me I will come."

He stood bareheaded before her, with a look of exaltation and resolve such as she had never seen upon his face before. And then, with the undefined summer night about him, and the starlit heavens overhead, he swore to make atonement for his past.

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THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR?

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNNE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE winter that year was bleak and bitter enough to set the hearts of all those who owned skates, and knew how to use them, bounding and thrilling; and to drive all the hunting-men, who were not literally chained to Stanham, up in a flock to London and their clubs.

Eddie Fairfax was the life and soul of the local skating-club. The broad sheet of ice on the Hall lake made a pretty picture every afternoon, with its crowd of young, fur-enveloped figures, with their rose-red cheeks and swift, glancing feet. Eddie lived in her skates. The frozen lake was about the finest outlet she ever could have for her restless, nervous energy.

"I've no doubt," she said to herself, as she went skimming with the fleetness of a swallow over the glassy surface, "if Ellinor stood on that bank watching us all, she would say, 'Call that skating! Stand on one side, all of you, and I'll show you how to carry your head and shoulders!' But for all that, I dare say her dignity would get more bumps on the back of its head than my insignificance does." And on she went, the cynosure of many admiring eyes, and not a few envious ones.

Among the former may be classed Lord Winterdowne's, behind their gold-rimmed glasses. As Eddie lived in her skates, so he appeared to have taken up his abode on the bank of the lake. Nothing would tempt him on the ice. The possibility of cutting a ludicrous or undignified figure kept him well away among the reeds and willows at the edge of the pond. Those same reeds and willows, too, saw a good deal of Colonel Wickham just then, for,

somehow, since he had broken off from his "vital statistics," the Colonel had spent a good deal of time at the Hall, and had formed an odd, unsympathetic sort of intimacy with Lord Winterdowne.

"It's queer those two men don't take more heartily to each other," the Squire would say to himself sometimes, noting their invariable divergence of opinion on every matter, small or great. "You would think they would fit each other like hand and glove. They have each of them a good head for figures, they go in for the same fads, yet there they are sparring from morning till night—for ever at cross-purposes. The puzzle is why they don't keep out of each other's way. It looks rather as if Wickham were mounting guard for Master Phil. Eh? That's what it must be!"

And, not displeased with the conclusion at which he had arrived, Mr. Fairfax went on his way, making himself as agreeable as he could to both gentlemen, getting, meantime, his own modicum of enjoyment out of the friendly intercourse in the shape of nightly whist-parties, held in turn at the Hall, the Castle, or Wickham Place.

Eddie took the attentions of both gentlemen easily and pleasantly, or indifferently and carelessly, according to the mood in which she chanced to be. She would go down to the ice with one, she would return with the two, and then, perhaps, if they chanced to accept her father's invitation and stay dinner, she would suddenly announce the fact that she was tired to death, and would go straight upstairs to bed, instead of taking her place at the head of the table.

"The truth of it is, Eddie," said the Squire, as he began sorting his letters at the breakfast-table one morning, "you are developing into a most heartless little flirt,

and if those men call each other out, and one of them gets a bullet, you'll have to answer for it."

Edie jumped up from her chair in a perfect whirlwind.

"I a flirt! Oh, papa, how dreadfully, dreadfully wicked of you to say so!" she cried, getting crimson—face, neck, ears, and all. "Why, if I tried to flirt, I couldn't—I shouldn't know how. The idea of such a thing! I know I'm full of faults; I'm self-willed and quick-tempered; I'm obstinate and unbearable; but whatever else I am, I'm not a flirt!"

The Squire went on sorting his letters with unusual rapidity. He began to feel—to use a common phrase—that he had "put his foot in it," and that the sooner he got it out again the better.

He tossed a letter across to his little daughter:

"One for you, my dear—two—here's a third."

But Edie was not to be so easily diverted.

"I'm not a flirt, papa—I say I'm not a flirt! Whatever else bad and wicked I may be, I'm not that!" she kept repeating.

The squire thankfully came upon an envelope which he felt confident would stem the torrent of Edie's indignation.

"I think you know that handwriting, my dear. You may have seen it once before," he said mischievously, right across her one hundred and fiftieth assertion that, whatever else she was, she was "not a flirt."

Edie picked it up with a great joyous thrill in her heart. From Phil at last! She knew it before she looked at it.

The door opened at this moment, and Lord Winterdowne came in close upon the servant's heels.

"Are you going on the ice this morning, Miss Fairfax?" he asked as he shook hands. "Pardon such an early visit, but I am going up to London to-day; it is the only hour I could command."

Edie clutched at her letters. Politeness must go to the four winds. The thing now was to get out of the room as quickly as possible, shut herself up, and devour them, or rather it, for there was only one she would have risked her life to save had the house been on fire.

"No, I'm not going on the ice this morning—perhaps not to-morrow morning—perhaps not for a whole week—perhaps never again, for the frost may break at

any moment—in fact, I'm sure there is rain in the air, and I dare say there'll be a deluge before night," she answered all in a breath, taking a step towards the door with every word she spoke.

Lord Winterdowne only took in about a quarter of the words she said, and certainly not a fiftieth part of what she meant.

He looked at her vaguely.

"Are you very—very busy this morning?" he began a little hesitatingly.

"Yes, dreadfully—dreadfully—dreadfully busy," answered Edie, getting outside the door with her last word. "I really don't know which way to turn."

"I particularly want—ah!—to—to see you alone this morning for five minutes. Is it not possible?" he asked, stammering a little, and looking as uncomfortable as it was possible for a man of his decorous deportment to look.

Edie all in a flash guessed his meaning.

"Oh, utterly—utterly impossible," she said, standing outside now in the hall, and looking longingly at the flight of stairs leading to the upper quarters.

"Then may I come to-morrow morning at this hour?" persisted Lord Winterdowne, evidently bent on securing an interview.

Edie felt she must get rid of him somehow.

"Yes, to-morrow at this time if you like," she answered carelessly, and then looked round to find that Colonel Wickham had come up the front steps while she was talking, and now stood behind, looking down on her.

Not a doubt but that he had heard the appointment made. She could see it in his face, half sad, half puzzled. Well, she couldn't help it. Things were bent on going crookedly that morning. By-and-by—when she had read her letter—she would come back in a sweet frame of mind, and put everything straight again. It would be easy work enough with the pleasant thoughts she felt sure would then be filling her mind.

"Papa is in the dining-room," she said to Colonel Wickham, scarcely stopping to shake hands with him.

And as "papa" at that moment opened the dining-room door, without further preamble she made her escape up the stairs to her own sitting-room, breaking the seal of Phil's letter as she went along.

Eyes brightening, hands trembling with nervous delight, cheeks flushing and paling

in turn, mouth all dimples and smiles; so little Edie stood reading Phil's few desperately written lines, while one by one her other letters dropped unheeded from her hand to the floor.

Not once nor twice, but at least fifty times over she read the words. Then her eyes began to swim.

Oh, poor—poor Phil! how unhappy he must be! How miserable she had made him with her own silly little attempt at arranging his life for him! Oh, what a mistake it had all been! How he must have suffered before he could bring himself to write in that imploring, desperate fashion! Come back! Yes, of course he might. That very hour if it had been possible, and she would tell him how truly sorry she was for her folly, and beg his pardon—ah, so humbly, and sweetly—and promise never—never to the end of her life to offend in that fashion again! How tiresome it was that the post did not go out till noon! There ought to be special posts when people wanted them, just as there were special trains for garden-parties and weddings. Well, anyhow she would write her letter at once, and take it herself to the post. That would be one step towards putting Phil out of his misery, so straight to the writing-table she went, pushing her other letters on one side, and dashed off this brief missive.

“DEAR—DEAR PHIL,” she wrote, “come back as soon as ever you like, and let things be just anyhow you please. Entrenous, I think I have been just a little bit of a goose.—Your own
EDIE.”

There! he would understand exactly all she meant to say without making a long letter of it. Phil always did understand her. Whoever else made mistakes about her, Phil never did. And here Edie, leaning back in her chair, fell into one of her old pleasant day-dreams, the like of which she had not indulged in since she and Phil had kissed under the walnut-tree, and of which it would be no exaggeration to say Phil was its Alpha and Omega, its middle and back-bone also.

Presently her eye chanced upon the letters still on the floor—three in number. Oh, there could be no hurry for those; they might wait. She gave them another little push with her foot. Ah, that was from Phoebe Macpherson (a housemaid who had married from the Hall, and whose first child was Edie's goddaughter), and this was from the London dressmaker who

had sent down her Christmas ball-dresses; but who was that other from? The writing was not familiar to her. It might want an answer by the next post.

She picked up the letter in the strange handwriting, broke the seal, and read as follows:

“DEAR MADAM,—I must ask you to pardon the liberty which I, an utter stranger, am taking in thus writing to you. I can only plead as my excuse my warm gratitude and sincere friendship towards one whom, for want of fuller knowledge on the matter, I am compelled to describe only as an old friend of yours—Mr. Philip Wickham.

“I fear the question I am about to ask will seem an unwarrantable, unpardonable impertinence on my part. I know it is such, yet I feel bound to ask it, and must trust to your charity and right judgment to accord my pardon. It is simply this: ‘Are you sure you have the love of the man whom you have partly released from his engagement to you? Are you sure that his hopes and wishes are not fixed in another quarter?’ I beseech you to get a true and unmistakable answer to this question, as much for your own sake as for his.

“I must beg of you not to mistake my motives in thus writing to you. Mr. Wickham never has been, never can be to me, more than the greatest benefactor a friendless girl could have. I am as much widowed as though I wore wedding-ring and weeds. But there is one to whom Mr. Wickham might be infinitely more than benefactor and friend if he were free to act according to the dictates of his heart—one, too, in every way worthy of a true man's true love, and to whose keeping his happiness might be safely entrusted.

“Dear madam, again I must ask your pardon for the liberty I am taking in thus writing to you. Again I must plead, as my one and only excuse, a debt of gratitude so heavy towards the two persons to whom I have alluded, that it makes me heedless of the common conventionalities of life.
L. S.”

Edie dropped the letter as she read the last word, not as though the paper had stung her, but as though her fingers had suddenly congealed into marble, and the power of touch and grasp had been withdrawn. The power of thought, of feeling, of utterance, seemed also to have left her, and for a moment she leaned back in her

chair, with brain as blank as that of the poor little frozen starling she had found dead on her window-ledge that morning.

Only for a moment, however. The next, all her senses came back to her with a rush, and seemed intensified a thousand-fold. She jumped to her feet; she tore the letter she had just penned to Phil into a hundred fragments; she crumpled up Phil's few lines, and tossed them into the fire.

"I see—I see!" she said aloud passionately. "I understand it all now. He wanted to save his honour, to marry me out of hand, and be done with it, lest his resolution might fail him."

She picked up Lucy's letter, and read through the bitter words once more. Who "L. S." was she had not the remotest notion. It had so chanced that, though Phil had long ago mentioned to Edie the fact of Rodney Thorne's engagement "to a little girl in Paris," Miss Selwyn's name had not been mentioned, or, if it had had a passing allusion, it had, somehow, not fixed itself in Edie's memory.

However that might be, it could not matter two straws who or what "L. S." was. One fact was patent from the tone of her letter—viz., that she knew very well what she was writing about. No doubt she had seen a great deal of Phil in London, and had had the fact forced upon her notice that he had transferred his affections to a person to whom she was evidently under great obligations.

There was one mistake she had made.

"Partly released him, have I?" cried Edie, a great wave of indignant pride sweeping over her. "He shall soon find himself as free as words of mine can make him."

Back to her writing-table she went once more. In a little over three minutes another note was written, and addressed to Phil. It was somewhat different in tone from the first.

Thus it ran:

"DEAR PHIL,—Was it not wise of me to insist that we should both take time to consider our engagement, and have a year's respite from it? If it won't make any difference to you, I should like to consider myself free from to-day, for, to be quite honest with you, someone else has slipped into your place while you have been away, and I'm not at all disposed to turn him out. Do not trouble to write in reply. I will consider your silence to signify assent.—Believe me, always your friend,

"EDITH FAIRFAX."

And then, the letter signed and sealed, she bowed her head on the writing-table, crying aloud, with dry eyes and breaking heart:

"Oh, Phil, Phil! must I give you up? Why did you not take a knife and stab me to the heart? It would have been far less cruel."

A knock at her door made her lift her head, and old Janet came in to say Colonel Wickham wanted particularly to speak to her.

Edie got her thoughts back with difficulty.

"Colonel Wickham—Colonel Wickham!" she repeated vaguely.

Old Janet grew uneasy.

"Are you ill, Miss Edie? Have you a bad headache, you look so white!" she asked.

The hot blood came in a rush to Edie's face.

"Ill?" she cried; "I never felt better in my life. Ask Colonel Wickham to come up into my sitting-room, if he must see me; and, Janet, take this letter, it is very important, and put it in the post with your own hand."

And here she tossed her letter to Phil across the table to the old servant.

Colonel Wickham, coming into the room a minute after, would have endorsed Edie's words, and vowed that, with eyes and cheeks so brilliantly coloured, she never could have felt better in her life.

By way of contrast, possibly—Nature takes a savage delight at times in striking sharp, uncouth key-notes of contrast—Colonel Wickham looked unusually solemn and grey that morning.

"I thought you would have come down to have a chat with me, Edie," he said a little reproachfully; "I have been waiting downstairs to see you. Your father has gone off to Four Fields Farm. Lord Winterdowne has gone with him."

He said Lord Winterdowne's name with a marked emphasis, looking keenly at Edie meanwhile.

Four Fields Farm was a farm owned by the Squire, and was situated some five or six miles outside the parish.

Edie jumped to her feet.

"Oh, how could papa go without me?" she cried. "I told him I particularly wanted to ride with him this morning."

"I told him, Edie, I particularly wanted to speak to you this morning, so he was good enough not to send up to you," said the Colonel in a yet graver tone than

before. "I wanted to ask you if you had any news of Phil. It is so long since I heard from him I am getting rather uneasy about him."

"Uneasy?" laughed Edie; "there was never less cause for uneasiness in your whole life. He is quite well, and as happy—oh, as happy as a man could be."

"Have you heard from him this morning? What does he say?"

"Oh, nothing much worth repeating. A silly little letter; I tossed it into the fire a minute ago. He wants me to marry him right off in a tremendous hurry. Ridiculous!" And here Edie gave a merry little laugh.

But Colonel Wickham grew graver and graver.

"I see nothing to laugh at, Edie. I see nothing ridiculous in a man wanting to marry the girl he's engaged to, when they're as fond of each other as you and Phil are."

"Oh, but we're not fond of each other—that's the best of it!" laughed Edie again; "we are both heartily sick and tired of each other, and I've written to Phil this morning, telling him I want to be released from my share of the compact—that I mean to be—yes, that's what I said—mean to be—mean to be!"

And here Edie jumped up in a flutter from her chair, and began putting pens, ink, and paper together with tremendous despatch.

Colonel Wickham went over to her side, took both her hands in his, and made her look up at him.

"Edie, what does this mean?" he asked, and now his gravity resolved itself into positive sternness.

Edie began to tremble violently.

"Oh, it's all easily understood," she cried, struggling hard to release herself.

But the Colonel would not let her hands go.

"It is not easily understood," he said. "Have you and Phil had a quarrel?"

"A quarrel! Oh dear no, what is there to quarrel about when we are both of one mind? We are tired of each other—that's all, nothing more."

"Tired of each other! After all these years!"

"That's just it. It is 'all these years' that have tired us out. Why won't you believe me? Do people never, never get tired of each other and break off engagements? Oh, let go my hands, please. Why won't you understand?" and here

Edie stamped violently on the floor, feeling that little by little her power of self-control was evaporating.

"I have one more question to ask, Edie, and then I will let you go. Tell me, and be honest with me, I entreat, has your acquaintance with Lord Winterdowne had anything to do with your getting tired of Phil?"

Edie's head drooped. She could scarcely bring herself to tell a downright lie—to slander, as it were, her own soul and its powers of loving, yet here was a splendid opportunity for putting a stop to all this tiresome questioning, and leaving herself and Phil free to shape their courses as they thought fit.

"Oh, why do you ask such questions?" she said, freeing her hands with a sudden jerk and walking away from him to the window. "You ought to be satisfied with what I tell you."

He followed her into the window-recess. "I ask the question, Edie, because about an hour or so ago I heard you make an appointment to see that man alone to-morrow morning. You don't mean to tell me you are going to throw Phil over for a man of that stamp?"

"Oh, what can it matter to anybody but myself what I do or don't do——" she began vehemently.

He cut her vehemence short.

"It would matter to me greatly, Edie. I have known you ever since you were a baby, and"—this added in hushed reverential tones—"I knew your mother also."

Edie's self-control was going—was gone now. She flung herself on the ground almost at the Colonel's feet, hiding her face in the cushions of the window-seat.

"Go away—go away!" she cried passionately; "why won't you leave me to myself? I want to be alone—don't you understand?"

He stooped over her as a father might over some wilful, passionate child.

"I will go away, Edie, directly you look up in my face and give me your word you have not the slightest intention of marrying Lord Winterdowne."

In his own mind he felt convinced this pair of lovers had had some desperate quarrel—a quarrel in which it might be that Phil's usually serene temper had given way. No doubt a peace between them could easily enough be effected if only sufficient time could be had wherein to negotiate it. He knew, however, little Edie's pride and impetuous temper, and

dreaded lest in one sudden, irrevocable moment she might render all such negotiation impossible.

Eddie's voice seemed to come in muffled gasps from out the cushions.

"I won't look up—I won't give you my word—I will marry just anybody and everybody I please."

He looked down on her pityingly.

"Get up, Edie," he said gently, "and let us talk the matter out quietly. Remember I've given you good advice ever since you were a baby out of arms and used to come to me with your scratches and bruised elbows."

His voice had more of authority in it than before. Edie's wilfulness yielded so far as to let her get up off the carpet and stand for a moment facing him, looking right into those kindly eyes of his.

His face showed grave and marble-white. Hers by rights should have had a river of tears streaming down it for the pain that was racking her poor little heart. Instead, however, it was dry, flushed scarlet-red, with eyes bright and staring.

Colonel Wickham looked at the window-seat.

"Come, sit down, Edie," he began, "and let us talk quietly of whom you will or will not marry."

But Edie had no intention of doing anything so rational. Her spirit of defiance would hold out just another sixty seconds, she felt—no longer. With the sixty-first must come collapse and humility. Well, she must get as quickly as she could into solitude, and not make an exhibition of herself for Colonel Wickham's benefit.

"I will marry just whoever I please," she answered in somewhat high-pitched key, and making for the door as she spoke with rapid though unsteady steps; "no one shall say to me, 'Marry that man—marry this one'; I will marry Lord Winter-downe if I like, or I'll marry Mr. Rumsey's curate, or papa's head-groom, or old Jeffreys, the gardener, or Whitelock, the old bellringer, or anybody I like on the other side of sixty. I hate and abominate men at six-and-twenty—they're odious and hateful, every one of them."

Her last sentence carried her out of the room.

Colonel Wickham stood looking after her wonderingly, pityingly. How his heart yearned over this petulant, wilful child! Ah, these foolish young things, if they did but know! If only one could make them see the right road and put their feet in it,

or, better still, if one could only gather them into one's arms and carry them over all the rough, thorny places in life! Now, supposing for a moment this bright, lovable little Edie had given her heart into his keeping instead of into Phil's, how tenderly—

But here the Colonel gave a great start, and put an abrupt stop to his thinking.

"You old idiot!" he said to himself; "you, of all men in the world!"

Then he went straight home to his lonely old house, sat down to his trim writing-table, and wrote a long and peremptory letter to Phil.

It was full of straightforward questions, such as, "What has happened to put you and Edie on such a distant footing? Is it her doing or yours that your engagement collapses now?" and so forth. But the gist of the whole letter was contained in the last sentence, which ran as follows:

"But whatever has taken place between you, don't try to mend matters with pen-and-ink. Come down at once, see Edie, and face to face have your explanation. On this I must strongly insist."

Phil, however, did not get this letter till the post after that by which he had received Edie's. His reply to it was dispatched promptly enough in the form of a telegram, which ran as follows:

"Impossible for me to come down. Miss Fairfax will explain."

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

HERTFORDSHIRE.

WILD forest was Hertfordshire, where it was not bare wide heaths as wild and desolate, and that long after the country in general was cultivated and settled. The "hams" of the Saxons are almost entirely wanting in the county, and even its chief town, to which it owes name and existence as a shire, was neither a tribal settlement nor the town of any great chief. Rather Hertford owes its name to the time when all about was a dangerous tract avoided by all but the well-armed and well-mounted hunting-parties that pursued the wild game in these forest solitudes. Here might be met the fierce wild cattle of the native tawny breed. Herds of deer housed in the forest glades, and the wild boar lurked in the marshy jungle. As the hunt was urged with cry and horn, it was noticed that at one spot in the greenwood where a

labyrinth of streams had formed a deep and dangerous morass, the slot of the deer led by a patch of firm ground to a gravelly ford through the waters. Some British trackway no doubt had hit the ford ages ago, and the footsteps of vanished races had worn a track now thickly overgrown with the tangle of bush and briar, and all memory of the old Celtic name of the crossing had been lost, so that as the Hartsford it became known to the few that passed that way. And Hartford it was still when in the Danish wars a stockaded fort protected the crossing, and formed a strong post in the wood. And still it was Hartford when the Conqueror built a castle there to secure the passes into Middlesex.

Long before, when the Romans held the land, the great roadway of Watling Street pierced the forest at its narrowest point, with a broad belt of clearings on either side, along which sprang up clusters of villages and hamlets. And the wild woods once passed, there was Verulam to welcome the traveller with its strong walls and stately buildings, and the broad lake that protected and adorned the city;

That citie which the garlaude wore
Of Britaine's pride.

About Verulam we seem to know more than about the other ruined cities of the land, for we get glimpses of it now and then—in its ruined state indeed, but still when the memory of its former state was still fresh amongst its destroyers, and when its walls and buildings were still in existence, and formed a vast quarry, whence the materials for the stately abbey-church of St. Albans were slowly hewn out. A special interest, too, has Verulam beyond all other ruined towns, inasmuch as Edmund Spenser has embalmed such of its history as then passed current in the stately sweetness of his verse. It was to Camden, the venerable father of English archaeology, that Spenser owed his knowledge of Verulam's ancient story. The Britannia of Camden had just then been published,

Camden the novice of antiquity,
And lanterne unto late succeeding age;

and fresh from his perusal of a work that first let the light of day into the topographical history of the land, the poet imagines how

It chanced me one day beside the shore
Of silver streaming Thameis to bee,
Nigh where the goodly Verlame stood of yore.

A good deal of latitude indeed must be allowed to poetic imagination, for St. Albans is a long way from any possible

channel of Father Thames. Still, the Colne, that slowly creeps into the river among willows and osier-beds just above Staines, and which in its chief tributary flows past the walls of Verulam, we may imagine to be haunted by

The ancient genius of that citie brent.

But in truth the poet had some sanction for bringing the Thames so close to Verulam, in the records of the monkish chronicles of the abbey. The most celebrated of these chroniclers, Matthew Paris, who was himself one of the brethren of the abbey, and who wrote in the thirteenth century, when many records that have now perished were open to him, describes how Ealdred the Abbot, long before the Conquest, ransacking the ancient cavities of the old city, which was called Werlam-cestre, overturned and filled up all he could. The rough, broken places, and the streets with their passages running underground, and covered over with solid arches, some of which passed under the waters of Werlam river, which was once very large, and flowed about the city, he pulled down and filled up or stopped, because they were the lurking holes of thieves, night-walkers, and outlaws, while the fosses of the city and certain caverns, to which felons and fugitives repaired as places of shelter from the thick woods around, he levelled as much as was possible. Among other materials were found the planks of ships, oars, and rusted anchors, which led to the supposition that the river had once been navigable to the walls of Verulam, and that possibly the main channel of the Thames had passed there, as the poet sings:

And wher the christall Tamis went to slide
In silver channel downe along the lee.

In contrast to which is the present condition of the place as seen by the Elizabethan poet:

There now no river's course is to be seen,
But moorish fennes and marshes ever greene.

The most wonderful find, however, of the destructive Abbot of St. Albans, was nothing less than a collection of rolls and manuscripts, the remains, perhaps, of the free library of ancient Verulam, one of which proved to be a volume in an unknown tongue, which turned out to be good Welsh, and an old Welsh priest, who happened to be living in the neighbourhood, was able to translate it. And this wonderful volume was found to contain the history of the martyrdom of St. Alban.

During the persecution of the Christians

by Diocletian—so, shortly, runs the story—a citizen of Verulam, named Albanus, gave refuge in his house to a Christian preacher. The friendly act was discovered, and the people, furious against the Christians, dragged Albanus before the judge of the city, when Albanus avowed his Christian faith, and gloried in the act he had performed. Such treason against the majesty of the state was adjudged worthy of death, and Albanus was condemned to be executed on the hill where now stands the abbey church. Where the martyr suffered sprang up a clear spring of water. The spring is there to this day, to testify to the truth of the legend. It gives a name to Holywell Street, and still flows in front of Holywell House. Somewhere near the spring was built a humble British church in memory of the martyr, which, perhaps, was enlarged when the Christian faith became dominant in the empire.

Verulam itself, we are told, was one of the last of the British cities to fall under the Saxon yoke.

And tho' at last by force I conquered were
Of hardie Saxons, and became their thrall,
Yet was I with much bloodshed bought full deere,
And priz'd with slaughter of their general.

In the heathen times that followed, the church on the hill may have fallen into neglect and decay, and the renowned Offa, whose royal seat was close by at Offley, was the first to restore the ancient shrine. The bloodstained King, become conscious of his many crimes, sought to ensure himself against future punishment by his devotion to the new foundation. He endowed the church with his lordship and palace of Winslow, in Bucks, and from that time the Abbot of St. Albans became one of the chief dignitaries of the land.

But while the convent flourished on the hill, the ancient city in the valley became more and more deserted, and, in course of time, the destruction of Verulam was completed by the Saxon abbots, who determined to build a noble church on the hill, and accumulated vast stores of building-materials by the destruction of all the old edifices.

With this abbey on the hill, directly overlooking the course of old Watling Street, the monks of St. Albans were in some way the guardians of the great highway to the north. Already the Roman road that communicated with London was neglected, and overgrown with forest, and infested by robbers and banditti, so that Abbot Leofstan granted one of the abbey

manors—that of Flamstead, to the north of the county—to a brave Saxon knight, Thurnoth, that he might guard the said way, and act as convoy to pilgrims to St. Alban's shrine. But soon came the days of the Conquest, and after a vain effort to oppose the Conqueror's passage, Frederic, the last Saxon abbot, retired, broken-hearted, to the camp of refuge in the isle of Ely. Then came the era of the busy, worldly Norman churchmen, and Abbot Paul, of Caen, set to work with the Roman materials collected by his predecessors to build a grand Norman church on the model, though on a far more extensive scale, of the grand church of St. Stephen, at Caen, the Conqueror's own especial foundation. Of this noble minster of St. Albans the chief features still remain, although transformed by the more graceful and elaborate work of following centuries; but the original work of Paul, of Caen, executed in the grim and sombre Roman tiles, is still existing, as strong and firm as ever, in the eastern bays of nave, tower, and transept, while remains of the still more ancient Saxon church are to be discovered in the curiously-shaped balusters of the triforium in the transepts.

St. Albans has other memories than of its old ecclesiastics. Here was fought one of the first battles of the Wars of the Roses; when the Duke of Somerset, one of the ill-omened Beauforts descended from John of Gaunt and Catherine Swynford, with the imbecile King Henry in his train, held the town against the Duke of York, who was advancing towards London from the north-west, and who had encamped his forces in Keyfield. The town of St. Albans had clustered about the abbey in the form of an irregular cross along the lines of highway, and one of the early Saxon abbots had accentuated this form by founding a church on each of three extremities of the cross—St. Michael's to the south-west, within the ramparts of old Verulam; St. Stephen's, a mile or so to the south; and St. Peter's to the north, that guarded the highway towards Bedford. No wall enclosed the rambling, irregular town, but the entrances of the various streets had been strongly stockaded, and the King's standard was fixed on the slope of the hill at Goselow, looking towards St. Peter's. The Duke of York attacked the barriers in front, and was repulsed with heavy loss, but the Earl of Warwick, working round to the flank of the position, forced an entrance through some gardens in Holy-

well Street, and soon the cries of "A Warwick!" raised in the town itself, took the heart out of the defence. The King was wounded, and taken prisoner, and a great slaughter of noble Lancastrians followed. Somerset himself, the Earls of Stafford and Northumberland, John, Lord Clifford, and many valiant knights were struck down and killed in the mêlée, and were honourably interred by the brethren of the abbey in Our Lady's Chapel.

Some six years after, Warwick found himself once more at St. Albans. Queen Margaret was advancing upon London, with the fierce men of the north, her levies flushed with their recent victory at Wakefield and the death of the Queen's great enemy. Warwick had marched from London to meet the advancing host, and found the Queen's forces encamped on Bernard Heath, just to the north of the town. The rival forces met in the very streets of St. Albans, the leading troops on each side engaging in a fierce street-fight, in which the sturdy northern men had the advantage. Warwick's men were driven pell-mell out of the town, and the sight of their flying comrades affected the whole army with panic, and they fled precipitately back towards London. Then began the plunder and sack of St. Albans, whose unoffending inhabitants were given over to the tender mercies of the rude northern freebooters and borderers. But this cruel outrage proved the eventual ruin of the Queen and her cause. For the citizens of London, who before had been inclined to propitiate her ascendant star, horrified at the news from St. Albans, and dreading a like fate for themselves, shut their gates against the Queen, and took sides decisively with the Earl of March, henceforth King Edward, for London was the true king-maker of those times, and for long ages before and after.

As to the more modern fame of Verulam, it is connected a good deal with the Bacons, who lived at Gorhambury, close by, while the stately effigy of the great Lord Bacon, with hat and ruff, seated in his elbow-chair, is the great ornament of St. Michael's Church. Some fragments are left of the old manor-house of the Bacons, but the present mansion is of the Georgian period. No male descendants of the Bacons were left to inherit the estates, which passed by marriage to Sir Harbottle Grimston, a man of note in his day, one of the Long Parliament, and afterwards Speaker under the Restoration.

Farther afield are the Langleys, one the King's and the other the Abbot's, and in the secluded parish church of the former lies one of the princely Plantagenets—Edmund of Langley, the son of Edward the Third, and the "Old York" of Shakespeare's Richard the Second. And if we visit King Offa's royal seat to the northwards we shall find in the parish church of Offley an inscription recording that the great Saxon King once lived and was buried there. But this last we may hold to be doubtful, for the chroniclers have it that he was buried in a chapel built for the purpose on the banks of the Ouse, perhaps with an eye to the known objection of evil spirits to running water, if, indeed, the waters of the Ouse can be so designated. Tradition, too, has it that the bailiff of Bedford frustrated the monarch's precautions—in other words, that a great flood carried away chapel, coffin, and everything, into unknown chaos.

At Offley we are not far from Hitchin, a pleasant little Quaker town in the midst of green fields and gently sloping hills, and with its little brook running clearly by, and so past the old priory to Knebworth, the ancient and pleasant but somewhat sombre seat of the Lyttons. We may wonder how the sober blood of the ancient wardrobe-keeper to Henry the Seventh should break out at last into the nervous flood of the novelist and dramatist of these latter days, but in truth, though the lands came from the Lyttons, the lineage is none of theirs. The Strodes, Robinsons, Warburtons, and Bulwers all contributed to the making of the brilliant author, and from which line came the vital spark of genius it is hard to say.

But while among the tombs of Kings and Princes, we should not have forgotten Ickleford, where one of a line as ancient as any of our Plantagenets, Henry Boswell, King of the Gipsies, lies buried. And at Barkway, not far off, in the churchyard there, the writer of this chronicle was shown the green mound that covered a mighty puglist, designated by the old-fashioned farmer who served as guide, as the King of the Bruisers.

Nearer the borders of Essex lie the Pelhams, three of them lying as if in a rift among the forests, where adventurous settlers had established themselves. Tradition recounts the fame of one of these early settlers, a mythic hero of the dragon-slaying period—one Piers Shonks, who destroyed a loathly serpent that haunted these parts. It is said that the great old

serpent himself took umbrage at the slaughter of one of his race, and promised Sir Shonks that when his—Shonks's—time had come, he would lay hold of him, whether he was buried within the church or without it. Thereupon Shonks cleverly doubled upon the fiend by having a niche made for himself in the wall of the church and his body placed therein, an event once commemorated by a long inscription, not contemporaneous, of which two lines may be quoted :

But Shonks one serpent kills, t'other defies,
And in this wall as in a fortress lies.

Shonks may be said to be the originator of those curious fancies in the way of burial, of which there are other examples in the county, as at Stevenage, where there was long shown the body of one who reposed on the cross-beam of a barn. Indeed, the county can boast its fair share of eccentrics, living or dead. One of the best known of these was Lucas, the hermit, who lived in an outhouse of his once comfortable dwelling, his only clothing a dirty blanket, secured round his neck by a wooden skewer. And not far from the hermit's cell, the traveller might pass through once fertile fields, all fast returning to a state of nature—saplings springing up in the pastures, burdocks and thistles everywhere, and a few half-wild black cattle grazing in the wilderness.

In Hertfordshire, too, witchcraft flourished long after its general disappearance. One of the last witches seriously put on trial was Jane Wenham, a Hertfordshire woman, actually in the eighteenth century, and at the county assizes at Hertford. A strange feature of the case was the woman's own previous confession, although she elected to plead not guilty at the trial. The jury found her guilty unhesitatingly, notwithstanding the efforts of the judge to make light of the matter, and the woman was condemned to death, although afterwards pardoned and set at liberty. In another case of an alleged witch tried before the same judge, evidence was given that the woman could fly. The judge asked the prisoner if this were really so. She answered in the affirmative, upon which said the judge gravely: "So she might if she could. He knew of no law against it."

Such superstitious fancies are no doubt due to isolated and secluded conditions of existence; and notwithstanding all the facilities of communication now enjoyed, and the fact of Hertfordshire being one of the home-counties, many parts of it are isolated

and secluded still. The great railways pass through it; their trains thunder along full of busy people passing from one great city to another; but there is little communication between village and village—less, perhaps, and less movement and stir, than in the coaching days of old. These old days, indeed, have left their mark upon the country in unmistakable fashion. Its towns are wayside towns, where half the houses have been inns at one time or another; its villages are long drawn out along the roads, and the traditions of the country are of coaches and mails, of noted coachmen and the exploits of the road. The wastes and heaths of other days have been enclosed, and lie in great, wide fields under the plough. But rural hamlets are few and far between, and the internal circulation of the county seems almost to have ceased.

A different state of things, indeed, may be expected when we reach a part of the county that is almost suburban. With Hoddesdon and Broxbourne we seem to come into the glare of street-lamps, and Cheshunt will soon be no more rural than Camberwell.

With Cheshunt, indeed, we may have recollections of Richard Cromwell, the Lord Protector of a summer's day—Carlyle's "poor idle triviality"—who lived out his long, uneventful after-life in retirement at Pengelly House, under the name of Clark. It is told of this Mr. Clark that he kept, in a hair-trunk in his garret, all the loyal addresses he had received when he mounted the chair of Lord Protector, and that he was accustomed to seat all new acquaintances upon this trunk and make them drink to the prosperity of Old England.

In Cheshunt, too, is Theobalds, that favourite hunting-seat of James the First, whose park was originally enclosed by the sagacious Lord Burleigh with a park wall, it is said, full ten miles round. But King James was so pleased with this hunting-ground within a ring-fence that he offered the Cecils, in exchange for it, his manor and palace of Hatfield.

And at Hatfield, which, as the crow flies, is not far from Theobalds, Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, the second son of Burleigh the sagacious, built himself a stately palace, of the heavy Jacobean order, where still live his descendants; and in the church there lies the founder, Robert, himself, under a monument of a taste which was stale and antiquated even when it was designed—the Earl, in his robes and garter, above, and as a fleshless skeleton below.

And now, with a roar and quaking of the earth, the Great Northern express rushes past, skirting the almost royal shades of Hatfield, and it begins to pause in its flight, and to think of shutting off steam for King's Cross, as it rushes in its headlong flight by the roadside station of Barnet.

But Chipping, or Market Barnet, is only just within the limits of the county, and the battle famous as that of Barnet was actually fought in Middlesex; but still, as it is connected with Hertfordshire in most people's minds, and no doubt the headquarters of one of the rival armies were actually in Barnet itself, some account of the fight may be given.

According to Shakespeare, Edward the Fourth and Warwick had actually made a compact at Coventry to meet each other at Barnet and fight out their quarrel. Anyhow, the two armies marched on parallel lines for London; but Edward, with his customary dash, reached the city first, and having secured the allegiance of the Londoners, and recruited his forces, he turned to meet Warwick, who, finding himself outmarched, had halted and encamped his army on Gladmore Heath, a rising ground just to the northwards of Monken Hadley and of the obelisk that now marks the site of the battle-field. Edward reached Barnet at nightfall, and, with hardy daring, encamped his forces in the dry valley, just below Warwick's lines. The King-maker had dragged some heavy guns into position, and all night long canonaded the supposed camp of his foe, who lay snug below the line of fire. At the first dawn of morning—a Sunday morning—and before the sacristan of the village church had crawled out of bed to ring the bell for primes, the King was astir and marshalling his men for the fight. But a thick white mist brooded over everything, and the two armies groped for each other in vain for some time. In fact, deceived by the lay of the ground, Edward had marched his columns too far to the westward, so that his right wing came into action with the right wing of the enemy, while the rest of the army were only beating the air.

The Earl of Oxford, who, with Warwick's brother, commanded on the right, drove the King's men in confusion from the field, who, flying with noise and clamour even to the gates of the city, spread the news everywhere of the King's defeat. But the battle was not half over yet, for, as the air cleared a little, the King,

profiting by his own mistake, wheeled round upon the flank of Warwick's line, exposed by Oxford's victorious advance, and threw the whole into confusion. Warwick, dismounting from his horse, fought like a paladin to restore the battle. And then, as the sun broke through the mists, it shone upon a sight that almost paralysed the arms of Warwick's men. A fresh array of enemies, bearing the cognisance, it seemed, of the sun of York, were hastening to take part in the fight, to be received with shouts of defiance and a stinging flight of arrows. A terrible and fatal mistake, for these in reality were Lord Oxford's men, who bore upon their shields a many-pointed star, fatally mistaken for the sun of York; and these friends, who would have surely turned the scale for Warwick, being received in this hostile fashion, raised the cry of treachery, and dispersed in confusion. Even then, not till Warwick himself had fallen under his wounds, was it known that the battle was won or lost.

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.

IN the late Lord Lytton's excellent comedy, *Money*, Sir John Vesey, after impressing on his daughter's mind his conviction that "men are valued not for what they are, but for what they seem to be," cites his own example, as follows, by way of illustration. "My father got the title by services in the army, and died penniless. On the strength of his services I got a pension of four hundred pounds a year; on the strength of four hundred pounds a year I took credit for eight hundred pounds; on the strength of eight hundred pounds a year I married your mother with ten thousand pounds; on the strength of ten thousand pounds I took credit for forty thousand pounds, and paid Dicky Gossip three guineas a week to go about everywhere calling me 'Stingy Jack.'" This very candid disclosure at once sets the speaker before us in his true light—namely, that of a humbug sailing under false colours, and deserving credit, in his own eyes, for successfully throwing dust into those of his neighbours.

Were we gifted with the Asmodean faculty of seeing things as they really are, and of correctly interpreting the motives and actions of our fellow-creatures, how many Sir John Veseys should we find, whose sole aim in life is to keep up appearances,

and who, either by a superior knowledge of the world, or by a fortuitous train of circumstances, have been able to attain their object without any untimely exposure of their pretensions! It is only doing these indefatigable strugglers for a social position justice to say that their self-imposed task is no sinecure, demanding, as it does, the most unrelaxing efforts to keep their heads above water, and to combine the strictest private economy with the indispensable public display. Certain unavoidable expenses must be incurred, no matter at what sacrifice of personal comfort. They may starve and pinch themselves at home, but society must know nothing of their embarrassments, nor of the pains they take to conceal them. They may dine on the scrag-end of a neck of mutton, but no one except the butcher and their servants need be an iota the wiser. They are commonly supposed to live like other people, and, as long as they keep their own counsel, their acquaintances, many of whom are possibly in a similar predicament, are not likely to be too inquisitive about them.

It is not, however, with the home-life of these social pretenders, nor with the innumerable shifts and contrivances which form so large a part of their daily existence, that we have to do, but with their constant struggles to maintain an equivocal position, and the embarrassing but unavoidable obligations thereby entailed on them. In the first place, whatever may be the "*res angusta domi*," they must appear to be perfectly at their ease. The locality selected for their abode, if not in an exclusively patrician quarter, must at least be within the pale of fashionable civilisation. Mayfair and its immediate neighbourhood, where fancy prices are not the exception but the general rule, and where even the smallest tenement is pompously denominated by the agents a "bijou residence" and charged for accordingly, will naturally be beyond their means; but with a little management they may contrive to be tolerably housed in Sloane Street or Ebury Street, both of which are almost Belgravia, and possess, moreover, the inestimable advantage of being within walking distance of the "Row." Secondly, the young ladies—for of course one or two marriageable daughters form part of the establishment, or the game would not be worth the candle—must be well dressed, even though their maid's fingers be worked to the bone, and the regions across Oxford Street explored over and over again in

quest of cheap purveyors of "*modest et roba*." If she be fairly good-looking, gifted with a sufficiency of small-talk, and well up in what is going on, such a damsel is a trump-card in her parents' hands, and may safely be counted upon as a valuable auxiliary; nor are the accomplishments required of her insuperably difficult to attain. A diligent study of the *Morning Post* and the "society" journals will enable her to hold her own in conversation, while a guinea subscription to *Mudie's*, and an occasional glance at the operatic and theatrical criticisms in the papers will supply her with all she need know about the literary and dramatic novelties of the day. By this means she may not only secure for herself a desirable popularity, but also profit by it as an "*Open Sesame*" to certain houses not easy of access; and the thin end of the wedge thus skilfully inserted, a similar privilege accorded to papa and mamma—if not absolutely objectionable—will follow as a matter of course.

There is one important point which those specially interested in keeping up appearances are bound perpetually to bear in mind—namely, the instability of their social position. It is not enough to have obtained admission to exclusive circles if they have not the necessary tact to ensure themselves against the possible contingency of dropping out of them. Let it once be whispered abroad that the So-and-Sos have for some cause or other been "weeded" from a great lady's visiting-list, or that their intrigues for an invitation to the ball of the season have met with a point-blank refusal, and their whole scheming fabric is irremediably shattered; there are never wanting ears to listen to such reports, nor tongues to propagate them. One rebuff is followed by another; people begin to wonder what claims the So-and-Sos can possibly have to be received in good society, and, a doubt once raised as to their eligibility, the coolest of nods is only too frequently succeeded by the "cut direct."

To steer clear of so deplorable a catastrophe demands infinite caution and diplomacy on the part of social pretenders; they have embarked on a hazardous voyage, and in order to sustain their assumed characters must do as others do, and obey the dictates of fashion, like *Scribe's* old soldier, "*sans murmurer*." When the annual exodus arrives, and not a soul save the two or three millions whom nobody

talks about still lingers in the modern Babylon, they, too, must be on the wing, and show themselves at Trouville or Homburg as the case may be, taking especial care that their movements are duly chronicled in the most accredited "society" organ. A week or two of this compulsory expatriation will suffice; on the plea of extending their tour they may profit by a return-ticket, and quietly regain their homes, where they are at liberty to immure themselves in back-rooms until the day of deliverance has dawned, and London is itself again. Or, if they choose to run the risk of discovery, they may imitate the Frenchman, whose imaginary travels may appropriately be recorded here.

Some years ago, a young Boulevard exquisite of moderate means and parsimonious habits, whom we will call M. Jules, announced to a few of his intimates, not a little to their astonishment, his intention of realising during the ensuing summer months a long-cherished project of visiting Switzerland and the Italian lakes. To his particular friend Agénor he was still more communicative.

"You shall hear from me frequently," he said. "To save postage, I may as well send the letters under cover to my notary, with whom I shall be in correspondence, and he will forward them on to you. If they amuse you, I give you leave to show them to the other fellows at the club."

"All right," replied Agénor; "when do you start?"

"To-morrow."

"Adieu, then, and bon voyage!"

On the following evening, true to his word, M. Jules began his journey; but not exactly in the direction indicated by the Guide Joanne. Instead of taking the train, he merely hailed a fiacre; and, depositing himself and a well-worn valise therein, bade the driver proceed along the quay to that quasi-suburban locality called Gros-Cailrou, where, within a few doors of the establishment exclusively authorised to supply the wants of the smoking community, he had secured two rooms at the very reasonable rate of fifty francs a month.

Some three weeks later, his friend Agénor, as thoroughly Parisian in his habits as Auber or Nestor Roqueplan, and whose absences from his beloved boulevard were limited to occasional excursions to St. Germain or Ville d'Avray, received from the supposed tourist a lengthy epistle, dated from Chamounix, but bearing the ordinary Paris postmark, and describing

in highly picturesque language the experiences and adventures of the writer. According to his account, he had met with several most agreeable travelling companions, among whom an adorable English "mees" was particularly and mysteriously alluded to, inheritress of an enormous fortune, and—if Agénor's correspondent might be credited—by no means indisposed to accept his homage. This missive was followed by a second from Como, and a third from Baveno, couched in the same ultra-poetic style, but ambiguously hinting that the inconstant M. Jules had successively and unaccountably transferred his allegiance from the Britannic heiress to a Belgian Countess and a Florentine Marchesa. In short, by the time that the first detachment of clubmen had returned to their smoking-room and baccarat, at least half-a-dozen letters had found their way to Agénor's bachelor apartment in the Rue Godot. What the recipient thought of them it would be premature to say; but the way in which his colleagues of the Cercle des Montards literally screamed with laughter on listening to certain extracts from them would probably have more astonished than flattered the ingenious narrator.

Early in September, the first autumnal gathering on the Longchamps racecourse beheld Agénor at his accustomed post on the grass-plot of the "enceinte du passage." He had not been long there before he heard himself accosted by name, and, turning, perceived M. Jules advancing towards him with his usual jaunty and self-confident air.

"Well, here I am again!" began the soi-disant Helvetian explorer; "none the worse for my trip, you see; a little change does a man a world of good. You got my letters, of course?"

"Oh yes," said Agénor, in a somewhat constrained tone; "I got them."

"Graphic, were they not? I felt sure they would interest you. So I may congratulate myself that you are satisfied?"

"Not quite," dryly remarked the other. "You owe me fifty francs."

"Fifty francs! What for?"

"For your last month's rent of the rooms at Gros-Cailrou"—here M. Jules's countenance suddenly fell, and assumed an unmistakably cadaverous hue—"which, doubtless in the hurry of moving, you have forgotten to pay."

"How on earth did you find out?" stammered M. Jules.

"No very difficult matter," replied Agénor, "considering that the house is

question happens to be my property—a fact of which you were apparently unaware. So, my good fellow, as in these bad times we poor landlords are dependent for subsistence on our lodgers, and can't afford to indulge in such luxuries as Swiss tours and flirtations with Countesses, you will infinitely oblige me by handing over the money."

A compatriot of M. Jules, even less favoured by fortune than that worthy, devised the following very harmless method of satisfying his craving for a little temporary notoriety. In the days when the Café de Paris still existed, he would occasionally enter that renowned temple of gastronomy—or the Maison Dorée, by way of variety—at the fashionable dinner-hour, and enquire of the head-waiter, in a sufficiently audible voice to attract the attention of all present, if some apocryphal Count or Marquis had already arrived. On receiving—as was natural enough—an answer in the negative, he would express his astonishment and finally retire, remaining for some moments on the steps of the establishment in full view of the passers-by, flourishing his toothpick with the air of a man who had dined well. When he judged that he had properly asserted his social position, he would quietly cross the boulevard, and, repairing to one of the two-franc restaurants in the vicinity of the Palais Royal, absorb, with an enviable relish, the inscrutable dainties prepared for the frequenters of the "gargote," with the proud consciousness of having done his duty.

Nowhere, perhaps, has the folly of keeping up appearances under false pretences been more amusingly exemplified or more pitilessly shown up than in Theodore Hook's novel, Jack Brag. The audacious impostor is always on the point of succeeding, but never does; something invariably happens to dash the cup from his lips, and embitter his anticipated triumph with the dread of detection and consequent exposure. And yet one can hardly help sympathising with the little man, so ingenious are his projects and so indefatigable his efforts to realise them.

Nevertheless, he came to grief, as such pretenders, in the long run, generally do.

PRINCE FERENDIA'S PORTRAIT.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

IT was the close of a long, grey, cheerless summer's day—a day on which I found it impossible to settle peacefully to anything indoors or out; a day of restlessness, of gloomy forebodings, and the worst of bad

spirits. I had been conducting myself like "a cat before a thunderstorm," according to my friend and partner in the studio, Jack Morris, who ended by taking his departure on some errand of his own, and leaving me in silence and solitude. I persuaded myself that it had been Jack himself who had prevented my settling to anything steadily, and getting out my writing-case, began to turn over the pages of my unfinished article on Japanese Landscape Art, and resolved that it should be in the editor's hands by next morning.

I wrote on perseveringly through the clamour of church-bells and the sounds of feet trudging churchwards—a sound distinctly unlike that of the same feet bound on week-day errands—and on in the stillness that followed the cessation of both. I had the house to myself, all the other lodgers were out, and a great, silent, echoing, empty place it seemed. Even the noise of carriage-wheels outside had no power to induce me to lift my head and look out of the window.

"Some of Jack's Morris's swell friends," I thought as I listened to my landlord's feet shuffling up the steps from his abode in the basement, and the opening of the front door.

The shuffling steps ascended, however, and stopped outside my door. Other steps followed—a man's tread, firm and vigorous, then the soft rustle of a woman's dress.

"A lady and gentleman to see you, sir," announced my landlord, and bustled in to light my gas.

"I hope you do not consider a visit at this hour an unpardonable intrusion?" spoke a pleasant voice in the gloom. "This is the only time when we both happen to be disengaged, and our business here concerns us equally. Allow me to introduce you to my wife, the Princess Ferendia."

I bowed to her highness—a tall lady wrapped in a dark mantle, which she wore with singular grace. Her broad, plummy hat was pulled down over her brows, and a smile, the flash of a pair of dark eyes, and the sparkle of her earrings, were all I could distinguish.

I began to apologise for the darkness, but she put up her hand in deprecation of my worthy landlord's unsuccessful operations with a lucifer.

"This light is so pleasant, quite enough to talk in; and that is all we have come for."

"The princess and I were both much struck by a portrait of yours in the Academy, Mr. Jervoise," the Prince went on—"Lord Belhaven's, I mean. He is a cousin of mine, so we could appreciate the excellence of the likeness."

"It is admirable, too, as a picture," added the Princess. "We were both delighted."

I was delighted with it myself, only, of course, I didn't say so, only observing sedately :

"Lord Belhaven was a capital subject."

"I hope you will think the same of Prince Ferendia."

Her voice struck me as odd. It was full and musical, with a delicious foreign inflection, and I wondered why it should grate on my ear so harshly.

"In fact nothing will serve the Princess but that you shall paint my portrait," the Prince explained ; "and we have come to see when and how it can be arranged. How many sittings must I give you ? It's a long business, isn't it, and an awkward time to choose, but——"

An expressive shrug finished the sentence.

I tried not to lower my position by looking excessively gratified ; but a commission like this, following my hitherto solitary success, was as exhilarating as unexpected. I knew that if ever I did make my mark it would be as a painter of portraits, but I had imagined it necessary to make a name in some other line first before I should be much sought after. How I blessed Lord Belhaven, who had paid off cheaply the obligations he was under to our family by giving me the honour of a sitting or two !

"When can you begin ?" asked the lady abruptly.

"In about ten days' time I think I shall be at liberty," I answered her, trying to consult my note-book in the lessening light.

"Ten days !" she cried. "Impossible ! I want you to begin at once—to-morrow."

"That is, I fear, equally impossible. I have several engagements, and work that I should like to clear off first. I will do my best if your time is pressing——"

"It is, it is !" she cried, with a ring of passion almost in her tone which struck me at the moment as odd, but which I set down to a bit of foreign exaggeration. "The time we have is so short. I thought you would be glad to work for me. I heard you were a rapid painter, too ! How long shall you be ?"

I rather resented this. I had great ideas of the dignity of my profession, and did not choose to be possibly ordered about like a dilatory tradesman by any Prince or Princess of them all.

I did not reply at once, searching for a polite but firm mode of assuring her highness that I must take my own way or none.

The Prince interposed, laughing :

"You'll have to give her what she wants at once, or quarrel with us outright. That's what it usually comes to in the end. I always give in myself—it's the shortest way."

"Nay, I am not so unreasonable, she protested. "Have I offended Mr. Jervoise that he does not speak ? Is he frowning ? I wish I could see his face," and she turned hers to mine in the dark.

The gas-tap that regulated the studio lights was at my hand, and on this hint I turned it on full, and then stood for the moment transfixed and struck speechless by the wonderful beauty of the woman who stood smiling before me. She had risen to shake her cloak from her shoulders, and now sank down gracefully again into a soft nest of white fur lining, at the same moment doffing her plumed hat and dropping it on the ground beside her chair. I suppose she was on her way to, or had just come from some entertainment, for she was in full dress, and wore a gown with a foundation of deep orange satin, which showed in streaks and flashes through a tawny foam of lace.

Her bare, creamy, satin-soft arms and rounded neck showed dazlingly fair, banded and clasped by rough barbaric-looking, uncut gems in a dull gold setting. But her face—how can I describe the witchery of those long, liquid, night-dark eyes that, as their dusky lashes lifted slowly, shone full into mine with a mystic sparkle in their violet depths, while the full rose-red lips parted in a honey-sweet smile ? There was power in the face, too, in the firm outline of the jaw, and the moulding of the forehead, off which the velvet-black hair was brushed and coiled high, leaving one soft, little delicate tendril to escape and curl round the tiny ear. I don't know how long I stood gazing in stupid wonder, while the Prince, his hand on the back of her chair, smiled with an air of complacent proprietorship, amused, no doubt, at my open, clownish admiration. I recalled myself, and blushed and stammered something, and

obeying an almost imperceptible gesture of those jewelled fingers, advanced and took my place on a low seat near the Princess.

"Let me see that stupid book," she said, leaning towards me over the arm of her chair. "There are no engagements in it that you cannot tear out and give the time to me."

The Prince yawned slightly, and turned away to inspect a picture on my easel.

"Settle it between yourselves," he said; "I am a busy man and a poor man. This is the Princess's whim, and she must find the time and money to gratify it."

"Did you ever know a woman who could not find enough of both to pay for her own fancies? We shall give no ball this season, and you will make no bets at Goodwood, and go no more autumn cruises, and not touch a card till this is paid for. So shall you find time and money in plenty;" and she laughed a light little laugh, and then bending over me, asked softly: "You will do this for me?"

I bent my head in acquiescence.

"You will begin at once, and with all speed? The time is so short. I know I am begging a great thing, but you will grant it me?"

Her voice was full of suppressed pain or impatience—I could not understand which.

"I will. You shall have the best I can give," I declared fervently, and the fair white hand fell gently on mine as if in acknowledgment. I stooped and pressed my lips lightly on the slender fingers, then raising my eyes saw that she was leaning back wearily, as if exhausted by some effort, with closed eyes and ashy lips.

The sound of the door opening abruptly startled us both. Jack Morris looked in on us, but at the sight of the splendid Princess his lips contracted into a silent whistle, and he as abruptly disappeared.

I hastened to explain his entrance to the Princess. Her husband, returning from his inspection of the pictures, looked interested.

"Jack Morris! I thought so. We haven't met for many a year, but we were great friends once. Poor old Jack! I must leave a card for him."

While he was pencilling some words on it I looked at him attentively, as I was perfectly warranted in doing, and agreed with his wife that he was an admirable subject. He was splendidly handsome, with the highest type of English good looks—for English he was undoubtedly, despite the fluent French in which he was addressing a few under-toned remarks to

"Hersilie." Perfectly regular features were lightened up by bold, laughing eyes of the bluest of blue, and the flash of a ready smile under his thick, yellow moustache. His figure was tall and well-developed—perhaps a trifle heavy owing to want of training, his hands white and strong. He was a man for men to look on with admiration, and women to adore. Did the Princess? I wondered. She kept her face rather averted from him in speaking, and I thought her voice took a tone of constraint. That was what I fancied when I came to think it all over afterwards. Then I had leisure to invent an explanation, and decided that there had been a quarrel, and that this portrait was to be a peace-offering.

"I hope that you and Morris will be able to dine with us soon," he said pleasantly. "Tuesday? It is very odd how few days we unlucky mortals have which we can call our own. By the way, when do you want me here?"

"Not here at all," interposed his wife hastily. "I want to see Mr. Jervoise at work. At our house to-morrow. Two o'clock, if you please."

"To-morrow? That won't do. I'm going down with Ponsonby and those other fellows——"

"No, no; you must put them off. Tell them I must have you for this. There will be plenty of time after Mr. Jervoise has finished. You will be quite free after Mr. Jervoise has finished," she repeated with a sort of catch in her voice.

I supposed it was one of the ways of great ladies to become hysterical if contradicted, and at another time might have been amused at her. Now I was too bewildered and oppressed by an uncomfortable foreboding of coming evil to do anything but note the appointment carefully.

"To-morrow, and the next day, and the next, till you have finished. And I want it finished by Thursday," were the Princess's last words.

I declined to commit myself further, and stood looking on while the Prince dropped her mantle on her shoulders with a grace which I felt powerless to emulate, and then they both took leave of me.

CHAPTER II.

"A GLOVE, a piece of orange-peel, the end of a cigar, Once trod on by a princely heel—how beautiful they are!"

quoted Jack Morris half an hour later, picking up a delicate bit of crushed white

stephanotis that I had seen in the Prince's coat. "Not to speak of a card with a coronet in gold adorning our humble overmantel, and a carriage with noble liveries and coats-of-arms all over the panels waiting outside. It had a very good effect. I only wish somebody had happened to drop in just then."

"Why didn't you come in just now?"

"How did I know that you didn't want to keep them to yourself? Who's Ferendia?"

"You ought to know better than I. He left that card for you."

Jack made a small grimace of incredulity as he picked it up, which merged into an expression of mild astonishment as he read.

"Laurie Bosworth! So that's what has become of him! Yes, we were friends of yore, at Vienna, when his uncle, Lord Fotheringhay, was ambassador there. Poor old Laurie!"

"Why aren't you friends now?"

"Lost sight of one another. Lucky for me, perhaps. The old story of the brass pot and the earthenware. He was an expensive acquaintance, too. I was in the diplomatic line myself in those days—not a bad one, only neither Laurie nor I seemed precisely cut out for it. He kept his noble relative in perpetual hot water by his indiscretions, and had to be gently cast adrift at last. I deserted diplomacy for newspaper work, you know."

I hadn't known it, but I thought it very likely, as there were few of the highways or byways of life that Jack Morris had not trodden during his brief earthly pilgrimage, and many and various were the friends he had made in his journeyings. I had seen him receive a gracious syllable from a resplendent nobleman on his way to some Court ceremonial, and a wink of recognition from a suspected dynamitard in the dock within the same twenty-four hours. My only subject of wonderment was that his information did not extend farther, but he seemed at a loss when I mentioned the Princess, and asked me if I had any idea who she was.

I had heard the name before, and ransacked my brain for chance fragments of information.

"I think I heard Lord Belhaven mention her. It's a Servian or Herzegovinian principality, I believe. He took the title on his marriage by Royal permission."

"Very possibly; royalty would be so very likely to interfere. What was she—Russ or Slav?"

"How can I tell? Do you know a Slav when you see one? I don't," I answered him somewhat crossly.

Jack was sketching her profile from memory with a bit of charcoal, and doing it very well. I told him so.

"That's not your Princess, that I know of. It's only a woman she reminded me of. I used to know her once in Odessa—not a Princess by any means."

I don't mind confessing that it was with a light step and a complacent spirit that I took my way next morning to the address that the Prince had given me. The other engagements I had pleaded were not all sham, but nevertheless might all be conveniently postponed, and this commission seemed more promising the more I looked at it. The Ferendias were well known, and, it would appear from Jack's account, well connected. I might call on Lord Belhaven that afternoon, I thought, and gain a few more particulars about them; but both Jack Morris and a Peerage which I had consulted vouched for his relationship to the Hon. Laurence Augustus Bosworth, of whose marriage, however, the book, being an old one, gave no account.

When I arrived at my destination, the door was opened by a servant in one of the rather over-magnificent liveries which had so impressed Morris, who ushered me upstairs into the drawing-room, where the Princess was awaiting me, pacing to and fro impatiently.

She turned upon me as I entered, looking even handsomer than the night before in her flowing muslin morning-robe, with her hair loosely coiled and fastened with a diamond pin.

She gave me her two small hands—how white they were, and what burning little palms!—and smiled in my face, while she upbraided me for my want of punctuality.

"But I am already before my time," I pleaded.

"Your time! It is a question of my time!" she pouted charmingly. "And by that I find you late—so late. See, I could not commence my toilette for fear of missing you, and the day is passing. Where is the Prince?" she demanded, turning to the servant who stood waiting for further orders.

"His highness has not yet returned."

"Gone!" in a shrill tone of anger. "When he knew that I wanted him! Go and find him directly!" and she stamped her foot, and pointed to the door so

imperiously, that the man retreated with undignified precipitancy.

"Calm yourself, dear Princess. He is here. I have brought him back," said a voice close by us. A portly little grey-moustached gentleman was standing there, though how or when he had entered I could not divine. "I knew your plan for to-day, and persuaded him to return. He begs Mr. Jervoise will do him the favour to come to his room for one minute. A question of costume, I believe."

The Princess had dropped my hand suddenly.

"Ah, cher M. Nicolas, you never fail me!" she said with a conventional little smile. "This is Mr. Jervoise."

M. Nicolas bowed in the finest manner, and blinked amicably at me through his spectacles, while he gave me to understand that my reputation was already European, and that this meeting crowned the felicity of his existence.

Then he offered to conduct me to the Prince's apartment.

Ferendia, in his shirt-sleeves, greeted me with a sort of affable exasperation.

"You have fairly driven me into a corner, I find. So now to get the thing over as soon as possible. What am I to wear, and how am I to be taken?"

The discussion that followed was lengthy and animated. Ferendia was as concerned about his appearance as any woman, and was evidently determined that justice should be done to all his points. The valet was summoned, coats, waistcoats, and cloaks without end produced, and the Princess requested to come and assist us with her opinion. I was slightly amused to see how seriously this great muscular fellow took the question of the more or less becomingness of a colour or texture. His own taste leaned to the bright and florid. The severity of modern English dress was pain and grief to him. The beruffled and beribboned Stuart costume, or the embroidered coats and laced cravats of the early Georges, were after his own heart. Deeply did he lament that he had no uniform which he was entitled to wear.

"I ought to wear our national costume, *Hersilie*," he cried with a sudden inspiration. "It will be the proper thing to do when we go down to Ferendia. It's a splendid dress. The same as the *Herzogin*. I wore it at a ball in Paris. We will telegraph for it."

"But Mr. Jervoise must begin to-day," she answered, and I saw her link her hands

nervously together and glance at M. Nicolas. "We cannot wait till the dress comes."

"Now, where is the hurry? We shall be in town all the season, and I dare say one day is as good as another to Mr. Jervoise. I shall wait and do the thing properly, if it is to be done at all."

He made a sign to his valet to clear away the clothes that were lying about. His wife looked again at M. Nicolas.

"Pardon," he interposed, "but the national costume? Ah, it is magnificent, but—well, for a ball in Paris the costumier's version may do well enough; for a picture that is to remain as an heirloom, that one will exhibit, engrave," and he shrugged his shoulders and shook his head vigorously with immense significance, "it must be correct to every detail. The embroidery of the pelisse is the work of a lifetime. It is the secret of certain families. Then the scarf for the waist, and the arms. Where will you get them?"

"They are all to be had somehow, so it will be as well to be seeing after them at once, as I shall certainly want them all, this autumn at latest," said the Prince sulkily. "I don't understand the mighty difficulty, either."

I hastened to interpose. Would the Prince give me a sitting or two for his likeness, and the costume could be put in after. Meanwhile, there was a certain coat, heavy with braiding, and lined and trimmed with costly fur, that it would be a perfect joy to me to paint. He assented reluctantly, recovering his complacency by degrees, as he noted how the soft richness of the furs threw up the blond colouring of his face, and the close-fitting shape the muscular grace of his handsome figure.

"I can wear my orders, you know, *Hersilie*. They will give it the touch of colour it wants."

We left him to complete his toilette, and went to make the necessary arrangements. I found that the Princess had set her heart on my working in her boudoir, a tiny gem of a room, of which my easel, when set up, absorbed half the available space; and where a south sun streamed in through tinted blinds. I made her understand the objections to the arrangements, and, assisted by M. Nicolas, we perambulated the house in search of a more suitable studio. One room after another presented some objections, till

M. Nicolas had a happy thought, and conducted me in triumph to a small apartment opening on the turn of the stairs, leading to the servants' attics. It was over a bath-room, and was, I suppose, intended for a linen-closet or store-room, for it was unfurnished, except for an oil-cloth on the floor and a small stove. The light was excellent, and there was quite room enough for my purpose. M. Nicolas called the footman, and laboured with him in my cause in quite a touchingly zealous manner, dragging boxes and planks to form a sort of stage, adjusting curtains, carrying chairs in and out, and finally bearing all my possessions upstairs, and assisting me to arrange them, till his brow grew damp and his coat dusty. The Princess watched him silently and thanked him when he had ended; but her interest in the work seemed to have cooled down a little, or she repressed it in his presence. When her husband appeared, debonair, smiling, with his orders on and a cigarette in his fingers, she took a seat where she could watch me working. M. Nicolas, in his capacity of tame-cat, trotted in and out, and once reminded her that she had her toilette to make and an appointment to keep that afternoon, but she answered him with such tigerish impatience that I didn't wonder at his withdrawal in pique. I painted in silence, while the Prince talked and smoked cigarettes incessantly. He was a delightful companion. He had lived abroad the greater part of his life, but not enough to alienate him from home interests. He seemed intimate with every name of note in the society of that season, with plenty to say about them all. I could not wonder at his universal popularity. He had been married two years he told me, and since then he and his wife had done nothing but run about and make friends, and amuse themselves everywhere.

"My wife and I, and M. Nicolas, I should say; for he has the gift of turning up and joining us in all sorts of unexpected places—a sort of relation of Hersilie's. Lives at Ferendia, and runs over to report how things get on now and then. It is very amiable of him to take as much trouble as he does on our behalf; I suppose he makes it pay somehow. Anyhow, it is fast becoming a bore. He is rich, you know, and perfectly presentable, and wild to get into society in England. There is no reason why he shouldn't, but he is too shy to get in on his own merits, so she takes him in her train everywhere. He

makes himself very useful, but one gets tired of him. I won't stand him next year, remember that, Hersilie."

She lifted her dark eyes from the cigarette she was rolling.

"No; you will not have to stand him next year."

I worked with all speed, and was for once actually satisfied with the progress I made. The Prince had had enough long before I was disposed to leave off, but the Princess witched him into patience, first for one half-hour and then for another, till I began to feel I might as well cease before spoiling the good commencement. The Princess seemed impatient of my preparations for departure.

"Can you do no more?" she asked. I had to assure her that it would be only waste of time, and then she demanded at what time I could come next day. I named an impossibly early hour, as I thought, but she agreed with eagerness. I wished, meanwhile, to go on with the portrait a little at home, I said. The carriage was promptly ordered round for me, and was to call for me next morning. Meanwhile M. Nicolas offered me a brandy-and-soda, and the Princess left us. A pleasant, frank, chirpy, old-young gentleman, just the person for a useful tame-cat in such an establishment, with a profound reverence for all things English. I gave him an invitation to look in at the studio any time, which he accepted with gratitude.

RUSSET AND GREEN.

A STORY IN SIX CHAPTERS. CHAPTER VI.

MANY was the mile of barren street trod by Mr. Barton that night, in the long and aimless wanderings which lasted from the moment of his quitting Mary Kennett and her husband, until the broad morning sunlight drove him home, animated by the one settled purpose which the shock that had broken his dream-palace into fragments had left him. At first he had felt numbed and stupid, and had wondered, vaguely and almost uninterestedly, at his own calm under this heavy blow. He wandered into the streets, and walked on, mile after mile, feeling nothing but a muffled aching at his heart, and a sense of heavy weariness, until, stirred, perhaps, to fresh action by the bodily exercise of walking, his mind began to work again. Then the muffled aching grew keener and keener, and the weariness heavier, until they seemed to fill all his being, and he felt that they would never

leave him till his death, and that all his life long the same monotony—the same springless, dull inelasticity of mind and heart—would weigh upon him.

All natures have their anodynes in trouble, to which they naturally recur. The drunkard turns to his favourite beverage, and imbibes sufficient liquefied peace of mind to make him forget it for a few brief hours, until he wakes to find it doubly intensified by an aching brain and nerves unstrung. The wrathful man smashes things and swears, proceedings which have a wonderfully soothing effect upon some organisations. The truly strong man turns to duty, as infallibly as the magnetic-needle, released from any chance encumbrance which has diverted it, turns to the loadstone of the pole. And no sooner had the cloud which seemed suddenly to have fallen about his heart and brain evaporated sufficiently to let him see in which direction duty lay, than Mr. Barton turned towards it. It was characteristic of him that when once the shock had passed, his pity was so engrossed by the solitary old woman, and the friendless girl, and the poor, shiftless scamp himself who had wrought all their unhappiness, that he had none to bestow on his own troubles. They were bitter enough. Very barren, and poor, and empty of all comfort, joy, or pleasure, life loomed before him. Labour and solitude—to those two words his whole existence had been narrowed in a moment. With that calm heroism which great hearts alone can know, he bent his head and acquiesced with destiny. Nay, he did more. He saw Mrs. Travers's last days sweetened by the repentance of her prodigal; he saw the woman he loved with pure and passionate devotion slipping farther and farther from him in her renewed and growing love for her reclaimed husband; and conquered selfish sorrow so completely as to find joy almost unmixed in that prophetic vision. Such a passion as his is not to be conquered in a moment, and many and furious were the gusts which shook him. But still, with lofty hope and sublime self-abnegation, he stood four-square against them like a tower.

Before the hour arranged for the prodigal's visit, there was the accustomed round of daily labour to be got through, and to be done in less time than was usually given to it. And Mrs. Travers must be warned of the joy which awaited her. At her age, a too sudden revulsion

of feeling—even though the news which should occasion it might be as joyful as was this—is dangerous. The widowed and deserted mother had breathed too long the atmosphere of calm despair to be so suddenly transported into purer air, and the shock of the wanderer's return would need greater fortitude to meet it than would have been needed to encounter even the certain news of his death or his endless estrangement.

Those who met the Rev. John that day were conscious of a change in him. He was as patient, as gentle, as quick with help or counsel as of old, but the almost boyish cheerfulness which had hitherto distinguished him was gone, and had given place to a settled gravity. His whole life had been latterly passed in ways which demanded self-repression, and trained to a rare degree of strength the faculty of concentration which he had always possessed. Like all men who are truly great in character, the one thing to which for the moment he set his hand was to him the one thing at that moment existent. He was thorough in all his pursuits. Whether the task of the minute was of the gravest possible importance, or a mere trifle, it claimed and engrossed all his attention until its completion. So when he set out upon his daily round that morning, he did his uttermost to leave behind him all thoughts of yesterday's bitterness, and to forget it as completely during his working hours as if it had been the commonest of the trivial disappointments to which all men are alike subject. But it was always in the background of his thoughts, and coloured all his being, as a spot of dye will permeate and change the hue of a vessel of pure water.

At mid-day he bent his steps towards Beatrice Place, and was admitted. He passed up the stairs, and found the room in which the last ten years of the bereaved mother's life had been spent, untenanted. He rapped at the inner door leading to her bedchamber, but received no answer. The door was ajar, and he glanced in. The room was empty. Standing in some perplexity, he heard voices in the rooms above, and recognised Mary's, and the deeper tones of Mrs. Travers. He mounted to the upper storey, and was met upon the landing by the former. She gave him her hand, and led him into the room. In strange and striking contrast to the rest of the house, it bore signs as of long and continued habitation. The furniture

was bright and tasteful; there were flowers, and stands, and shelves, and books, easy-chairs, a writing-desk, and through the open door beyond was to be seen a brightly-furnished bedroom. Mrs. Travers was sitting beside the window. She rose at his entrance, and advanced to meet him. Mr. Barton almost started at the sight of her, so great was the change in her appearance since he had last seen her. Her eyes were clear; there was a flush of colour in her cheeks; her face had lost many of the lines which long years of grief and pain had worn in it—the heavy mass of ink-black hair seemed no longer a mockery, but the fitting accompaniment of revived and restored beauty.

"I am changed, am I not?" she said, with Mr. Barton's hand in hers. "I am young again. Hope has come back to me. My Roland is found. Oh, dear friend, I knew you would not seek always in vain."

"But it was not I who found him. It was by the merest chance——"

"I know—I know. She has told me all, and I have not only a son, but a daughter. We shall live together, all three. This was his room—my Roland's room. These are his books, and his piano, and the flowers he loved best, renewed every day since he left me—my poor prodigal! We will live together. I cannot wonder that he went away. I was a poor companion for his youth and brightness. I was grave, severe, too unrelenting, too unforgiving. But now—— No, he will not leave me again, because then he must leave Mary too. And between us we will love him so well that—— He is coming back again, John. Ah, you were boys together; you knew him. How brave, and handsome, and clever he was! See, here is his portrait. Five years old! I was only five-and-twenty then, and that is five-and-twenty years ago." She touched the pictured face with a touch as gentle as that which had many a time dwelt on the cheek of its original. "Five-and-twenty years!" she repeated with an indrawn breath. "And ten years spent away from me—ten years without a word or sign! Oh, my poor prodigal, come back to me—come quickly! I have waited so long! I have been patient; I have tried to bend my heart to the will of Heaven. Ten years! Do you know what ten years of hunger is—ten years of thirst? I have hungered and thirsted for him, for the sight of his face, the touch of his hand, the sound of his voice. I have forgotten all for him—

even God. I have made an idol unto myself of my own flesh and blood, and God has punished me—heavily, with many stripes. I have sinned, but it was for him."

"Sinned!" cried Mr. Barton. "Love is no sin."

"I sinned," she repeated, with a touch of the old bitterness of voice, and a shadow of the old frown upon her face. "I made unto myself an idol, and I was punished. But I repented. It was but last night"—there was an exaltation in her face not of this world, and her eyes gleamed with a light of almost unearthly softness and splendour—"it was but last night that my stubborn heart was broken. I prayed, not, as I had clamoured for ten years, to see my son again, but for strength to bear the Sovereign will, whatever it might be. And to-day he comes back to me. I am pardoned."

She bent her head, still with that glow upon her face, and her lips moved silently. Mary stood beside her, with an arm about her neck. She took the hand in hers and stroked it gently.

"He is coming, dear. Be patient. He is coming back to us, our poor prodigal! We must be brave; we must meet him with smiling faces; he must not doubt his welcome. He has suffered, too, dear. Never doubt that. 'Ten years—ten years in a far land. And when his father saw him, a great way off' And there is no love like a mother's—not even a father's, not even a wife's. I know, dear—I know," she answered to a touch upon her shoulder. "But a mother's love is the greatest. He is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and he is coming back to me—coming back, repentant and pardoned, to peace and home."

She was silent again for a moment, still gently smoothing Mary's hand with her own.

"You were always good, John; always brave, and kind, and helpful; always his friend. We will have the good old times back again—the days when you were boys together, and used to fill the house with your noise and laughter. There has been little laughter here for ten long years, but now he is coming back we will be as we were; we will be all young together again. Though I am afraid that I have lost the trick of being young. Perhaps Mary will teach it to me again. It used to be easy enough to laugh. When one is young, one laughs and cries so easily. And I have done neither for ten years. Shall I ever laugh or cry again, I wonder?"

And more to her own amazement than to theirs, she broke suddenly into a very storm of tears.

Blessed are the pure in heart—aye, blessed indeed, with blessings of this life which may dimly foreshadow to our earthly senses the glory of their promised benediction in the world to come. There was no touch of bitterness, no drop of gall in the pure draught of joy which the memory of that scene was to John Barton as he sat alone that day awaiting the promised visit from Roland Travera. The fiery test to which his love had been put in the last four-and-twenty hours had proved its quality. The hopes he once had cherished were dead and buried beyond resurrection, and he could say "Requiescat in pace" above their grave from his heart, and feast his pure soul upon the prophecy of the sweeter flowers which should blossom above their resting-place. The woman he loved should be happy; the widowed mother, who had been to him as his mother in the bygone but unforgotten days, had wept her last tears in his sight. Strengthened and chastened by love and counsel, the repentant prodigal should go astray no more. He should be so environed by happy influences that no shadow of the outer world should ever fall on him again. And for him, John Barton, there was work, and in it enough of solace and of hope to keep him whole-hearted for the struggle. The widow and the fatherless should find his hand the more open, his voice the sweeter and more strengthening; should find each their share of that deeper stream of affection which his first great earthly love had unsealed within his heart. Between Mary and himself there should be esteem, brotherly affection, the love which every man may extend to every woman, and find himself the richer for the gift. Her influence should dwell about him, with purity and increase of strengthfulness, and her tranquil and tender spirit should radiate from that once desolate house into many a den of infamy which her feet would never enter, nor her eyes behold. A perfect life, a life of peace, and strength, and helpfulness; a life as free of any bitter-sweet of passion as of abiding sorrow.

Time fled by unheeded in these and kindred thoughts, and he was only aroused from his reverie by a clock striking. He stood still in his measured march up and down the limits of his sitting-room to listen to the sound. One, two, three, Three!

His ears had deceived him, surely. No, his watch corroborated the metallic tongue. Roland had promised for two o'clock. In the few parting words which had passed between himself and Mary that morning she had told him of the prodigal's reiterated assurance that he would come. An hour late! Well, after all, an hour is not much; there are a thousand and one suggestible accidents of city life which may cause a man to break the most important of all possible engagements by sixty minutes. The Rev. John resumed his march—he was one of the great race of peripatetic thinkers, to whom bodily motion is almost indispensable to sustained thought, and which counts among its members Frederick and Napoleon, surnamed the Great—and plunged anew into reverie, to be again disturbed and recalled by the striking of four o'clock. If Roland should not come! Impossible! "He will be here!" That phrase, spoken aloud, was repeated by his echoing footsteps, and another hour's continuous marching beat it out with a rhythmic regularity. "He will be here. He will be here." That voiceless monotone ceased at the renewed chant of the clock proclaiming the hour of five, and another took its place. "If he should not come—if he should not come!" He quickened and slackened his pace to get rid of this irritating repetition; but it accommodated itself to the beat of his footsteps, and strive as he would to bring them back again, the dream-pictures of the future, which had looked so bright but two hours since, had lost their clearness of outline and their comforting richness of colour, and seemed dim and faded. He threw himself into a chair to silence that remorseless rhythm which had accompanied his steps; but it rang in his head still, and would not be quieted, and he could not sit inactive and listen to its maddening voice. He took a book, but from the familiar page the same phrase stared him in the face, and again he began his measured tramp. The clock chimed six, and the phrase changed. "He won't come—he won't come!"—that was the burden of the muffled song his feet made upon the carpet. He thought of Mary and the widowed mother sitting together, nursing each other's fading hopes, praying, fearing, listening to every rattle of wheels, every passing footstep in the street without. In his heart he cursed his own stupidity in ever letting Roland slip through his fingers when once he had held

him, and bitter thoughts assailed him respecting the prodigal. He tried to beat them down, but they would return. He remembered how, years ago, Roland's apparent natural incapacity to keep an engagement had been the theme of many a jest from his mother and himself. That such and such a thing might happen when the sky fell or when Roland kept an engagement, had been a household proverb among them. That jesting declaration seemed to have a very grim reality about it now. It gave a new rhythm for his feet to march to. "When the sky falls—when the sky falls!" He beat that out for another hour, and then, as the last stroke of seven died out upon the air, there came a knock at the door below. He stood still and listened, the beating of his heart almost suffocating him. "A gentleman to see you, sir," announced the servant, and disappeared with a command to introduce the visitor, who, immediately appearing, disclosed himself to Mr. Barton's disappointed eyes as Mr. Samuel Bunch.

Mr. Bunch was pale, and disturbed, and dusty, and, from the greasy gleam of his features and the heaviness of his breath, had obviously been running hard. He took off the soiled white hat, and mopped his steaming forehead with his coat-cuff.

"Hadn't got the coin for a cab," he said pantingly. "Done the distance in thirty-five minutes, and called in at Beatrice Place, too. Not so dusty. You must come back with me."

"Come back! Where?"

"St. Thomas's. Roland Travers—that's his name, ain't it?—is a dying."

"Great Heaven! What does this mean?"

"I was there," panted Bunch in rapid explanation. "I was doin' a 'ospital subject. When I'd finished, a case came in on a stretcher. I see his face, an' knew it. He was the party as met you with Miss Kennett last night in the park. Been gambling in a place in York Street—Poverty Corner, you know, where the out-o'-work pros goes on Fridays. Heard all about it from a cove as come with him. Travers had been a winnin' pretty free, and drinkin', too. One of 'em—pretty low lot they must ha' been, playin' in a crib like that—ses as how he's stacked the cards, and Travers goes for him, and gets a smash with a whisky-bottle across the head. My pal, the 'ouse-surgeon, as gives me the subjects to paint, was there, an' told me the poor chap can't live above an hour or two. So I puts my-

self along, and calls in at Beatrice Place on the chance of seeing Miss Kennett. Told her all about it, and she tells me to come for you. And here I am."

Mr. Barton stood looking at the narrator of this tragic story with a face suddenly gone white, and a breath as heavy as the speaker's own. The shock was too sudden for his immediate comprehension, and he was simply dazed by it.

"We must look sharp, gettin' back," said Bunch. "Wake up, sir; there's work to do."

He gathered together a hat, a stick, and a pair of gloves which stood upon a table near at hand, and thrust them towards the clergyman. The latter took them, half mechanically, and led the way downstairs and into the street. A hansom was passing, empty; Bunch hailed it, and gave the word for the hospital.

"He must ha' been a nice lot—a uncommon nice lot," said Bunch, when the cab, entering upon an asphalt-paved street, gave a chance for conversation to its inmates, "to leave a gal like that for drink and gamblin'. Plucky, she is, too—real game. When I told her what had happened she went as white as a sheet of blotting-paper. I thought she was going to faint or cry, but not a bit of it. She just thanked me for taking the trouble, and asked me to come on and tell you—'my husband's oldest friend'—that was what she called you. I see her go upstairs again, and she stopped on the first landing with her hand on her heart, holding on to the baluster, and I heard somebody—a woman's voice—ask, 'Is that Roland—my Roland?' She's his mother, ain't she—Mrs. Travers?"

"Yes."

"Drinkin' and gamblin', with a wife and a mother waiting for him, and a breaking their hearts for him. He's a nice lot, ain't he? By Jove! I'm a'most sorry as I took the trouble to go and tell 'em. I wouldn't ha' done it for him—not much, I wouldn't, the heartless scamp!"

"Who are we to judge him?" said Mr. Barton.

"A long sight better than he is," replied Bunch. "I don't set up to be a angel—I shouldn't look the part if I did—but I ain't so bad as him, I hope. I shall remember her face till I die," he went on after a pause, "and the voice I heard, 'Is that Roland—my Roland?' How is it as women always love the scamps so much

more than the good sorts, I wonder? They do somehow. I've always noticed it. I've always been a steady chap, and if I was to go under to-morrow, there ain't a woman in the world as 'ud think twice about me."

The cab cleared the Strand and crossed the bridge, pulling up before the hospital. They went up the steps together, and encountered the porter in the hall.

"Where have they put him?" asked Bunch in an undertone.

"Number fourteen," answered the man.

"Have two ladies come to see him?"

"Yes, a quarter of an hour ago. They're with him now."

"This gentleman is a friend of the family," said Bunch. "The young lady is his wife, and she sent me for him."

The man touched his hat to Mr. Barton, and, pressing an electric-bell in the wall, committed him to the charge of a nurse, who promptly appeared in answer to the summons. He followed her along a carpeted corridor, and entered by a door which she opened for him into a long, lofty room with a double line of beds ranged round it. There was an atmosphere of quiet in the room, which was dappled here and there with flecks of sunlight from the open windows, through which the fresh breeze of the early summer day, cooled by the river expanse outside, played softly with the curtains of the beds. Roland Travers lay near one of the windows, and beside him stood Mary and the doctor, looking down upon him as he breathed heavily and muttered inarticulately in his heavy sleep. Kneeling beside the bed was a muffled form, with its arms cast upon the coverlet—his mother. Her face was hidden by her encircling arms, and the rich mass of hair which had given to her lined and weary face so strange and weird a beauty, was tumbled all about, and Mr. Barton saw, with a pang of actual surprise, that there were strands of white in it. Ten years of constant sorrow had left its pristine colour untouched; and now, one hour of agonised despair, following on a day of hope, had faded it.

They took his hand and pressed it, letting it fall again without a word. The

doctor nodded to him, and bent his eyes upon the patient.

"Is there any hope?" asked Mr. Barton in a whisper.

"None."

"How long?"

"I cannot tell precisely, but the end is very near."

"Is he quite unconscious?"

"Yes; but he may rally for a second or two. They often do in such cases. See!"

Roland Travers stirred, and opened his eyes. They rested for a moment, blank and expressionless, on Mary's face. Then the empty stare changed to a look of vivid pain.

She knelt beside him.

"Roland, do you know me?"

The lips moved faintly.

"Yes."

"Your mother is here. Speak to her."

He turned feebly towards her, and with a last flash of his fast-failing strength, took the worn hand in his. It lay there, quite passively, and colder than his own.

"Forgive—mother," he said.

"She forgave you long ago," said Mary.

"Tell me so, mother. Let me hear it from your own lips."

But there was no answer. Mary drew aside the heavy mass of hair which veiled the face, and Roland Travers knew that the mother he had wronged so deeply must speak the word he asked elsewhere, beyond the stream in which his world-worn feet were already set.

The end of every story is the beginning of another. The romance of Mary Kennett had ended when she had married Philip Travers, and the story of Mary Travers, which it has been my task to tell, ended but a month ago, and merged into that of Mary Barton. She has found peace at last—or at least such semblance of it as may be known this side the grave, whither she and her husband journey together, strewing their path with seed and flower of good and gentle deeds. The shadow of past sorrow is upon her, but so, too, is the light of present peace and joy, and in her woman's world of love and duty her every step leads upwards to the perfect life.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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PRICE TWOPENCE

LADY LOVELACE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "JUDITH WYNN," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

COLONEL WICKHAM took Phil's telegram in his hand, and went off at once with it to the Hall.

"Now, Edie shall give me an explanation; I won't go without one," he said, as he made his way over the frosty tangle of the shrubbery, in and out among the bare brown hazel-rods.

But when the Colonel reached the Hall he found that Edie had not made her appearance that morning, pleading as an excuse a bad headache.

"Come in and have some breakfast, Wickham," called the Squire to him, as he heard the Colonel's voice outside in the hall. "The truth of it is, the barometer is low—very low this morning, the atmosphere is uncommonly heavy, and we may have a gale before night." Then he added in subdued tones as Colonel Wickham came into the breakfast-room: "My own opinion is that Edie and Phil haven't hit it off at all lately. However, I don't see that you or I will mend matters by interfering—best let them alone, and they'll right themselves."

Colonel Wickham, however, was not disposed to view things in quite so cheery a light. It seemed to him that matters at that moment called not only for interference, but for interference of a strenuous and energetic sort. He declined the Squire's invitation to breakfast, and announced his intention of running up to London to say a few words to Phil.

The Squire laughed and shook his head.

"Better let them alone, Wickham; they'll make it up right enough," he said. "Why, bless my soul! we shall have

enough to do if we interfere in all the quarrels they'll have between now and their wedding-day!"

Colonel Wickham, however, held to his purpose.

"Phil and I must have a reckoning together," he said to himself—not to the Squire—so he caught the next London train, and arrived at Phil's hotel somewhere late in the afternoon.

It may be questioned whether the reckoning Colonel Wickham was to have with Phil could be heavier than the one Phil was having with himself at that very moment.

Edie's note had fallen like the crash of a thunderbolt at his feet. It startled him at first almost out of his senses—he was prepared for any amount of refractoriness and playful teasing, but not for a letter written in this strain with a sledge-hammer for a pen—the next moment it appeared to him a positive revelation. In its light he seemed to see, understand, and be able to piece together into coherence all Edie's wild vagaries and apparently inconsequential sayings and doings.

That was what it had meant all along. When she had been so anxious to suspend their engagement for a time, it must have been her own heart, not his, she was thinking of; when she had coquetted, and played, and trifled with him, it had not been from mere girlish lightness of heart, but because her fancy must have been veering from one man to the other; and now it had settled, and no doubt permanently, upon the one most to its taste.

Who that one was, naturally was the next question that arose. A question, however, that Phil had scarce asked himself before he had answered it. There could be but one answer to it, as certainly as there had been but one man beside

himself at Stanham for whom Edie had ever shown the slightest predilection. That man was Colonel Wickham. And hereupon Phil fell to torturing himself by recalling a whole world of words and looks Edie had from time to time bestowed upon his uncle, winding up with that memorable evening when she had gone into a flirtation with the Colonel, and he—Phil—had turned upon her with the question, "Was she making up her mind to be his aunt?"

The matter did not admit of a doubt, it seemed to him.

"The next thing I shall hear will be that they are going to be married, I suppose," he said to himself savagely.

Under circumstances such as these, the first thing a man generally longs for is a revolver, with exactly three bullets—one for the woman who has played him false, another for the man who has led her on to do it, the third for himself. Phil experienced to the full this generic feeling of the race. He had his share of the passions organic alike in saint and sinner. He kept them down, in a measure, and after the first fierceness of his passion had blazed itself out, his mood changed, there fell a great bitterness of spirit upon him. He scoffed at the whole race of women. They never had been, and never would be, capable of a grand, true passion such as men were in the habit of wasting upon them—the more fools they!—of a passion which, once fixed, could never veer, but must end only with life itself.

And then he scoffed at himself and his own heart for having been simple enough to pin his life's happiness on the faith of a little girl of eighteen. How could he have been idiotic enough to expect to be treated differently from the rest of mankind?

Well, thank Heaven, he had learnt his lesson for life. It would never need to be repeated. Henceforth women would be to him what they were to most men of the world—nothing more, nothing less—just creatures to toy with, to flirt with, to amuse oneself with, and occasionally to marry if convenience demanded it, and the creature were exceptionally well-looking.

This mood would in due course, no doubt, give place to another, in which Phil's better self would once more get the upper hand; but it held sway for a tolerably long period, and helped to push things a little faster downhill than they were already going. Under its influence,

he spent two long mornings in Ellinor Yorke's society—mornings during which, to say the least, his conduct was remarkable and his manner pronounced.

That is to say, he went headlong into the wildest, maddest of flirtations a man could be capable of. Ellinor's soft, languid glances he returned with long, steady, expressive ones. "She evidently likes to be looked at; why shouldn't I look?" was the argument he used in defence of this misconduct of his eyes; to be supplemented later on by another plea of like kind: "She likes to be flirted with; why shouldn't I flirt? It's an equal game; we are neither of us handicapped by that foolish thing called a heart."

If an equal game, it was, however, also a dangerous game, as Phil, before it was over, was to find out. Lucy looked on, a little puzzled and a little frightened at what she felt sure must in some sort be the result of her own handiwork. When she had penned her letter to Edie, it had seemed to her that she was doing an act all but heroic in its daring and defiance of the conventionalities of life. Results of some sort, of necessity she had expected, but scarcely such immediate and tempestuous results as these. She had thought it possible he might come round and see them; tell the story of his lovmaking with the little girl at Stanham; how heartlessly she had played her game of fast and loose; how thankful he was to get his liberty back again. And then, in due course, no doubt, he would once more have resigned his liberty—this time into the loyal and tender keeping of Ellinor. But, as it was, "in due course" were words that seemed to have no meaning for him.

Getting back to his hotel from one of these wild, reckless, lovmaking mornings, Phil was met by the waiter with the news that Colonel Wickham was waiting to see him—had been waiting, in fact, for more than an hour and a half.

"He's been a standing like a statue at the window, with a pencil in his hand, the whole hour and a half, sir," pursued the friendly waiter as Phil made his way upstairs.

Now this was an exaggeration; a quarter of an hour was the outside limit of Colonel Wickham's statue-like attitude; a quarter of an hour which, when Phil entered, had not quite run itself out. Burdened as the Colonel's mind was with the heaviest anxieties, with the arrangement of affairs which before anything else demanded a

clear brain and a light hand, he had nevertheless found it impossible to resist the force of old habits and associations. This room—for the nonce Phil's sitting-room—he had occupied annually for the past fifteen or twenty years during his periodical visits to London, and at one of its windows he had also annually taken some most interesting notes for his book of metropolitan statistics. The said book, on a certain page, showed the exact amount of traffic that passed along a certain street leading off the Strand during a quarter of an hour of the busiest time of day: how many foot-passengers, how many travellers in hansom and other cabs, how many wag-gons, carts, or carriages. At the end of every seven years these returns had been balanced against increased population in the metropolis, and the result showed in interesting figures at the foot of the page.

Phil, when he saw his uncle's watch on the window-ledge beside him, and the pencil and note-book in his hand, knew exactly what process of calculation was going on, and that nothing short of an earthquake must be allowed to interrupt it. It did not add to the serenity of his temper to have to stand silent and unoccupied for exactly three and a half minutes. He walked across to the mantelpiece, leaned his long arms among the spill-cases and candlesticks, and took a steady survey of himself in the looking-glass.

"What a confounded hang-dog appearance I have this morning!" he thought; "look as if I had not been in bed for a month;" and then he lifted his eyes a little higher, and found that his uncle had put away his note-book and pencil, and now stood looking over his shoulder at the self-same reflection.

Evidently with the same thought in his mind, for as Phil turned round to shake hands his first question was, "So you've been keeping late hours—eh?" then without waiting for Phil's reply, he plunged into his subject at once with, "I suppose you have been expecting to see me, Phil, and can guess pretty well what I've come to talk about?"

Phil was ready for him.

"I am delighted to see you," he answered. "Now I can have the pleasure of personally congratulating you."

It was said sarcastically, cruelly, in a tone that Phil did not often use, and with a look in his blue eyes which his uncle, at any rate, had never seen there before.

Colonel Wickham's face showed blank for a moment in his astonishment, then he frowned heavily.

"On what do you ground your congratulations, may I ask?" he said, shortly, sternly.

"On the fact of your engagement to Miss Fairfax." How the words seemed to stick in his throat! "I suppose by this time it is an accomplished fact?" answered Phil, staring his uncle full in the face.

The Colonel returned the stare with brows levelling more and more.

"What reason have you for supposing such a thing?" he asked.

"A very good reason," this with a short, untuneful laugh: "the young lady's own statement in the short letter she wrote to me, breaking off our engagement."

"Wha—at!" and now the Colonel's brows broke their level line, and arched instead. "Do you mean to tell me that Edie wrote to you breaking off your engagement?"

"I do. Why shouldn't she if she felt so disposed?"

"Without any previous communication from you?"

"Without any communication from me that would warrant her doing so. The only time I wrote to her it was to beg her to hasten, not retard our marriage."

"And in her letter to you my name was mentioned?"

"Oh, as good as mentioned," answered Phil with the same unpleasant laugh as before. "When a young lady tells you she infinitely prefers someone else to yourself, you naturally set your brains to work to find out who that other person is. I did so, at any rate, and could come to but one conclusion."

Hitherto the two men had been standing still staring at one another, but now, as Phil finished speaking, the Colonel suddenly turned his back on him, walked slowly across the room to a chair, sank into it, leaning back, looking white, and troubled, and old.

What a train of thought Phil was opening up with his hard, careless, mistaken speeches! What a temptation it was to receive those speeches as gospel truth, to believe that this young girl, with all her sweetness and youth about her, had really preferred him—the world-worn, weary old man—to this fine young fellow before him, had loved him all along through her waywardness and coquetry, and at last her

honest, true heart had compelled her to make the admission to her young lover.

"There's nothing half so sweet in life as Love's young dream," save and except only Love's old one. Colonel Wickham, in the love-dream he was opening his heart to at that moment, seemed to see his old one embodied and given back to him. In Edie at that moment he seemed to see Edie's mother, stretching out her arms to him, and saying with one of her sweet bygone smiles:

"See! I cheated you out of your happiness once long ago; take it back now a thousand times sweeter than it was before!"

And yet—and yet! it was hard to understand. There were things that wanted explaining.

Phil did not interrupt his uncle's train of memories. He stretched his long limbs, walked across to the window, folded his arms on the ledge, and looked out. The other window of the room looked down on the busy street; this across a narrow roadway on to the river. Barges were passing along—a City steamboat with just half-a-dozen people on board. Among them a soldier in scarlet coat, and a girl. Very close together they sat, and the man seemed to be talking and bending low over the girl as though he were saying sweet things to her. Lovers, of course! What a couple of fools! And yet—and yet—heigho!—sometimes folly was better than wisdom!

Colonel Wickham found his voice at last.

"Do you mind showing me Edie's letter, Phil," he asked a little unsteadily, "if you have it at hand?"

Phil continued looking down at the river, and the soldier, and the girl.

"I should be delighted—only I haven't it at hand," he answered, without turning his head. "Don't know what I did with it—tossed it in the fire, I suppose, or perhaps I lighted my pipe with it."

"Can you tell me the exact words she made use of?"

"Sorry I can't. I've forgotten. They were short and plain enough, however, and conveyed clearly to my mind what they meant."

"It's a mystery," muttered the Colonel. "I don't see my way quite." It was said half to himself.

Phil took him up sharply.

"I see no mystery," he said. "Heaps of girls do it. Why shouldn't they make fools of old men as well as of young ones?"

Phil's tone was aggressive enough, but truth to tell, he was feeling very sore.

"She couldn't really have been in love with that other," the Colonel muttered again.

"What other?" demanded Phil, turning upon him furiously, a sudden jealousy leaping like a flame to his eye.

"Winterdowne. They were a good deal together of late."

"Winterdowne—bah!" And Phil turned upon his heel, and once more fixed his attention upon the barges and the river.

Whatever folly Edie might commit, she could not stoop to such folly as that. As well expect her to walk into the woods and fall in love with the first sapless fir-tree she came across as with such a dry, unsympathetic specimen of humanity as this middle-aged scientific peer.

Colonel Wickham's doubts, however, were not to be easily allayed.

"It's a mystery," he again repeated. "If I could but believe that she really cared for me, of course it would end the matter; but—"

"So far as I am concerned, you may consider the matter ended," said Phil nonchalantly, still with his back to his uncle and his eyes fixed on the river.

For a few moments there fell a silence between these two. Colonel Wickham began slowly walking up and down the room, then he stopped at Phil's side, laying a hand on his shoulder.

"Phil—Phil," he said, in a pained, vibrating tone, "choke down your pride; come home with me and win your old love back again! Take no refusal; make her give herself to you once more. Poor child! left to herself, she is bound to rush into misfortune and folly."

Phil turned a white, fierce face towards the Colonel.

"Is she a bale of goods," he cried passionately, "to be handed from nephew to uncle, from uncle to nephew? Thank you, no; I decline such a family arrangement. Take your good fortune, sir, and make much of it. All I ask of you is, not to ask me to come and be a spectator to it."

Then he walked away to his writing-table, seated himself, began opening and shutting drawers, took out a package of luggage-labels and began addressing them—the said labels were subsequently found to be illegible and were committed to the flames.

The Colonel recommenced his slow,

irregular walk up and down the room. His brain felt clouded and bewildered; it could not settle itself to any steady, linked train of thought, but went jerking and zigzagging in odd, inconsequential fashion, just as it listed. After a time, things must clear themselves to him, and he would be able to think calmly over the whole state of affairs. For the present he must give it up.

Then he suddenly became aware of the nature of Phil's occupation. He paused in his walk, looking over the young man's shoulder.

"Are you starting off again, Phil? Where to this time, and for how long?"

"Can't say for certain. New Zealand, Algiers, the Cape, perhaps. I'll let you know when I've made up my mind."

"When do you start?"

"To-night, perhaps, or to-morrow night, if you mean to stay and dine."

"No, I mean to get back by the sixteen express. But why are you in such a hurry to set off on your travels again? Can't you stay on a week or two longer in town?"

No answer from Phil, only scratch, scratch went the pen, faster than ever.

The Colonel made another turn up and down the room, and then stopped again at Phil's side.

"Let me have a settled address as soon as possible, where your letters can be sent," he said. "You young fellows, when you start on your travels, go harum-scarum here, there, everywhere, and don't give a thought to the old fellows at home, who like a line now and then to hear how you are getting on."

"Never fear, you shall hear from me right enough," answered Phil, still scratching away with his pen.

Another turn the Colonel made, and then again came back.

"And, Phil," he said, speaking in low, somewhat unsteady voice, "there's one thing more. Supposing things are as you say, and Edie really does care for me after all; you may be quite sure she'll be safe and happy in my keeping. Aye, as safe and happy as she would have been in yours?"

And Phil, recollecting the wild love-making mornings he had got through the last two days, lifted up a white face, in which his eyes glowed and gleamed with an unnatural light, and answered recklessly, madly:

"Safer and happier a thousand times over than in my keeping, not a doubt!"

SHILLINGBURY SKETCHES.

OUR LADY BOUNTIFUL.

To play the part of Lady Bountiful is by no means such an easy task as the world has been hitherto led to believe. Poets, painters, and romancers in general are chiefly responsible for the rendering of the character which has been foisted upon the public as genuine, and it is to be feared that these gentry have been no more veracious in this particular than with regard to "gentle spring," "rural delights," "the pleasures of contentment," and divers other now generally discredited abstractions. According to the counterfeit presentment of the above-named, Lady Bountiful drives about the blossoming country lanes and the shady village greens in a handsome pony phaeton, bringing out jellies, and beef-tea, and nourishing port, and hot-house fruit, and warm clothing, and even baby-linen now and then, as if she had a conjuror's apparatus concealed somewhere beneath the apron of the carriage. In her graver moments, she drops into the national school, to put the children through their catechism, or gives portions to model village maidens, when these latter mate with model village lads. She apprentices to the local carpenter, or blacksmith, or cobbler, the more soaring spirits of the village boyhood. Her voice is always cheery; she is decidedly "comfortable looking" in her outward seeming, and last, but by no means least, she has a pocket running over with small change, and an apparently inexhaustible balance at the local bank.

In Shillingbury we had a Lady Bountiful of our own; but she certainly was not fashioned on the lines of the recognised type, and in her method of proceeding, she differed still more widely from the Lady Bountiful of tradition. Mrs. Cutler Bridgman—for such was her name—was not properly speaking one of ourselves. She came from a distant county and was, as we were soon informed, the widow of the late Charles Cutler Bridgman, Esq., barrister-at-law. She herself was a Tompkins, one of the Wiltshire Tompkinsees, and she had by her marriage with a mere professional man, caused an estrangement between herself and that haughty family, whose fortunes, as we afterwards learned, were first established by one John Tompkins, an army clothier of Farringdon Street, who flourished in the reign of George the

Second. Neither did she take kindly to her husband's family, who were London people; for she was possessed with the idea—a very natural and laudable one in a descendant of a citizen of London and a merchant tailor—that those people whose only hearthstone lay within the metropolitan limits, could not be exactly of the right sort; certainly not the right sort when judged by a county standard. So on account of the cheapness of house-rent, and of its sufficient remoteness, both from Tompkinses and Cutler Bridgmans, she fixed upon Shillingbury for her abode.

She hired a fine old-fashioned red-brick house, standing at the lower part of the market-place, just opposite the church gates, and there she brought her family, consisting of four awkward, long-limbed girls, whose ages ranged between eleven and sixteen. These were all her kith and kin; but the catalogue of the Cutler Bridgman household would be very incomplete without mention of Miss Eliza Pomfrey, a person who had come to Mrs. Bridgman as nurse to her first child, and now, having seen the whole troop through all the difficulties of childhood, spent her time in ruling the household, collectively and individually, with a rod of iron.

Eliza Pomfrey belonged to that class of old family servants over whose decay and disappearance so many laments are uttered; but I doubt whether we should hear so many regrets on the matter if everyone knew, at first hand, the full liability attached to the possession of an old family servant like Miss Pomfrey. She viewed mankind in general, and the tradesmen with whom she had dealings especially, with eyes of suspicion and scarcely veiled hostility. Putting aside a few trifling speculations, which by long usage had lost all flavour of wrongdoing, she was rigorously honest. Like the typical dragoon of the East, she was resolute in suffering no outsider to have any share in plundering her employer.

In bowing her neck to the yoke of a house-tyrant, Mrs. Cutler Bridgman was probably actuated by the same motives which now and then induce the French nation, when it grows a little weary of changes of ministry, popular demonstrations, and revolutionary antics in general, to put up for a time with the lesser discomforts of personal rule. It is convenient, no doubt, to have all your laws made for you, and all your household routine organised; all your military and naval affairs kept

straight, and all your tradesmen's bills paid without any trouble, beyond paying the necessary taxes, or signing the necessary cheques. The French nation is occasionally seized with a desire to be let alone to grow its grapes and beetroot, and count its eggs and artichokes; and in the same way Mrs. Cutler Bridgman felt herself impelled to delegate her household duties, and a certain portion of her personal liberty, to her executive power, in order to find time to prosecute the mission to which she believed she was called.

For Mrs. Cutler Bridgman, like Mrs. Jellyby, felt on the subject of missions very strongly indeed; but, unlike that lady, she did not survey the uttermost parts of the earth in search of her proselytes. She preferred to work in her own place amongst her own people, taking them vigorously in hand whether they wished to be reformed or not. No one, looking at our Lady Bountiful in the flesh, would have been surprised to discover that she was a person of energetic disposition. She was tall and thin in person, apparently fragile as a lath, but really endowed with well-nigh inexhaustible powers of endurance. Her face, never comely at its best, had been marked and furrowed by care; and, by losing its smoothness, had gained much in character and expression. Outdoors one always saw her attired in a long grey cloak, and wearing the plainest of bonnets. It was a rare occurrence, indeed, to traverse Shillingbury from one end to the other, without catching a glimpse of her sombre figure, either coming out of a cottage or diving down some alley in prosecution of the particular work on hand. She seemed to be perpetually on the move, and indeed no harder penance could have been placed upon her than to keep her inactive and unemployed for a whole day. Early in the morning she would write and dispatch half-a-dozen notes, making appointments with half-a-dozen different people at places perhaps seven miles apart, and she would very rarely be behind time, let the matter concerned be ever so trifling.

Following the line of religious thought she did, Mrs. Cutler Bridgman could hardly have looked forward to enjoying anything like spiritual peace in Shillingbury, supposing that she knew the state of church parties before she came amongst us. Mr. Northborough, our then rector, read with perfect decorum the morning and evening services every Sunday, and treated his

hearers on each occasion to one of those exquisitely polished, carefully reasoned, spoken essays which he called sermons. No man could be more free from enthusiasm than he was, and certainly no one would be more likely to regard with amused contempt the strivings and runnings to and fro of an active woman like Mrs. Cutler Bridgman in her universal crusade against human frailty. The Rev. Onesiphorus Tulke was at that time the head-master of the free-school; and, aided and abetted by Mr. Winsor, was in his full career of activity on behalf of the various evangelical societies favoured by the latter gentleman. A band of malcontents would make surreptitious visits on the great festivals of the Church and on saints' days to Bletherton, where Mr. Laporte, the new vicar, had started choral services, a surpliced choir, and divers other innovations. Last, but not least, there was Miss Dalgairns, an Ishmaelite indeed, regarding the rector as a hidden rationalist if not infidel. Mr. Tulke—well! Mr. Tulke preached doctrines approximately sound, no doubt; but the sharp nose of Miss Dalgairns was not at fault with respect to the reverend gentleman's true character. She smelt the rat long before anyone else in Shillingbury had any suspicions about him. Naturally the wanderers over to Bletherton came in for her fiercest denunciations. In addition to all these parties in the church, there was a compact minority of Nonconformists, who loved their brethren of the establishment, high, low, and broad, as dearly as these last-named sections loved one another.

But, as a matter of fact, the Irishman who once complained that he was growing mouldy for want of a "bating," would not have been more uncomfortable in a region of complete calm than Mrs. Cutler Bridgman. Indeed, I have a suspicion that, before she came to Shillingbury, she sent an emissary to enquire whether there was to be found sufficient fuel to keep permanently at boiling-point the kettle of theological hot water, and that she must have found the report to be all that she could desire.

The church views favoured by our Lady Bountiful were undeniably high. For the age in which she lived they were very high indeed, and she soon found out that no one in Shillingbury came up to her standard, even amongst that small band of wanderers who strayed occasionally into the alien fold of Mr. Laporte at Bletherton.

But naturally she looked to find the most promising field for her proselytising activity amongst these, and it was not long before she set to work. When she, figuratively speaking, set up her standard in the midst of a hostile camp, she was not the only one who felt something of the "rapture of the strife." Miss Dalgairns, in the absence of any adversary worthy of her prowess, was beginning to find her arms growing rusty, and to sigh for some new occasion to use them. Mrs. Cutler Bridgman was not the woman to veil her crest, or to make any secret of her religious attitude, but even had she been given to concealment, she would hardly have baffled for a week the skilful espionage of her opponent. As it was, she threw down the gage of battle at once, and the declaration of war, I regret to say, was delivered in church.

The pew belonging to Miss Dalgairns was the next one to Mrs. Bridgman's. The former lady had a comfortable cushion and hassock in a particular corner, and invariably worshipped looking westward as religiously as an Indian Mussulman. When the Creed was repeated, on the first Sunday of Mrs. Bridgman's attendance at morning service, it was a fine sight to see the champions face each other. Not one of the nodding plumes of Miss Dalgairns's Sunday bonnet gave sign of motion, while Mrs. Bridgman, gazing eastward, surged and bowed, and elevated and prostrated herself with extra fervour at the appointed places. After this all Shillingbury knew that the signal for battle had been given, and that it would not be long to wait before the first blow would be struck.

Among the more favoured protégées of Miss Dalgairns in Shillingbury was an elderly dame named Lydia Crump. Mrs. Crump was a widow who lived on a small pension, given to her by her late husband's employers, and with her resided her grandson, Joshua, the only child of her only daughter, who had died when Joshua was a baby. Mrs. Crump was a feeble-voiced, querulous-tempered, pious old woman, and Joshua was one of those slow-witted, flabby-faced, listless boys, who appear to develop so readily under a grandmother's nurture. It is hardly necessary to say that, in order to stand as high as she did in Miss Dalgairns's books, Mrs. Crump had been forced to surrender her freedom both of will and deed to the direction of her imperious patroness. She ate and drank what Miss Dalgairns declared to be most wholesome, and at the same time

most economical. She read, or professed to read, the sheaves of tracts which were laid upon her table. She allowed herself to be physicked from the Dalgairns pharmacopœia, and she would plead guilty to the possession of whatever ailment Miss Dalgairns might tax her with, even though that lady might affirm she was suffering from bronchitis, while she herself would only be sensible of rheumatism in her left leg. The effects of the Dalgairns domination, though in a minor degree, were felt by Master Joshua Bates from his earliest youth, and Joshua, though he was not a very bright boy, began with ripening years to regard the benefactress of the house with a feeling of undoubted awe, with which, it must be confessed, there was mingled more of abhorrence than of affection. Poor old Lydia was lonely, and unwilling to part with her grandson when he reached that age which usually sees boys of his class being bound apprentice or setting off into the world in quest of fortune. Ever since Joshua had been breeched, she had been tremblingly on the watch for that day when Miss Dalgairns should bear down upon her, and tell her that the boy must be sent out into the world to earn his bread by this or that calling; but for some reason or other "the dreadful dawn was stayed" till Joshua was nigh fifteen; a strange circumstance indeed, for Miss Dalgairns, in cases when acting for one person's good meant inflicting punishment upon another, was usually very prompt. But at last the thunderbolt fell. Lydia was told one morning that she must take Joshua to the tailor's to be measured for a page's suit, as a situation in that capacity had been secured for him in the household of the Hon. Mrs. Chespare.

When Joshua was made aware of the fortune which was in store for him, he did not display any particular joy. He wandered about the streets and roads all day looking the picture of misery. Perhaps he lamented the rapidly shortening span of his liberty, or perhaps he was turning over in his mind some of those stories which he had heard about the rigorous discipline of Mrs. Chespare's servants' hall, and of the somewhat meagre diet provided therein. Anyhow, he was mopping up his tears as he shuffled along Church Lane, when suddenly he almost ran against our Lady Bountiful, who was coming round the corner in the opposite direction. Mrs. Bridgman had then been located in Shillingbury about a year, and during that

time she had pretty well mastered the state and circumstances of every household, and, amongst other details, she had attentively considered the relations subsisting between Miss Dalgairns and her dependents. Here was Joshua Bates in tears, something had evidently gone wrong, and her experience told Mrs. Bridgman that the occasion was one to be improved. So she stopped Joshua, and by half-a-dozen judiciously put questions, ascertained how the land lay. After listening to the boy's whimpering protestations that he should certainly be starved or die of cold if the plans on his behalf were carried out, she bade him cheer up and come to her house the next morning.

When Joshua told his grandmother what had befallen him, the poor old woman's heart sank within her; for, since Mrs. Cutler Bridgman had been amongst us, Miss Dalgairns had turned on a fresh and very pungent supply of anti-Puseyite tracts; and she had not omitted to supplement the printed warnings contained in these by divers verbal ones, caustic, and going straight to the point. Lydia felt that it would be a very bad quarter of an hour for her when she faced her patroness, and informed her that Joshua had been in parley with the enemy. She told Joshua, with a faint assumption of authority, that he had better keep clear of Mrs. Bridgman; but Joshua declared that he meant to go. The boy was not gifted with a very robust will, but the chance hope of an escape from his dreaded servitude in buttons now nerved him to persevere to the end.

At the appointed hour he slipped away, and on his return informed his astonished grand-parent that Mrs. Bridgman was a very nice lady. She didn't keep him waiting outside the scullery-door, as Miss Dalgairns did, but spoke to him in the housekeeper's-room, regaling him with a lump of cake and a glass of beer after the interview. She said, too, that anyone might see that he, Joshua, was not a boy fitted for indoor service, and finished by asking him whether his tastes ran in the direction of shoemaking. If they did she would bind him apprentice to Lambert Cuddon. He had always wished to be a shoemaker, and here was his chance. He would go to Miss Dalgairns on the morrow, and say that Mrs. Chespare must look out for another boy in buttons. But when, about ten minutes afterwards, Miss Dalgairns came in and said that the page's suit was ready, and that she would come

round to-morrow and see how it fitted, poor Joshua's spirit failed him, and he sat dumb and awe-stricken. But the next morning there came a note from Mrs. Chespare, saying she would not require Joshua Bates as a man-servant. How the question of that futile livery was settled I know not; but I will venture to say that if it ever was paid for, the payment did not come out of the Chespare coffers. It happened that just at this time Miss Dalgairns was called away from Shillingbury for about a fortnight, and when she returned she found Joshua Bates bound apprentice to Lambert Cuddon, as fast as indentures could bind him.

And then the outburst of her indignation was terrible. Lambert Cuddon was as obnoxious to her as any person could well be. He was indeed a decent fellow enough in his trade, neither a freethinker nor a democrat, as the sons of the last often are. He had a very good tenor voice, and formerly had been one of the leaders of the church choir, but his position in this he resigned, owing to a dispute with Jonas Harper, just at the time when Mr. Laporte and his doings at Bletherton began to attract notice in Shillingbury. He did some soleing and heeling to the well-patched shoes of the above-named divine, and one Sunday morning, thinking, perhaps, that one good turn deserved another, he walked over to Bletherton church. Mr. Laporte was a man of the world, and by a little judicious flattery he soon enlisted Cuddon as a member of his own choir.

Miss Dalgairns knew well enough that Joshua would learn something else besides nailing and sewing uppers in Lambert Cuddon's workahop. Poor Lydia took to her bed in consequence of the flood of reproaches which were launched at her head, and was only induced to "get about again" on account of the abundance and nauseousness of the medicines which she was commanded to swallow. Whenever Joshua met his quondam patroness he was greeted with a frown of the blackest disapprobation, which grew yet more dire when it was noised abroad that he had been seen walking with his master in the direction of Bletherton, and gave way to a stare of contemptuous non-recognition after it had been clearly established that he had walked in procession, carrying a banner, on the occasion of the last harvest thanksgiving service.

Mrs. Bridgman, by this move of hers—a move which she spoke of as the winning of

a soul to the Church—while other people called it kidnapping, pure and simple, certainly strengthened her position. She got Cuddon a lot of work for the Asylum for Decayed Anglican Organ-Blowers, an establishment connected with an "advanced" West End London church, and Joshua, after his apprenticeship was over, was transferred, by her influence, to a leading establishment in Martlebury. She was a shrewd woman of the world, and she had learnt that you win people over to your way of thinking in religious matters much more readily if you can show them some consequent material advantage in this life, than you will if you merely promise them joys which lie on the other side of the dark gate of the graveyard. When it became generally known that practical benefits might fall into the laps of those who stood well with her, a surprising revolution of public opinion took place. Matrons endowed with half-a-dozen children to be "got off," lost all their distaste of Mrs. Bridgman's genuflections in church, and became quite sceptical as to the truth of those stories about her worshipping idols and sending money to the Pope of Rome on the sly. The Shillingbury contingent attending Mr. Laporte's services waxed in numbers as time went on, and the gaps in our own congregation, never an overflowing one, became more apparent. The rector, Mr. Northborough, all the while treated Mrs. Bridgman with studious politeness, and even went so far as to express his high approval of her scheme for establishing a visiting and catechising mission at Brooksbank End; just what was to be expected of him, Miss Dalgairns affirmed, since it eased him of all necessity, according to his own code of duty, of doing any visiting or parochial work in that unsavoury district himself. By her successive benefactions at Christmas and Easter, Mr. Laporte's stock of ecclesiastical properties grew rapidly. When that gentleman was laid up with low fever she sent to London post-haste for a nurse from an Anglican sisterhood, and when Sister Monica appeared, one Sunday evening, with her somewhat startling head-gear, in Shillingbury church, Mr. Tulke, who happened to be the preacher, put aside the written discourse he had prepared, and thumped out a fierce denunciation of the scarlet woman who sits upon the seven hills.

Mrs. Bridgman's household, like that of most other philanthropists, was not, in

itself, a model of order, for Miss Pomfrey, with all her virtues, was not gifted with the faculty of administration. There was rough-and-ready plenty, as far as the table was concerned; and, with regard to the education of the girls, there was a rough-and-ready training at the hands of a German governess. They grew up mannerless, uncouth hoydens; not very enthusiastic as to their mother's work, but possessed with strong beliefs as to the purity of the Tompkins blood, and the inferiority of everybody else in Shillingbury. No doubt Mrs. Cutler Bridgman would have done better to spend more of her time in controlling her kitchen and schoolroom; but, had she done so, she must have left the outside masses a little more to their own devices; and our Lady Bountiful was fated to "missionise," for the reason which impels little dogs to bark and bite, if for no other. Granted, therefore, this necessity, she would have done better to work only with those cases of which she had positive knowledge, but, in an unlucky moment, she gave ear to the suggestion of the Rev. Cyprian Wicks, the priest of her favourite high-church in the metropolis, that she should take personal charge of a "case" of a somewhat unusual character, which had recently come under his notice.

The "case" in due time arrived in Shillingbury, and took up its residence in Mrs. Cutler Bridgman's household. In other words, the case was a very fine, handsome girl, who was evidently suffering from the effects of some accident, since she walked only on crutches. Miss Mary West—for such was her name—had been discovered in the accident-ward of a London hospital by the good Cyprian, who, when he ascertained what her religious views were, took a warm interest in her, and decided that she was altogether too good for the quarters in which he found her, and the result of his benevolent interference was that Miss Mary West became a temporary dweller under Mrs. Cutler Bridgman's roof.

Naturally, there were plenty of surmises as to the status and antecedents of Miss West. Mrs. Bridgman had already entertained several "cases" committed to her charge by the Rev. Cyprian Wicks, but none of them had been so interesting as the one in question. After the lapse of a few weeks, she seemed to be recovering from her lameness, for she was able to walk with a stick, and one Sunday morning she appeared in Shillingbury church.

Only once, though; for, as Mrs. Cutler Bridgman informed everyone she came across, Miss West's conscience was so outraged by the constant and flagrant violations of the rubric at every turn that she determined to go to church no more, till she might be sufficiently recovered to walk as far as Bletherton.

Meantime, she made herself very pleasant indeed to the daughters of the house. Anyone with knowledge of the world would have seen that she was not a lady; but the horizon of the Misses Bridgman was not an extended one. Judging from the way in which she talked of the metropolis and its delights, her experience of it must have been large and varied; but she never named either her calling or her place of abode. Whether or not Mrs. Bridgman was wiser than the rest of Shillingbury in this matter, nobody knows or ever will know. It was not from her mouth that enlightenment came to us.

Miss West, after a time, became an active teacher in the Brookbank End mission-room, and was introduced by Mrs. Bridgman to a select working-party, at the meetings of which one lady read aloud Thomas à Kempis, or some such entertaining volume, while the others made various articles of infant clothing. At last the time came when she had quite recovered from her sprain, and began to talk of returning to London. The following Monday was fixed for her departure, notwithstanding the protestations of her young friends, and on the last Sunday evening they walked over to service at Bletherton church.

In a recent paper, mention was made of Sir Foxall Matlock, a nephew of Mr. Winsor. Sir Foxall was the eldest of a family of brothers amongst whom, according to rumour, Mr. Winsor's worldly wealth would be divided, and they were, with one exception, young men eminently worthy of their uncle's testamentary benevolence. This exception was Talbot, the youngest of the brood, more commonly known in the circles he frequented as "Tolly."

Mr. Talbot Matlock was a barrister, living, in spite of his early training, a good deal in that world "where soda-water flows freely in the morning, and where men call each other by their christian-names." Being such a one, it is not wonderful that his invitations to Skit-field should be few and far between, and

the reception accorded to him somewhat frigid. Indeed, it is doubtful whether he would ever have been bidden to his uncle's roof, had he not been a much more skilful shot than any of his brothers; and, on this account, more serviceable in filling the game-larder. The head-keeper would always place him at the warmest corners, even though Sir Foxall himself might be present, but then the baronet, besides being an indifferent shot, was fabled to be a little "near" in the matter of tipping.

Whenever Talbot was down at Skitfield, he made a point of heaping up still further the measure of his iniquities by going over to Bletherton to call upon Mr. Laporte, whom he had known at college; and it happened that he walked into church that very same Sunday evening when Miss West was present to listen to Mr. Laporte's voice for the last time. As the church was rather full he was ushered into the seat already occupied, in part, by Mrs. Bridgman and her following; and, not being much of a church-goer, Tolly soon lifted his eyes from his prayer-book to take stock of the congregation. When he caught sight of Miss West's countenance, he looked at her attentively till he caught her eye. Then the young lady blushed a little, and afterwards paid heed to nothing but her devotions. She was very silent as she walked home, but this, no doubt, was due to regret at her approaching departure.

Tolly was late for supper that night, having smoked a pipe with the vicar after service, and he was received with a chilling silence as he drew his chair up to the table; but he was not the sort of young man to be easily disconcerted. He chatted airily about Jack Laporte's new biretta, and what a good fellow Jack was when you got him away from his preaching-shop—in spite of his aunt's deprecatory cough, and Mr. Winsor's frowns. "What a funny woman that Mrs. Bridgman seems to be, aunt," he went on; "she's always got a fresh young woman with her, whenever I come down. Where does she pick 'em up?"

"I know nothing about Mrs. Bridgman and her doings, Talbot," said Mrs. Winsor; "but I believe the person at present with her was sent to her by some Puseyite clergyman in London to be nursed for an injured knee. The young woman was quite lame when she came down; and Dr. Barnes, who attended her, told me she must have had a very severe fall;" and so

Mrs. Winsor went on at some length, showing great powers of insight, if she really knew nothing about Mrs. Bridgman and her doings, as she declared.

At last she was interrupted by Tolly, who gave a long whistle, and at the same time brought his hand down heavily on the table.

"By Jove! I have it now. Just fancy! What a lark!"

"What do you mean, Talbot?" said the head of the house.

"Why, she's Mdle. Fleurette, the girl who does the trapeze business at the Kensington Music Hall. You must have heard about her. A month ago she came down ever so many feet, and everyone thought she was killed."

Instantly, in spite of the horrifying nature of the topic, there was a rustle of curiosity round the table. There was game afoot; the scent was hot; and a successful hunt must lead to Mrs. Bridgman's utter discomfiture.

"And was she really sent from a respectable hospital? What was the name of the clergyman who took so remarkable an interest in her? Was it not almost certain that Mrs. Bridgman must have known whom she was taking in? Was the girl not one of the disreputable——" But here Tolly broke in.

"Disreputable! not a bit; a real good girl. She goes to church every Sunday. Jim Hennessy told me all about her. Jim used to go to the same church—a high church, somewhere Paddington way—just to have a look at her. Oh, there's nothing wrong about the girl, aunt. She's as right as——" But here a kick administered to Tolly's shins under the table by Sir Foxall warned him that there was no need for him to furnish a comparative to the rectitude of Mdle. Fleurette.

Miss Mary West had scarcely passed the confines of Shillingbury before the whole story was noised abroad, and the scandal for a time was certainly very great, especially amongst those mothers whose children had been taught the catechism by such a creature, and those ladies who had worked in the same room with her. How Mrs. Bridgman excused herself and the Rev. Cyprian Wicks, or whether she ever attempted to do so, does not now concern us. Six months after this untoward event, our Lady Bountiful left us to take possession of a house in Wiltshire which had been bequeathed to her by some collateral Tompkins.

THE OLD FRENCH THEATRE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

EXCEPTING the Church as a matter of course, we do not know of any institution in France that has had a longer continuous existence than the theatre. Nominally, the French Academy is older. It was founded in 1635, and the Comédie Française was established in 1680. But in that year Corneille had ceased to write for the stage; Molière was dead; and all the plays that Racine had written for the public had been produced. The establishment of the Comédie Française was not a new foundation. This was an additional title, taken by the actors in the year 1680, probably because in that year the King ordered that the two existing French theatres should be merged into one, and that no other large French theatre should be allowed in Paris. It is difficult to say with certainty at what time the theatre first became national in France, though we think it more reasonable to take the year 1588 as a starting-point than the later date, 1680.

At the close of last year a book was published in London by Messrs. Chapman and Hall, *Annals of the French Stage*, by Mr. Frederick Hawkins, giving a somewhat detailed account of all the principal plays that were acted during the seventeenth century. The main body of the work treats of the plays acted in the seventeenth century, but in truth Mr. Hawkins goes back very much farther. He begins with the year 789, and takes us down to the death of Racine in 1699. That is a long space of time, and we think he has covered his ground very well. Keeping closely to the title of his book, Mr. Hawkins is an annalist rather than a historian, and of other stages besides the French he says little or nothing. The book is evidently the result of conscientious work. Mr. Hawkins has given us facts rather than his own theories about theatrical art. He has his own ideas, for he is in sympathy with his subject; but he does not egotistically show us that he wrote his two volumes as though he believed it to be of importance to the world that people should know what he thought. We wish, indeed, that Mr. Hawkins had told us a little more what he thought of some of the plays by the chief writers, or that he had said a little more of the nature of their work. We should be glad to know what Mr. Hawkins thought of these plays; for the

expression of an author's opinion, whether it be correct in detail or not, is often a true guide to the tone of his thoughts.

At the end of the second volume, Mr. Hawkins has given us a tolerably full index; and a chronology of the French stage, in which he puts under each successive year plays that were acted, and also denotes under each year all the most important events relating to the theatre. Both of these additions to the book are valuable to those who wish to study the subject. Of foot-notes, indicating the authorities, we have seen none. Mr. Hawkins may have thought that as these books and their writers would be unknown to most Englishmen, there was no need to give them. We believe we are correct in saying that those who do know where to turn to the best authorities for facts relating to the old French stage, will find Mr. Hawkins to be accurate in his statements.

We have said that Mr. Hawkins is an annalist rather than a historian, but in the first two chapters of his book, in sixty-seven pages, he has taken us over eight hundred and forty years, and has shown us the route pretty well by the way. After that time, important events come closer together, and years are more surely marked by plays of interest that have made their reputation.

The earliest French plays that we know much about are the *Mystery Plays*, and they belong to a civilisation anterior to ours. Mr. Hawkins says: "The *Mysteries* illustrated what to nine out of every ten men and women were the subjects of their most frequent and passing thoughts. It was an age of ardent, profound, unquestioning faith, mingled with debasing superstition." These plays were performed by a band of young artisans, known as *Les Confrères de la Passion*, and they enjoyed a monopoly for their performance. In 1398, the Parliament forbade them from playing at St. Maur, near Paris, and this prohibitory act is the first document we have which tells us of a definitely constituted company of players in France. For many years the representation of the mystery plays had been regarded by the actors and by the audience as a sacred show. Then by degrees the reverential feeling in the plays was lost. People who had paid their money for admittance into the theatre wanted to be amused, and thus the whole spirit of the mysteries became changed. What had been looked upon as

a divine worship came to be considered a pastime. And this brought about a rupture with the Church. Until the excesses had grown too great, the priests encouraged these performances; they were so popular that the hour of vespers was advanced in order that all good people might attend the service after they had come out of the theatre. But when the mysteries had definitely broken with the Church, the plays became a question of profit and loss to the manager. To make them remunerative, the comic scenes were lengthened, the Devil became a personage of greater importance, and, discomfited as he always was on the stage before the audience, it was he who played the principal part. A new character, the Fool, was introduced, more unseemly than the Devil, because of his eccentricities, and then the wildest buffoonery was naturally the most relished. The clergy could not remain indifferent to these excesses, which, under a show of piety, were in fact compromising religion in the gravest way; and finally, when they could not succeed in repressing the burlesque, they got the representations prohibited by the Parliament. This was in 1548. The prohibition extended only to Paris and the neighbourhood, for we find these plays were acted in the provinces for some years afterwards. Sainte-Beuve says: "From a literary and dramatic point of view, that which essentially characterises the mystery plays is the lowest vulgarity, and trivialities of the most abject kind. The authors were troubled by only one care—to retrace in the men and things of former times the scenes of everyday life. All their skill was devoted to making this copy, or rather, this faithful facsimile."

Early in the fifteenth century another dramatic company of a different kind was started in Paris by the Clercs de la Basoche, a band of young lawyers, who played usually in the hall of the Palais de Justice. The Basochiens invented two kinds of plays—the *Moralité*, the figures in which are chiefly personifications of sentiments and abstract ideas; and the *Farce*, which was usually a ludicrous representation of any homely incident. In this, as in the grotesque part of the mysteries, we may see that the French comedy actors were in an informal way aiming at a representation of real life. Their love for reality was strong then as now, and crude as their performances were, the satirical banter was thoroughly appreciated. In a few years the *Enfants sans Souci*

followed with their *Soties*. These were buffooneries and horse-play of the wildest kind.

There were thus three troupes of actors in Paris more or less formally constituted, the two latter playing probably as much for their own amusement as for that of the spectators. The existence of the three troupes caused a rivalry, for the *Confrères de la Passion*, who enjoyed a monopoly for performing the mysteries, induced the *Enfants sans Souci* to play one of their drolleries after each of their own pieces. In 1548, after the pseudo-religious plays had been prohibited, the *Confrères* bought a portion of the ground belonging to the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*, and built for themselves a new theatre upon it. But they found that they could not sufficiently draw a paying public by their performance of secular plays, so they let their theatre to a company of actors who thought they understood their art better. This was in 1588, and for nearly a hundred years from that date, until the formation of the *Comédie Française*, the chief theatre in Paris bore the name of the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*. We think, therefore, that the French theatre can show a continuous line of existence from the year 1588 to the present day.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century an effort was made in France to revive the form of the old Greek tragedy. Ronsard was the first; then came Du Bellay, Jodelle, Belleau, Garnier, and others. They wrote tragedies in French, in which they strove to copy the Greek plays as closely as possible. The pieces showed an absolute want of invention in the plots and in the characters. The action was simple, as in the Greek plays, the personages were not numerous, the acts were short, and the chorus was made an important feature. The lyrical poetry was usually far superior to the dramatic. But except in ennobling the language, these plays can hardly be said to have any merit at all. They were performed in the colleges, and though the public might be admitted by paying their money, these performances could never have been popular. Their authors were young men who were scholars, and they were ambitious chiefly of showing off their learning to a well-selected audience. This attempt at a revival of the Greek form of tragedy is worth noticing because, as we shall see presently, the French dramatists thought they were doing right

in taking Aristotle as their teacher when they were writing their plays for the amusement of the people.

This outburst of learning on the stage was not likely to live long. The theatre tried to extend itself beyond the colleges; but the Parliament resolutely set its face against any reappearance of the mysteries, and the wild, rollicking farce went temporarily out of vogue. But with goodwill on the part of the audience, the theatre will thrive nearly always. At the end of the sixteenth century it was certainly popular in Paris. Mr. Hawkins says: "Nailed to posts in the streets, the announcements of the Hôtel de Bourgogne were quickly surrounded by a little knot of citizens, and the theatre was not unfrequently crowded to its utmost capacity. The curtain rose usually at two o'clock, an hour after the opening of the door." Tragedy hardly had a real existence until the days of Corneille; but the birth of comedy was earlier. At the time of which we are now speaking, the latter end of the sixteenth century, the two best authors were Larivey and Hardy. Larivey was of Italian extraction, and he put upon the French stage Italian plots, manners, and customs. He arranged Italian comedies to suit the French taste, as nowadays so many of our playwrights adapt French comedies for the English stage. Larivey's plays were all in prose, which was a novelty for a piece of any pretensions, and his dialogue was vivacious, and natural. He wrote twelve comedies, of which we still possess nine. Alexandre Hardy was a man of greater powers. He was nearly as prolific as Lope de Vega. He said himself that he wrote five hundred plays; another account credits him with six hundred; another with eight hundred. He was poor, and was obliged to write that he might live. He bound himself to the actors to give them six plays every month. Probably not all of these were written. It was common in those days for a troupe of actors to have "their author" attached to their company; and very likely much of the learning of the parts was from verbal instructions. The actors would learn what they had to say after the readiest fashion. Hardy's plays, and those of other authors of the time, were often transmitted to memory by the actors, and they were printed—such of them as attained to that honour—from any copy that an actor could write from memory of what he had learned. Authors'

profits were then unknown, but Hardy passes for the first playwright who exacted a honorarium for his work. His literary baggage consists now of forty-one plays—perhaps sufficient to prevent us wishing for more. Alexandre Hardy was one of the informal pioneers to dramatic literature in France. He had no good models to work upon, and his poverty pressed him so closely that he allowed himself no time for reflection as he did his work, but in his way he did understand the stage. The tastes of his audience were not severe, and he strove to please his public.

The Italian comedy was popular in Paris at this time, and it had a certain influence over the French stage. It was introduced into France by Catherine de' Medici, who, from her youth, dearly loved the frolics of the Zanni and of the Pantaléone. One of the old chroniclers tells us that in the reign of Henri the Third (1574-89), "there was an Italian company, who took four sous a head from all the French who wished to go and see them play; and that there was such a crowd and rush of people, that the four best preachers in Paris did not, among them, collect so many people." The Italian comedy was of two kinds—the written, and the improvised or popular comedy. This latter was called *La Commedia dell'Arte*, and was much the most highly esteemed. People were accustomed to it, and they liked it best. It appeared everywhere in Italy on the commonest stages. Each province created its own personage. To Bologna we owe the pedant, to Venice the merchant and the pantaloon, to Naples the "fourbe" or the cheat. When the set was completed, the parts were immutably fixed. Each player had his part definitely cut out for him, and the audience knew generally what might be expected from each actor. The success of a play would therefore be very largely dependent upon the merits of the actors, and upon their natural cleverness. Doubtless this constant repetition of the parts made the improvisation of the dialogue easier. But with the Italians gesture had a larger part in their play than spoken words. The best of the Italian companies that came to Paris were *I Gelosi*, who came for the first time in 1577, and after frequent goings and comings, returned finally to their own country in 1604. The pearl of this troupe, as she has been called, was Isabella Andreini, the wife of one of their most celebrated actors. She was very

popular on the stage, and was as much respected in her homely life. She died at Lyons, on her way to Italy, in 1604, and after her death the company of I Gelosi dispersed.

It would be more impossible for us now to determine how much Molière learnt from the Italian actors in Paris, than how much Raphael learnt from Perugino. But we may say that his early plays are as much Italian as French. The plots are Italian, and so are the modes of intrigue. So far as we can judge, it would seem that he was indebted to the Italian actors for the constant movement of his pieces, and he may also have learned from them that every line of dialogue should make a step forward in the action of the play. He is incontestably the most genuinely dramatic of all French writers, and we cannot but think that he owed much of his success to the Italians. The wish to learn, and the aptitudes were his own, but the Italian actors were his chief instructors. When he became popular enough to excite envy, his enemies reproached him that he had taken lessons from one Tiberio Fiorelli, who used to play the part of Scaramuccia. An amusing account of this is given in the third scene of the first act of a play called *Elomire Hypocondre*, by Le Boulanger de Chalussay. *Elomire*, it will be seen, is an anagram of Molière. Mr. Hawkins has made a mistake by calling this play "a ballad." Some of the lines relating events in Molière's early history are cleverly written, and they are accepted as an authority. Molière thought the play was scurrilous, and got it suppressed. In the last few years the piece has been twice reprinted. Opposite the title-page there is a picture representing the master and his pupil. The pupil has a glass in his hand, with which he is squinting frightfully—the glass being held so that he can see his own features in it, and observe his master at the same moment. The attitudes of the two men are exactly alike. Under the figure of the master is written, "Scaramouche enseignant;" under the pupil, "*Elomire estudiant.*"

In the French drama of the first half of the seventeenth century we see also that Spanish influence was very large. It was from the Italian actors that the French borrowed chiefly, but also from the Spanish writers. As we all know, the English dramatists under Elizabeth and under the Stuart Kings borrowed their plots very largely from the Spaniards. But

we may remember that, though the Spanish dramatists were fertile in plots, incidents, and situations, they created few characters. A Hamlet would be beyond their power, and an Alceste would be foreign to their nature. Their poetry; or the pathos or passion thrown into their plays, never rises very high. Instead, they were strong in high ideas of chivalry and romance. Such feelings are more easily understood, and they became popular. The highest expression in France of Spanish ideas is seen in Corneille's *Cid*, played first in 1636. Corneille had then written eight comedies and one tragedy, but the greater glory obtained by the *Cid* eclipsed that of all the others. The groundwork of the play is wholly Spanish; but the beautiful poetry of many of the lines is wholly Corneille's. In those days Corneille lived at Rouen, and also at Rouen lived a M. de Chalon, formerly a secretary of Marie de' Medici. Corneille went to see him one day, and M. de Chalon said to him: "The kind of comedy that you have hitherto undertaken can only bring you a temporary credit. You will find in the Spanish dramatists some subjects which, if they are treated after our fashion, and by hands as competent as yours, would produce a great effect. You should learn their language. It is not difficult. I will teach you what I know of it, and until you can read by yourself I will translate for you some passages out of *Guiller de Castro*." Corneille profited by the advice, and rewarded his good-natured friend by writing the *Cid*.

We may as well say here that shortly after the marriage of Louis the Fourteenth with Maria Theresa of Spain, that queen caused to be brought over to Paris a company of Spanish actors. They came into France in 1660, and remained until 1673. They do not seem to have had any success except before the Court, and when they played before the town they failed altogether. An old author says of them: "They never could adapt themselves to the French taste; their drollery appeared grave, and their gravity ridiculous. The audience was wofully sober at seeing their comedies, and only went to their tragedies to laugh at them." Their language was not understood by the audience, and, unlike the Italian actors, who were so popular, they did not impress the French favourably by their powers of impersonation.

During the first half of the seventeenth

century there were two French theatres in Paris—the Hôtel de Bourgogne, of which we have spoken, and the Théâtre du Marais. This latter theatre was probably founded in 1600, but we do not hear much of it until the year 1629, when Corneille's first comedy, *Mélite*, was brought out there. The older established Hôtel de Bourgogne must, however, have been the better of the two, for when an actor of the Théâtre du Marais distinguished himself, an order from the King commanded him to leave that stage for the rival theatre. In the year 1634, five actors were taken from the Marais Theatre to the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

It seems pretty clear that the actor's position was more remunerative than that of the author writing for the stage. Hardy used to get three crowns (or eighteen francs of the then existing value of money) for each play; and later on an actress of the Hôtel de Bourgogne said: "M. Corneille has done us great harm. Formerly we bought our pieces for three crowns, which we used to earn in one night. Everyone was accustomed to the arrangement, and we used to make money. Now, M. Corneille's plays cost us a great deal, and we make very little." The author from whom we get this tells us also: "It is true that these old plays were wretched, but the actors were excellent and made them appear to be good on the stage." But the plays were improving, and the position of the dramatist would be improved when he could demand payment for his work. Of the three great names that enriched or made the French theatre in the seventeenth century, we must speak in another article. We have now only just mentioned Pierre Corneille, chronologically the first.

PRINCE FERENDIA'S PORTRAIT.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

"So that's Ferendia—as you see him?" said Jack Morris meditatively, that afternoon, contemplating my morning's work.

"It is. How much more do you see in him?" I asked curiously.

"You've made him a pleasant, prosperous-looking fellow—genial, kindly, frank. Not over-bright, perhaps, but open as the day, airing all his small vanities and foibles with a childlike confidence."

"That's the man, as I am humbly striving to express him."

"Not the man who'd sell his friend or

his own soul for what they'd fetch, if money were short with him, or smile in your face and offer you a cigarette while he was telling you the lie that should bring you to ruin. Not Laurie Bosworth." Jack broke off short, and took an energetic turn or two up and down the room, then stopped again before my easel, and looked fixedly at the canvas. "Yet I'm drawn to him. Confound him! It's the old fascination. I feel as if it were given to me to know the secrets of that man's soul, and with my hatred there is mixed an infinite compassion and dread, and I feel as if I must hold out a hand to save him, though I can't, for the life of me, tell from what. Jervoise, over that man's face there lies the shadow of a doom."

Morris was given to holding forth melodramatically on occasion.

"All right. I'll paint it in if you'll show me how," I said.

But he took no notice of the suggestion.

All the same I was well content with my work, and got to it betimes in the clear, pure morning light. Before I had worked an hour there came a smart rap on my door, as with the head of a whip, and without further ceremony it opened to admit two visitors—the Princess and M. Nicolas. She was in her riding-habit, lovely as the day, even with black circles round her eyes and pale cheeks.

"I couldn't sleep for thinking of my picture," she said, "and had to turn out for a long ride to quiet my nerves. I was possessed with the idea that you would forget your appointment, and felt I must come to remind you. The carriage will be here for you presently."

The colour rushed to her cheeks as she spoke, and her musical laugh rang through the room. M. Nicolas merely bowed and smiled, and smiled and bowed, his moustache-ends curling up to his spectacles. Then he trotted off softly on the tips of his toes on a respectful little round of inspection. The Princess turned to my picture, and gave a cry of delight.

"Ah, it is himself! Come and see, Nicolas."

Nicolas advanced gingerly, and adding a pince-nez to his spectacles, gravely considered it.

"It is good," he pronounced at last; "but you have made him too English, too solid—stolid, reserved. You do not keep before you the Prince's character. You must make him—intangibles? No; what is the word for what you cannot hold? You

grasp it, you lean on it—pouf! It has melted—gone.”

“So that is your view?” I asked, thinking of Jack Morris, and wondering that the Princess made no sign.

We found Ferendia in a state of comic disgust at my pertinacity, protesting that there was no such need of hurry, and that he should break no more engagements to oblige us.

“I only want to go over to Paris for a week, and then you have me safe back till the end of the season.”

“Safe till the end of the season!” echoed M. Nicolas. “We must have you safe before that, my Prince;” and Ferendia looked at him with much disdain at his interference.

The Princess came in presently, in a quiet morning-dress of velvet. The weather had changed, and a thin, cold, drizzling rain began to fall, augmenting the Prince's ill-humour, and setting her shivering. I watched the two with much interest that morning. I was curious to discover the terms on which they actually were. Were they real lovers, or sham? “L'un qui baise et l'autre qui tend la joue.” Which was which? The Prince certainly let himself be led by his beautiful wife with ostentatious subjection. He was enormously proud of her, too, and yet I caught a lowering glance of suspicion directed at her now and again, or his brows knit at some chance word of hers or M. Nicolas's, as if to discover a second meaning in them. She hovered round him as women do, making little excuses for a word, a look, a touch; and the look was devotion, and the touch a caress. She hung over me, watching with breathless delight my attempts to give the golden glint on his hair, or the sapphire lustre of his eyes, rejoicing in his beauty in an odd, half-cynical fashion—or so it struck me. Perhaps Jack Morris's dark sayings had given my thoughts a twist out of their rational groove. I seemed to read in the one handsome face vanity, instability, and treachery, as the features grew under my brush, and in the other hard, set determination, and a will as immovable as flint. Perhaps it was the day. It was so cold, and grey, and cheerless, that I sincerely rejoiced when the sitting was over.

“You freeze in here, is it not?” asked M. Nicolas, appearing as I put my things in order. “Ah, well, it shall be remedied. You make good progress.” So we all parted to meet again at dinner.

I thought Jack Morris had quite decided to ignore the invitation, when at the last minute he appeared to join me in the hansom. M. Nicolas, of course, we found there before us, and a nervous old lady—a Bosworth connection, come up from the country to chaperon two nieces, solid, dairy-fed beauties who sat in their fine gowns side by side, answering simultaneously when addressed, and keeping a wary eye on their astonishing relative, the Princess, like two barn-door hens on a falcon. She troubled herself very little about them or anyone else but Jack Morris, on whom she smiled her sweetest, and who took her in to dinner. Ferendia's greeting to his old friend was perfect, as also his attention to the Dowager Lady Bosworth. There was also to complete the party a stray curate, who looked infinitely perplexed by his surroundings, and a rising young authoress in a Worth toilette, who was kind enough to take notice of me. It was a singularly unremarkable entertainment, and came to its end in due course. We adjourned to the smoking-room after, where Ferendia and Jack Morris got up some animated talk about old times, to which M. Nicolas listened delightedly, and then went upstairs to the drawing-room just as the first of the evening's guests arrived.

Jack wanted to stay, to my surprise. He got into a corner, and kept M. Nicolas beside him telling him the names of everyone. There were sundry acquaintances of my own there, English chiefly, the smaller fry of diplomacy, though a big fish or two swam in later on. There was a large and miscellaneous assortment of foreigners, representing all nationalities with impartiality; with a few stragglers from other sets in society, who drifted together and looked about them curiously. I left early, as I had another engagement that evening. Getting home in the small hours, I found Jack sitting alone in the dark at the open studio window, an extinct pipe between his lips.

“What are you doing there, old man?” I enquired. “Moonstruck?”

“That's it. Or I wish I could think so,” he answered, turning his face away from me. “Jerry, my boy, how long do you mean to be about that job of yours?”

“I hardly know. I don't think the Prince means to give me many more sittings.”

“Get out of that house with all speed, I tell you. And if you find you owe me

any gratitude for the warning, never betray that I gave it. It's a magazine of infernal machines, and there's an explosion of some sort not far distant."

"What on earth are you talking about, Morris, and why need I go up in the general smash?" I asked incredulously. "And where does your private information come from?"

"Don't ask me. Take me at my word. No, I'll tell you this much. The last time I saw your Princess, she was amongst the Nihilist conspirators that I saw on trial at Odessa. She was a poor work-girl, the craftiest and busiest of them all. She had acted as a go-between, carried letters, distributed seditious pamphlets, concealed dangerous goods in her miserable garret. Imprisonment for the rest of her life was the sentence on this girl——"

"Doesn't look as if it had been carried out," I interrupted. "Why isn't she in prison now?"

"Listen. I happen to know that she never went there. Don't ask me how. Her trial was a sham, and so was her sentence. She was a spy of spies, a plotter amongst plotters, and she is at the same work here on a grander scale, I'll swear."

"And Ferendia?"

"I imagine he's a tool, and a useful one, with his good position in English and foreign society. If you ask how she comes to have met him and married him, and where the Ferendia estates lie, or who finds the money of which they seem so flush, or what they are all about here—I know no more than I do of the component parts of dynamite. I only know that when I suspect any to be about I keep uncommonly clear of it."

"The Prince does not look the stuff of which conspirators are made," I hazarded thoughtfully. "And his wife seems to be devoted to him," running over the improbabilities that struck me in Morris's story.

"The Prince has all the will if not the needful brains. Did not I tell you he lost his appointment abroad through selling Government secrets, and being fool enough to let himself be found out? The company he is in won't tolerate a mistake of that sort, and his wife won't save him. Love him? I dare say she does, as some women love. She'd take his kisses while she knew he had betrayed her to destruction, or she'd hold him tight in a caress till his enemies overtook him, one or the other.

"I hated him with the hate of hell;
But I loved his beauty passing well.

There you have it in another form. Only I say unto thee, Beware!"

"I shall have done with them to-morrow," I replied, and left him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE last sitting was at as late an hour as it could reasonably be—I forget for what reason. I was first in the studio, then in trotted M. Nicolas and drew my attention proudly to the brightly burning little stove, which had dried out the damp from the air and made the place comfortable. It was burning some sort of strongly-scented wood, a fancy of the Princess's, not oppressive even on that day of so-called summer, with the large window wide open above. M. Nicolas bid me a friendly adieu. He was going across to Ostend that night, and was very comic in his anticipations of the miseries in store for him. Then in came the Prince and Princess from some entertainment, gay and laughing over some small jest, the handsomest, happiest couple in England, any man but Jack Morris would have said. I began to feel myself ridiculous, as I thought over last night's confidences, and listened to the Prince's account of the way the day had been spent, and his delight in the admiration excited by his wife's toilette. I can't describe it, except as a shimmer of rose and blue, like a pigeon's neck. She never looked handsomer, he told her, for they were getting embarrassingly indifferent to my presence. She must dress early that evening, and get my views on her latest and loveliest gown. He was tolerably patient of the sitting to-day, for the weather was changing rapidly for the worse—cold and blustering with drifting showers that chilled the air, but hardly laid the pavement-dust. We had to close the window and stir up the stove, and the Princess sent for her zither, and sat down on the rough stage near her husband's feet, and sang song after song to us.

"Where did you learn that?" asked Ferendia suddenly. "That's a gipsy thing. I never knew you understood a word of Russian."

She laughed heartily.

"Not a word! I learned it like a parrot. I meant to astonish you. It's the same that I caught you humming one night, and you wouldn't tell me what it was." And she laughed more merrily than before.

The Prince's brow darkened, and he looked questioningly at her once or twice under his eyebrows. Digitized by Google

I worked on as long as I could, but the light waned early.

"Is this the last sitting you can give me?"

"The very last," answered the Princess for him from the doorway.

"Why?" he demanded. "In the name of all that's mysterious——" And then broke off short to admire and criticise.

She had left us some time previously, and now reappeared in her ball-dress, looking as if she had come straight from the hands of Cinderella's fairy godmother; a veritable princess out of a fairy-tale—all pearls and diamonds, gleaming satin and cobweb lace.

"Do you not know what to-morrow is? My birthday; and I have promised myself to see that picture in its place to-night," she said, smiling full in his face. "I shall have it carried there at once. Ring, if you please, and then you ought to go and dress. We are to go to Lady Bosworth's early."

"Not I," he laughed. "You go and do your duty by the family, and if you like to come back for me after, I don't mind taking you to the Duchess's. What, not off yet, Nicolas?" as that gentleman appeared arrayed in one of those amazing coats that some foreigners patronise for travelling.

"Can I assist?" he asked in his little officious way.

So he and I together conveyed the picture to the room in which it was to hang, and, leaning it against the wall, stood discussing it for a few minutes. Then he discreetly retired while the Princess, with some gracious words, placed in my hands a cheque for three hundred pounds—a welcome sight in those years of scarcity. She offered to take me in her carriage as far as our ways laid together. She was to go with the two Miss Bosworths to the opera, and had to dine with them first. I went back to the studio to bid good-bye to Ferendia, whom I found crouching over the stove, declaring himself stiff with sitting, while the ever-obliging Nicolas, on his knees, blew the fire to a red-hot glow.

"Stay and have a cigar," he said; "I've just opened a fresh box. Take one."

I declined, and directly after the Princess, looking like the White Cat this time in her furs, came tripping up to hurry me. I shook hands with Ferendia, and she nodded gaily, then, moved by some impulse, rushed back to him, and taking his face between her hands kissed his forehead twice.

He stood up to his full height, out of her reach. half vexed. half laughing.

"What now, Hersilie? You are coming back to me? You will see me again."

"When I come back," and without another word she darted down the stairs, and was buried in the depths of the carriage, her hood over her face, when I joined her.

"Give me a match, Nicolas," the Prince had commanded in his usual imperious manner, and Nicolas obeyed promptly.

That was the last glimpse I had of them then. Prince Ferendia, standing erect and stately, his face illumined by the sputtering, flaming light which the other held, and Nicolas looking up at him with an amiable smile curving his grey moustache, and the light of the match twinkling back from his spectacles. He closed the door on me as I left the room, and the picture vanished.

That night an experience so singular happened to me, that I hardly know how to describe it. I woke about midnight with a sudden start, followed by a horrible choked feeling that made me struggle violently to raise myself and to try to tear something—I knew not what—from my face and throat, but I was powerless; my arms were held at the elbow by an invisible bond, and I was too stupefied to realise where I was or what was happening to me, except that I must die. I gasped and strove, but in a dull, dizzy fashion, and then at last the whole world seemed reeling with me, and I slid off the solid ground into a great sea of blackness and peace. Then, with a tingling shiver, I woke—myself again. I sprang up to find Jack Morris watching me.

"What were you shouting 'Help!' for like that?"

I told him.

"I have been dreaming, too. Come along!" was all he said, helping me to dress with all speed, and we both descended through the sleeping house and stepped out into the clear, wet, shining streets. Without another word between us, we made straight for the Ferendias' house. At no great distance from it, we had to cross one of the principal main thoroughfares, alive and busy even at that hour, so that the sight of a cab, stopping to pick up a gentleman, need not have attracted any special attention. It made me stop, however, and lay my hand on Morris's arm. He saw it too, and drew me back into the shadow of a building. The light from a gas-lamp shone full into the cab-window, and glanced for a second on the glasses of a pair of spectacles and the curl of a grey moustache.

"Not on board the Ostend boat!" I said. "Where has he been?"

Jack only responded by quickening his steps, and a few more brought us in front of the house. There were lights in some of the windows, and I was about to ring, when Morris stopped me, and gently tried the door. It opened readily, and we entered. The table was laid for supper in the dining-room, but there was no sign of anyone about. Without further question or hesitation we ran upstairs, straight to the studio. The key was outside the door, but it was not locked. Before I could turn it a breathless servant came rushing up after us.

"We have come to supper with the Prince," said Morris coolly; "hasn't he come in yet?"

"Beg your pardon, sir," said the man, recognising me. "I had only just stepped across the road with a letter to the post. I hadn't left the house a minute. The Prince has not come in yet, sir." Before he had half concluded his apology I had turned the handle and opened the door. The room was close and the air felt heavy, though the window was wide-open and the stove black. That was all I saw at first by the light that streamed in from the landing; the next moment the man clutched my arm with a jerk that nearly overset me. "The Prince!" he whispered, and we all stood still and looked at him. He sat in an easy attitude in the chair in which I had painted him, his elbow resting on the table. His head, leaning back and turned slightly upwards, was supported on his hand; the other hand drooped beside him, a half-smoked cigarette between two of the fingers. His eyes seemed to watch us oddly from under his half-closed eyelids—that was all; and yet I stepped forward, and with a shaking hand touched his cheek. It was warm, yet no breath or pulsation stirred his frame. I moved the candle before his face; still that fixed, glassy stare.

"Look there!" whispered Jack, pointing to a fleck of blood-stained froth on the heavy moustache. "Ring the bell! Rouse the house! And you," to the footman, "run for a doctor at once!"

While he ran out to the landing, we tried to change the position of the body, loosened the collar and tie, and chafed the stiffening fingers; but each effort only made it plainer that it was a hopeless task. The household gathered,

clamorous and bewildered, and a doctor appeared as by magic—then another, and another. "Too late!" the first had said, and none of the others disputed the sentence. We had laid him on the low stage that had been put up for the sittings, with a cushion under his handsome head, and the doctor had just risen from his last fruitless ministrations, when the crowd around the doorway stirred and parted, and the Princess in her floating laces and sparkling gems rushed forward, and flung herself upon the dead body.

"There'll be an inquest," I said uncomfortably as we walked home together that night. "Shall we have to appear? Suppose the circumstances are considered suspicious, it'll be an awkward position—oh, Jack?"

"There'll be no inquest, and the circumstances will not be considered in the least suspicious," he replied confidently. "Do you think they do not know better how to manage than that? Prince Ferendia will be found to have died decently and in order, you may rest assured. Why not? If I happen to know what had been burning in that stove not many hours ago, and if I guess what M. Nicolas's last errand to that house had been, do you think I am fool enough to say so? No one else can tell. You have been painting a man with the rope round his neck—I told you so. Now hold your tongue for the rest of your days, if you would be wise."

The event justified his predictions, and a week later we stood together beside a newly-filled grave in a quiet country churchyard, near the home of his family.

"Poor Laurie!" sighed Jack. "I thought they'd have given him a longer tether. The end was bound to come, and I dare say he well deserved it, but I couldn't help liking him."

"Hush!" I whispered. "The Princess!" A black-shrouded and veiled figure drew near, and, passing us without a look, advanced to the grave, bearing a magnificent cross of white exotica. Then she laid it gently down, and cast herself beside it with a burst of passionate sobbing.

"She loved him!" I exclaimed in a tone of conviction as we softly retreated.

"Yes," assented Morris. "Not well enough to save him, but well enough to avenge him if ever she gets the chance. If Fate gives M. Nicolas into her hands, Heaven have mercy on his soul!"

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THE TEMPLE OF EROS.

By B. DEMPSTER.

CHAPTER I.

"A MAN and a woman went up to the Temple of Eros to pay their vows. And as they went, hand-in-hand, the man looked round him and saw all the beautiful things that lay on either side of them; but the woman looked at nothing—save at him, and the gold and marble of the temple gleaming in the distance. So they reached it at last, and waited there for the god, for though the spirit of his presence always reigned in its courts, he himself was not always to be seen by mortal eyes.

"Then, as the time was long while they waited, the man beguiled it by thinking upon all the things he had seen on his way up, and his thoughts amused him; but the woman, who had seen nothing but him, wearied, and as she had only him to amuse her, she demanded all his thoughts and desires. But when she saw that he had given some to the other things, she was hurt—then angry; then, at last, broke out into jealous passion, driving him, with bitter words, from her side. Then she went away, and hid herself in the temple. So when Eros at last appeared to receive the offerings of vows and roses, he found her alone weeping, and to him she poured out her sorrows. The great god listened patiently, for true love is ever patient in its strength.

"'Foolish woman,' he said, 'not to know that your world is full of sights and sounds, and that she who listens for the music of love alone, can only hear it broken in upon by discords. Nay, the very roses you bring me as offerings—your best and your choicest—have thorns. In your world the man is the wiser.'

"'But in yours?' she asked wonderingly, raising her tear-wet face to his, for she was still crying.

"'In mine?' and her eyes fell at the glorious beauty of his presence, as he stood before her. 'In my world there are no discords, for it is love itself, and into it are gathered all things—duties, ambitions, knowledge, honour—and they become one—love. And it is but a shaft of light from that land, piercing the darkness of yours, that makes the beautiful thing you call love. Only a shadow cast by the glory of mine.'

"Then the woman veiled her eyes, and broke out into a cry of longing and awe.

"'Take me to that land, that I may look on love in its completeness, and my heart will ache no more.'

"'I cannot yet—for——'"

Then there was a silence, and the man who had been speaking the allegory, in a low, soft voice, his eyes fixed dreamily upon the face of the old sundial, against which he leant, flushed faintly, as if half-ashamed of his fanciful speech.

"For its way lies through the gates of

death," another voice, that of the woman standing at the other side of the dial, finished for him.

She had been slowly pulling a rose to pieces as he spoke. After her first look of puzzled wonder at him, as he began the quaint allegory, she had never once raised her eyes from the rose, till he stopped as suddenly as he had begun. Then, still without looking, she ended the story for him.

There was a second's pause. The young man passed his hand carelessly over the face of the sundial, brushing off a leaf that had fallen on it. But the colour which had so suddenly come into his face had not died out, though it was so faint, and the woman's eyes were so full of shadows cast by her own thoughts, that she did not notice it.

Then she tossed all that remained of the rose out of her hand, and turned quickly upon him.

"Why did you tell me that story?" she asked, her eyes, with a curious bright light in them, looking keenly at him. "Was it my life that suggested it to you?"

He shifted his position slightly, letting his hand fall to his side.

"Was it, Douglas?" she asked again impatiently, as he did not answer.

"I can't say—it might have been, or perhaps it was a picture I saw once in the English Academy—a lot of people going up to the Temple of Eros." He spoke reflectively, gazing at the rose-trees before him. "I rather liked the picture. The legend was, 'Some have the roses, and some have the thorns.' I felt sorry for some of the poor beggars, you know."

"Those that had the thorns, for instance? But didn't you see that most of the people had them?" she answered with a short little laugh.

"Some had the roses," he repeated in the same slow, almost drawling manner; and he stepped across the narrow gravel-path separating them from the rose-trees, and gathered one of the roses.

She watched him with the same half-bitter, half-impatient smile.

"Take my advice," she said as he joined her again. "Don't go up to the Temple of Eros, or you too may find that there are more thorns than roses."

He was too much occupied pinning the rose in his coat to answer for a second.

Then he looked up and at her, his eyes as keen as her own.

"I am a man," he answered, his voice, clear and steady, quickened out of its usual drawl.

She made a little impatient movement of her head and shoulders.

"What did the woman do after the god had left her?" she asked abruptly, after a second's pause.

"I don't know," he answered as lazily as before. "History doesn't say. I should imagine——"

"Yes," with quick, bitter scorn, "I know what you would imagine—what all men would imagine—she went back to her husband, and was satisfied with the love he gave, and made up the blanks with dressing, and dancing, and amusing herself generally—she who loved him so perfectly, so dearly, that she counted all else well lost for his sake! You ought to be glad you are not a woman, Douglas."

"So I am, if I couldn't look about me a little, too. The god was right. In the nature of things, it can't be all love in this life while—men are men. It is too great a thing for them altogether, and they tire of trying to understand it."

She put up her hand to her eyes, as if the dazzling sunlight hurt her.

"Ah, but you would like to have some share in your husband's life—some part in his hopes, his ambitions, his works. If only Walter would let me be his wife—not a petted child, a mere plaything, to be treasured up because it is delicate and fragile! I don't want to be left alone for days, for weeks, for months, while his time is absorbed in work and ambitions, in which he will give me no part, though I can understand and think too."

She had broken out into a passionate outcry, her fair face flushed, her eyes full of pain.

She had come a step nearer her cousin in her troubled excitement.

He looked down into the beautiful moved face.

"You ought not to have married a rising and ambitious man, Lettice," he said lightly, "if you are jealous of his ambitions."

"Jealous of his ambitions! Is it jealous to wish to share them? I cannot be contented with what he gives me, any more than the woman you spoke of. Surely, if her husband had taken the trouble to point out those things to her, she would have looked and understood. Oh, Douglas"—she laid her hand suddenly on his arm and looked up into his face, "do you

think I made a mistake when I married Walter; that——”

“No.” He met steadily the gaze of her upturned-eyes, smiling a little as he spoke, though his lips were paler than before, as if her emotion had stirred even his indolence. “No.”

“No, no! I am sure that I did not. If only——”

Then her mood changed swiftly as the thought of the emptiness of her life came back to her.

Three years ago she had married the man she loved, looking forward to a life in which she should share his ambitions, his hopes, his disappointments, his sorrows; glorying in the thought of becoming to him what he was to her. She had married to find herself as completely shut out from his soul's life as if a granite wall had risen up between them.

He loved her, was tender and faithful to her; gratified, when in his power, her every fancy; but as to making her a sharer in the life of action and ambitions that he led outside their home-circle, he would as soon have thought of sharing his plans, his fears, his aims, with a petted child.

Strong, self-contained himself, love, as a power, had never made itself felt in Walter Drew's life. For two years Lettice had borne in silence the bitterness of her disappointment, the emptiness of the days she would so gladly have filled with her husband's hopes and toils.

But lately people had begun to notice a change in her—not for the better—and this afternoon she confirmed, to one of those who had suspected it, this falling off from the submissive patience which had first distinguished her married life.

It was this man who had suddenly broken out into the fanciful story of the Temple of Love.

“He is going away to-morrow for six months to look after his business and political interests in the West. You would have been amused, Douglas, if you had heard me pleading to go with him—for all the world like a newly-married wife. Even he laughed at me at last, and said I was a goose; that the long journeys would be uncomfortable; that there would be dangers as well as discomforts, for he would have to travel through rough, unsettled country; that I should be happier at home with my balls, and parties, and new dresses, while he may be shot, or sick to death, hundreds of miles away from my side.”

Even the pale quiet of Douglas Montfort's

face was slightly moved by her mocking bitterness.

He looked down at her, a faint disapproval in his eyes.

“There, I have shocked even you, at last,” she laughed in light mockery. “But it has been coming to this for a long time. I think the Lettice you used to know is dead. I shall build a monument over her, with the epitaph: ‘She wanted life, and they gave her balls and parties.’ By-the-bye, that reminds me, you will go to the Jarrolds' to-night? Walter is going to some meeting. I suppose it is very important, as it takes him away the last evening—when he leaves to-morrow for six months. I wanted to go and listen to him—you see he leaves to-morrow—but he says women are better at balls and parties, so I shall go to the Jarrolds'. You will dine with us as usual, and go on with me afterwards.”

“But, Lettice!” There was decided disapproval now.

“You think I ought not to go after what you told me, but I am going. They amuse me, and Walter doesn't object.”

“He doesn't know what sort of people they are.”

“But, you see, he doesn't think it necessary to go and find out. I think it must be nearly three months since he went anywhere with me. One gets so tired of the usual run of people to be met with at ordinary houses. I want a new experience, and he leaves everything to my own discretion. After all, it is a freedom in married life for which I ought to be grateful. Now I am going in. We shall see you at dinner?”

With the same brilliant, mocking smile, that changed so completely in the eyes of the man looking at her, the sweet girl-face he had known almost all her life, she turned and went up the path.

He stood watching her, till the dainty white dress disappeared behind the hedge of roses.

Then he passed his hand slowly down the back of his head—a trick of his.

“Had she made a mistake? Queer that I should have had to answer that question. Queerer still that she should have asked it me,” he murmured to himself with a slight smile, though his lips had grown strangely pale, for, as he stood leaning against the old sundial looking after her, a vision of what that question had meant to him rose up before him.

As long almost as he could remember,

Lettice had been to him the best part of his life. She had been the companion of his boyhood, as she had become the guiding star of his manhood, and while he toiled and waited, not speaking till he should have gained a home of his own to offer her, this other man, a stranger hitherto to her whole life, had stepped in and won her.

"Yes, it was very strange," he said, after another long pause, during which he did not stir; "odd things do happen in this life, but I hope nothing so curious will happen to me again. I don't think I could repeat that 'No.'"

It was some time before Montfort could leave the silence and quietness of the rose-garden, but when at last he did, and stepped out into the hot, dusty road beyond, leading back into the town, he was able to greet a passing acquaintance with the languor—almost affected—which was habitual to him.

CHAPTER II.

LETTICE DREW and Montfort were rather late arriving at Mrs. Jarrold's that evening. Her rooms were already crowded when they entered. Lettice, in a marvellous costume of Worth's, had scarcely ever looked more lovely and brilliant, and as she appeared, an almost involuntary murmur of admiration ran through the rooms.

Montfort noticed the sensation she excited, but instead of looking pleased, as the escort of the prettiest and best-dressed woman in the room, his eyes took a darker shade, and that shadow deepened as he glanced round at the faces of the guests. They all belonged to the fastest and most dashing set of New York. Lettice was soon surrounded by admirers, who gradually shut her out from Montfort. He lingered near a little while, looking on with intense disapproval as she laughed and talked, amusing the men, whom, as he knew, she, in her heart, despised. But he betrayed no outward sign of the pity and disappointment as he kept up a languid conversation with a lady near him. After a little, he strolled listlessly away, and took up his position near the doorway of a conservatory, draped with curtains. He felt so bored, and so generally irritated against the whole roomful of guests, that he was quite glad to find a position where he could escape notice.

He was suddenly aroused from his listless depression by hearing Lettice's name

mentioned by a man's voice at the other side of the curtain.

"Mrs. Drew! Yes, isn't she lovely! By far the prettiest woman in the room. No, her husband isn't here. In fact, he never goes anywhere with her. His time is too much taken up by his country to look after his wife;" the speaker laughed as if amused. "He's going to be President one of these days, and in the meanwhile she goes about everywhere with an awfully good-looking fellow—a cousin, I believe, the most confounded, stuck-up jackanapes I ever met! If I were Drew, I would let my country alone, and take care of my own home. People are beginning to talk, and one or two women have hinted to me that their proprieties are being shocked."

"I don't wonder! She's much too pretty, and much too brilliant to be left alone. I say, introduce me, will you. I'm bored to death, and she looks as if she could amuse a fellow."

"All right, only look out for the good-looking cousin; he acts the part of guardian, and might object to his property being monopolised."

There was a low, well-bred laugh from the two men, the cool insolence of which sent the colour in a hot dark wave over Montfort's pale face, while his hand was clenched with such force that the nails of his fingers went into the palm.

It had come to this, then! He had feared that it might, but never suspected that society had already dared discuss her name. His first impulse was to confront the two men. They could not accuse him of listening, for though they had not seen him, they had spoken loudly enough for any of the guests near them to hear. No. It was a fact, these two men—two of the fastest and most objectionable of Mrs. Jarrold's set—felt themselves perfectly at liberty to discuss Lettice openly like this!

The next second told him the folly of doing as he first intended. He could not drag her name into a quarrel with men like these. Nay, he could not even prevent the introduction! The two men, as he still stood there, white with passion such as rarely moved his cool, collected nature, passed him, and went straight towards Lettice.

With an exclamation like a smothered groan, he acknowledged to himself the fact that he was powerless to help her. He had no right. He was neither husband nor brother. His very care of her would only bring her fresh insult. For had not

the men said it? It was horrible! Only one thing remained—to take her away as soon as possible from the pollution of the presence of such men as these. He made a quick step forward. But a hand was laid suddenly on his arm, and a lady stopped him.

“Ah, Mr. Montfort, you have never come near me to-night. How bored you look! I have been watching you for a long time. You are always an amusing study to me. You always seem to be trying to make your way through life with the least possible exertion, or outlay to yourself. I often wonder if you are utterly selfish, or utterly negative.”

He murmured something in reply, feeling inwardly a savage anger against Mrs. Carter, though generally they were good friends. But the momentary pause had one good effect. It gave him time to recover the coolness he had so nearly lost.

“How well Mrs. Drew looks to-night! But what a pity it is that her husband leaves her so much alone. I hear he is going away to-morrow for six months, and she is to stay behind. It is such a mistake!”

“It would be, only it isn't the case!” He spoke with his most affected drawl, but a sudden, desperate resolve had seized him.

“What do you mean?” she asked rather sharply. “She isn't really going with him? Mrs. Jarrold has just told me.”

“I am sorry for Mrs. Jarrold. It is always trying to find that your news isn't correct, when you have taken the trouble to spread it. Mrs. Drew is going with her husband.”

Mrs. Carter gave a faint gasp of incredulous amazement. Had not the whole matter been discussed at every house of their set that afternoon? She gave a quick glance in Lettice's direction, and half turned. Montfort intercepted both look and movement. He adroitly, though carelessly, slipped in front of her.

“Good-night,” he said languidly. “I am going over to Mrs. Drew. Shall I give her any message?”

Mrs. Carter, slightly piqued at being baffled, declined his offer; though, just as she turned to enter the conservatory, she stopped again, and looked up into his face.

“I am very glad, for her sake,” she said meaningly. In spite of her fashionable follies Mrs. Carter was a kind-hearted woman, and Montfort knew it. But to-night he made no reply.

He made his way with unusual alacrity to Lettice. She must not contradict the report he had spread. If he could get her away, he would have time to think quietly over the plan that had suddenly flashed into his brain.

She had left the place where she had been sitting. In answer to his enquiries, some one told him that she had moved away with Mr. Wilson—the man who had asked for the introduction. She was on the balcony with him. Montfort went straight to it, though he wondered how she would take his request.

But someone else had made the path easy for him. As he stepped on to the long balcony he met her coming swiftly towards him, while at the farther end, in the shadow of the trailing creeper that covered it in, stood the figure of a man.

“Take me home, Douglas, at once!”

Her voice vibrated with the passion of some intense feeling, and as he glanced involuntarily down into her face, he saw that it was dyed scarlet, and her eyes were filled with unutterable shame and scorn.

She did not speak to him again till he placed her in the carriage, and followed her himself.

The brougham rolled off, while she sat rigid and white, every vestige of colour having faded from cheek and lips. Then, suddenly, with a low cry of unutterable loathing and shame, she tore off the glove from her left arm, rending it in the passion of her movement, and tossed it out of the window into the street.

“Oh, Douglas, why weren't you there to help me? Have I sunk so low as that! Do you know what that man did? He caught my hand and kissed it! Do you hear? Don't you despise me? And Walter—— Oh, Douglas, I wish I could die!”

Her face fell on her hands, and she broke into a storm of sobs that shook her from head to foot, and he could do nothing but sit there and listen. It was bitter as death.

CHAPTER III.

ABOUT one o'clock next day, the tall, well-dressed figure of Montfort appeared, leisurely making its way down the street in which stood Walter Drew's office. He was, to all appearances, the languid, bored dandy so well-known in most of the best drawing-rooms in New York. Even in the press and excitement

of business he was never in a hurry. This morning, having left his own office ostensibly for lunch, he was more listless than ever. But instead of going to the place where he usually ate his luncheon, he had made his way to Walter Drew's office.

No one, seeing him strolling along the busy streets, would have suspected that he was coming on a mission—a mission that had kept him awake the greater part of the night, that had made him pace with restless steps up and down his room, while his face grew white and drawn with the conflict raging in his heart and brain. Perhaps if the vigil of the past night had been watched, people might have accounted for the fact that his eyes looked more than usually sleepy, and suspected that the intense stillness of his manner arose more from exhaustion than indolence.

In answer to his question, one of the clerks told him that Mr. Drew was in his private room. Montfort made his way to it, and entering, found Mr. Drew on the point of making a hasty lunch off some biscuits and wine, placed on a table strewn with papers.

"Glad to see you, Montfort," he said, rising and coming to meet him. "I was afraid I should have to be off without seeing you, after all, to-day. I've been hard at work all the morning, and haven't even time to go out and lunch decently. I did want to get home to Lettice, as it is the last day, but there is no getting away. There are so many things to look to, going away as I am for some time. Have something with me."

Montfort sat down, and Drew went over to the table and filled two glasses.

Montfort drank his, and then helped himself to another, declining anything to eat.

Then as Drew ate his biscuits and drank his wine, talking, in the quick, decided way habitual to him, of the journey he was about to undertake, the arrangements it involved, its political and business issues, Montfort leaned back in his chair, listening to him with a languid appearance of interest.

"Lettice is dreadfully cut up at my going;" the bright, handsome eyes of Drew darkened a little; "but hard as it is to leave her, I can't take her with me. She is not at all strong, and——"

"Ah, that's really what I came about," and Montfort, with an apparent effort, roused himself enough to speak. "I think it would be better if you took her."

Drew stared at him in amazement—an amazement caused almost as much at the advice, as at the fact of Montfort, of all people, attempting to give it. Intimate as the two men were, as far as meeting and seeing each other almost daily was concerned, they were in reality as completely separated as two men, with not a thought in common, could be.

In his heart Drew rather despised Montfort, as a man who might make his mark, but preferred to fritter away his abilities in indolent frivolities.

"Take her with me! My dear Montfort!"

"I suppose there are drawbacks," answered the other slowly, inspecting, with much apparent interest, a wasp crawling up his wine-glass. "Still, there are drawbacks on the other side too."

"My dear fellow!" exclaimed Drew again, and he laughed; "it shows how little you know about women. Of course she wants to go now, but she would be bored to death in a week."

"She'll be more bored at home."

"Bored at home! How can she be, with such heaps of amusements going on! Just what women delight in. Then she will be going to the country, and she will have all her new dresses to think over. No easy thing with a woman, I assure you. And then you will be here, and you always amuse her. She looks upon you as a brother, and I can always trust you to look well after her."

The wasp had succeeded in perching itself on the rim of the glass, and just at this moment slipped with an astonished buzz into the glass itself. Montfort felt evidently for its bewildered, helpless condition, for he bent forward and gently tilted the glass to make a way for its escape. Then he answered:

"Yes, that is true; but you see brothers and sisters get tired of amusing each other sometimes. It grows monotonous. She might like a change."

"Really, Montfort, it is no use." Drew spoke a little irritably. Somehow Montfort's persistence vexed him. "The discomfort would be enormous. Besides, it is too late now. I must start to-day, and she has nothing ready. She——"

"She would be ready to start this same moment, if you told her." Montfort spoke with a sudden quickening of the voice, almost amounting to energy. "I say, Drew, take my advice, and let her go."

Walter Drew pushed back his chair, and

rising, took a hasty turn through the room. He suddenly stopped before Montfort, who had apparently relapsed into his usual condition, for he was leaning back in his chair, his eyes completely closed.

Drew looked down at him, something strange in his own keen, searching eyes.

Montfort opened his, and, languid and sleepy as they were, they did not once falter before the piercing, questioning gaze of the other man.

"Montfort! You have some reason for speaking like this. Nothing could have induced you to offer me advice upon my domestic affairs unless——"

"I thought you would probably imagine that I was impertinent." Montfort rose from his seat. He spoke calmly, though the keen eyes watching him saw that the pale quiet of his face was faintly flushed. "It certainly does sound a little odd, especially when your reasons are so good. I have no doubt that it will be an awful bore—the journey, and all that sort of thing. Still, if a woman cares for her husband, she is generally up to a good deal, and——well, there are drawbacks, too, to a town—a town as civilised as New York, for instance, when a woman is young and beautiful, and there are all sorts of people hanging about. Fast men and women who are not too particular, and where every innocent and every good woman—like Lettice, for instance—knowing nothing of what's bad, might easily be pained or wounded. You see, there are some cases where this very innocence leads people into unpleasant situations. And Lettice is very young—a child in some things, and——well, you see, as I said before, brothers and sisters can't go on amusing each other for ever. Besides, I sha'n't be here all the summer."

He spoke in a meditative tone, not looking at Drew, but trying in his coat, as he stood before a little mirror on the wall, the effect of a flower which he had taken out of a vase on the table, Drew—who had a passion for them—always having some near him. It took a little time to arrange, for Montfort was fastidious. He even exchanged it for another, after fastening it in, putting the first one back in the vase. Still Drew did not speak.

He stood watching Montfort as he adorned himself like the merest fop of a fashionable drawing-room, but he did not really see him, and his face had grown dark and stern, and his keen eyes troubled.

Those carelessly spoken words had been a revelation to him, as that dandily-dressed man before him had meant them to be.

Dangers menaced Lettice—dangers and troubles infinitely worse than any she would have to brave in long railway-journeys across lonely country, in far-off Western cities, still rude, and rough, and uncivilised. Uncivilised! Yes, but what was civilisation when it meant dangers, and traps, and treacherous pitfalls, only all covered over with roses and sweet-scented grasses, tossed there by the hands of men to hide the hideous abyss gaping beneath them?

Lettice, his beautiful child-wife; Lettice, innocent and pure, given into his hands to guard, and honour, and preserve stainless—not from sin, she could not fail—but from the touch of the evil that goes on beneath the roses of fashionable, civilised life! As a man of the world he knew what that evil would be. A sudden great revulsion of feeling set in—a hatred and loathing against the society in which a short time before he had urged her to find amusement while he was away. Amusement! Would he have her forget for one single moment him and his love, in the foolish dissipations, the false excitements, of a society life?

"I had better go home at once and tell her to pack up." He spoke at last in his usual voice, though the quick ears listening detected the strain beneath the tones. But Montfort took no notice.

"Yes," he said indifferently. The flower was arranged so satisfactorily that he was able to turn from the mirror. Not another word was needed between them. Neither could have spoken it. They understood, and each knew that the other understood. Neither of them were men to speak easily of things that touched closely their hearts. Walter Drew knew that Montfort would never have spoken at all as he had done, had not some very powerful reason forced him to do so.

He almost despised him as a dandy, but he knew him to be a gentleman.

"I may as well say good-bye," Montfort said, holding out his hand, after having taken up his hat and cane. "I sha'n't see you probably when you return. I am going away from home."

"Going away! Why, I was looking on you as a made man. You had such confounded good luck getting that post. I suppose, though, you have heard of something better?"

To all outward appearances, they were both again the ordinary men of business.

"No, I've not, but I think I am tired of the place. I have thrown it up, anyway. I shall knock about a little, and probably I sha'n't be back in New York for some years. I think I'll try another country for a little—England, perhaps."

CHAPTER IV.

LETTICE was perfectly happy. She and her husband had been away from New York now for a month, and though the curious new tenderness which had shown itself in the first part of their travels had given place to his usual manner, she was with him, and that was quite enough.

How the wonderful thing had come about she did not know—only that he had returned from his office on that memorable day, and told her to pack up immediately, to be ready to start in a few hours.

That month had seemed a new honeymoon, thrown so closely as they were into each other's society. She forgot everything in it—even the rather startling news of Douglas throwing up his splendid appointment in one of the best business houses of New York, for no apparent reason save that of an indolent caprice. Drew forgot him too, as other matters, in the shape of his business and ambitions, pressed themselves upon him. He was glad he had brought his wife with him. It was a little inconvenient at times, for he could not rough it quite as much as if he had been alone, and necessary rest for her often retarded his journeys. Still, this was better than that she should be troubled or unhappy in New York.

In the course of their travels they had arrived at one of those cities of the West that, mushroom-like, seem to spring up in a night. A city still in a very primitive condition as to unfinished houses and roads, but boasting of one or two public buildings, and a grand new hotel, hastily run up, certainly, but fitted up with all the latest contrivances, though built rather too near the river, whose dark, turbid waters, swollen with the unusually heavy rains of the past year, washed the end of its garden. This stream, modest enough as to size and energy in its ordinary condition, had had some share in the unfinished nature of some of the streets, several of which, in the lower part of the town, had been under water during the past winter, while there had been constant

floods during the wet spring and early summer.

Walter Drew and Lettice had been three days in Newbery, and were putting up at the big hotel. Facing it was one of the unfinished streets. They were coming down it this afternoon. The citizens of Newbery were friends of Drew's, and he was returning from a meeting hastily held in his honour. Lettice had gone to meet him, and they were coming back together. One of the few houses habitable in the road was a large store, opened, in spite of many drawbacks, by one of the enterprising citizens of Newbery. A man was just coming out of it as Drew and Lettice passed, she listening with amused interest to a light sketch he was giving her of the afternoon's proceedings—a habit he had fallen into since they left New York. He had begun it first, thinking that, as her usual interests and occupations were taken from her, she might find the time hang heavily in strange places, where she had no friends of her own to speak to, and was gradually, though unconsciously, finding a real pleasure and help in her quick intelligence and ready sympathy, her shrewd insight into people and things, which had astonished him at first, so little had he suspected their presence. They were both too much interested in the subject of their conversation to notice the man in the store. Besides, Douglas Montfort would have been the last person they would have expected to meet in that out-of-the-way, half-civilised town. He had only arrived an hour before, and was as startled at seeing them, as they would have been at discovering him. He drew back till they were well past, then he went to the entrance and looked after them.

"Fate has some spite against me certainly," he said to himself with a slight smile. "To think that, after having made such praiseworthy efforts to put miles between us, she should have led me straight across their path. They did not see me—that is a good thing. I must go away at once—yes, decidedly I must. Something has come over me; it is humiliating, but I am not as strong as I used to be. I think that last season in New York, seeing her so restless and unhappy, finished me off. It was difficult to see that empty place in her life and not try to fill it up!" The faint smile had died away, and he drew in a long breath, like a man tired out by some great strain.

From where he stood, he could see

clearly the hotel-entrance. The two had stopped before it, and Walter Drew was buying of a woman standing there a great bunch of roses. He put them into Lettice's hand, and she looked up into his face, laughing. Then, with a little gesture of infinite love and pride, she laid her hand on his arm, and they went up the steps together.

The man watching them with a curious, bitter-sweet smile in his eyes, waited till they were lost to sight.

"It is a curious sort of thing that a mushroom hotel, all gilt and tinsel, should remind me of the Temple of Eros," he said to himself, as he turned again into the street. "But it does. It was the roses, perhaps. 'Some have the roses, and some——'"

He did not follow out the train of thought. Perhaps he could not. He made his way to the office, from which started a coach that left the town every evening. He found that he had three hours to wait. It troubled him a good deal. But there was nothing to be done. He wandered about, and finding a place where he could dine, he went in and ordered dinner. He ate it, and so managed to get rid of some of the time. Then he went into the billiard-room and had a game with the marker. He lost—for he was not in playing form that evening—but he did not mind, for it helped to while away still more of the time. At last he could start for the coach. As he stepped into the street again he was astonished to find it full of excited, perturbed people, while down the middle of the street ran a rushing stream of red, muddy water.

"What's up?" asked Montfort, stopping and looking at the water, which seemed to widen and spread across the street.

"The water's rising again. We'll have a worse flood than usual, I'm thinking," answered the man he had addressed. "It will be bad for the hotel; that's my opinion. It ought never to have been built there. I believe it is undermined as it is. There have been some ugly cracks in the walls lately, only they have patched them up. But one wing has been settling. I told Webber so, but——"

The sentence was never finished.

There suddenly broke on the ears of the people, now hurrying through the threatened street, a curious crackling noise; then a terrific crashing sound, and the earth beneath their feet vibrated and shuddered as if an earthquake had shaken it, while

the air was suddenly darkened by clouds of dust and mortar.

"The hotel! The hotel!"

A simultaneous cry rose from a hundred excited, frightened voices, and a rush of men took place towards the street in which it stood, while terrified women ran out of their houses, expecting the same fate to befall their own homes.

Montfort was one of the first men on the spot.

One wing of what before had been a gorgeous hotel, was a mass of ruins, with only a fractured wall here and there standing, while the rest of the building looked as if in another few minutes it would share the same fate, if the waters, now breaking with lapping, gurgling sounds against the back walls, rose any higher. The fall of the other wing was the result of previous floods, as the tide which had now swept up over the garden had had scarcely time to touch it. But Montfort saw little of the ruins. The excited words of the proprietor, standing outside among the panic-stricken visitors and servants, to the effect that some of the people occupying that part of the building had not succeeded in making their escape, so little time had there been to warn them, drove every other thought from his mind. Beneath that hideous shroud of twisted girders and fallen masonry lay, perhaps, Lettice, with her roses!

He looked round. Neither she nor Drew was among the saved, many of whom were now hurrying off to be out of the way of the approaching waters.

Heedless of cries for his safety, and warnings that the rest might fall at any moment, he dashed forward into the ruins. He was conscious of nothing—the excited people in the street beyond, rapidly discussing a plan of rescue—the tottering walls and still falling masonry, that struck and bruised him as he passed.

How he escaped with his life was a marvel.

But, guided by a voice, faint and suffocated, calling for help, that seemed to come from the very centre of one enormous heap of ruins, he—stumbling, falling, forcing his way through narrow gaps, bruised and half-blinded—he went to the rescue of Lettice with her roses.

How he managed to make a small opening in their prison—for it was Walter Drew and Lettice who were there—he did not know. But he succeeded enough to let in some air to the prisoners beneath.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Drew as the light and air fell once more upon them. "She would have been suffocated in another moment."

Then, as he caught a glimpse through the opening, at which Montfort was still tearing with wounded, eager hands, an exclamation broke from him:

"Montfort!"

"Never mind," said the other, his voice sharp with impatience. "There isn't a moment to lose. Try and get out of this. The men are coming."

He did not say that the water, which had only wet his feet as he entered, was now over his ankles, and, where dammed up by huge masses of the falling masonry, was deepening into miniature torrents rushing along the sides of the tottering walls. The flood was rising rapidly. The ruins would not stand much more.

They would not stand any more. The words were scarcely out of his mouth when there was another terrible crash, drowning the cries and shouts of the terrified crowd outside as they rushed backwards out of the way of the falling masonry.

There was a moment of intense darkness and stillness. Then Montfort, lying on the ground, unable to move for a beam resting upon his arm, half-stunned, bruised, and bleeding, heard a voice.

He was a prisoner with Drew and Lettice. The new fall had not only broken up the old prison, but formed another, in which Montfort, as well as the other two, was now imprisoned.

It was Lettice who spoke.

"Thank God, Walter, you are alive!"

Montfort turned his head in the direction of the voice.

They seemed to be in a low narrow cell. It was quite dark, save from where a ray of light piercing a tiny opening fell on the farther end, which sloped downwards from where he lay.

By its light he could see Lettice kneeling by the side of her husband.

"Yes." He raised himself a little. "And Douglas?"

"Oh, I had forgotten! I could only think first of you. Dear Douglas!"

"I'm all right," he answered lightly, the darkness hiding the momentary spasm that crossed his face at the pained avowal of her own forgetfulness. Yet it only showed him a little more plainly what he had known all along—that he might have been the veriest stranger in the land when her husband was concerned. "No, don't

stir!" as they made a movement in his direction, and only struck down some more loose rubbish. "I'm a prisoner here for the moment; but it will be all right. They are coming to rescue us, and I think I hear them now."

His steady voice deceived them, and the thought of deliverance coming reassured Drew, who only thought of Lettice.

The two men shouted as loudly as they could, and, after a little, an answering shout from the rescuing-party told them that they were discovered.

Then there was nothing to do but wait.

Lettice lay still in her husband's arms, her head on his breast.

Montfort, from where he lay, could just see them. The beam across his arm was causing him almost intolerable pain, and he began to fear that his strength would not be able to bear it. Perhaps if Drew moved cautiously, he might come to him and try to lift it away. He called to him.

But he was speaking to Lettice of the good chance there was for their rescue, and did not hear Montfort's voice, which had grown low and faint.

With a pathetic patience, Montfort tried to remove it himself. Then he made a discovery. Their prison walls, so adamantine as far as they were concerned, were yet so lightly thrown together, that the beam resting across him, with its weight of timber and masonry, was the keystone to the whole. Its removal would turn the prison into a tomb. Even the slight push he had given it, brought down more bricks. He must have fainted then for a moment or two, for he heard neither the voices of Drew and Lettice, nor the sound of the rescuing-party overhead.

He returned to consciousness, with a sense as of cool fingers touching his forehead. Perhaps it was this touch that revived him. His head had fallen back on the ground, and there was a strange lapping sound like whispering voices among the bricks and rubbish round him. It seemed as if the voices had told him a secret. With a smothered exclamation he raised himself as well as he could, to find that the others, too, had learned the secret of the voices. The water was still rising, and was forcing its way into their prison, and apparently not finding an outlet below, was rising with the curious lapping sound up the sides of their prison walls to search for one above.

Overhead the rescuing-party had learned

it too, for they were working with fierce, feverish energy.

Montfort turned to the other two to see how they bore the secret of the waters.

Drew was holding Lettice closer to him.

"Lettice! If only I had not let you come with me!"

The words broke from him in the uncontrollable passion of despairing love.

"My husband! Think! If I had been in New York, and you were now alone, and then the news had come to me, and I knew that you had gone from me without one kiss—one word!"

"But, my darling, this may mean death."

"Death! Does love fear death? Does it not go victorious through its very gates as I shall go now with you?"

She put her arms round his neck and kissed him, and there was silence, save for the sound of the rising waters, save for the sounds of the eager efforts of the workers above, while husband and wife sat clasped in each other's arms, and the other man lay there, still, listening, having drunk the cup of bitterness to its very dregs. But Walter Drew, as he sat there, looking death in the face, understood at last what love was. Love, as Lettice told him, was the last thing on this side of eternity, as it would be the first to meet them on the other, for it alone might accompany them thither. At this supreme moment, when his ambitions, his successes, his worldly advantages, had all been swept out of his reach, leaving only love in his hands, he felt as he sat there, his wife's lips breathing close to his, her faithful heart beating against his own, that he had missed something in his past life which this moment of supreme agony held.

They lost count of the minutes as they went by. The waters, now surging and beating against the mass of masonry outside, could only force their way in slowly, but they rose surely.

Montfort's position on the higher ground gave him an advantage, without which his helpless condition would have soon placed him level with the waters. The brave workers outside never ceased, though every moment added to their own peril as the waters deepened round them. Suddenly a great shout broke from them, and at the same moment part of the rubbish overhead fell in. Drew had not time to draw Lettice away, and something struck her, and she fainted. But as the cloud of dust and mortar cleared away, Montfort and

Drew saw the opening that had been made overhead, just wide enough for a man to force his way through it.

"For Heaven's sake be quick!" shouted a dozen voices. The waters will overflow in a minute. They are all round us now."

Drew caught Lettice in his arms, standing up beneath the opening.

"Make haste, Montfort!" he called out in his eager excitement, forgetting what Montfort had told him.

"I can't move!" Montfort answered quietly. "I'm pinned down!"

Eager impatient voices shouted from above as the water began now to rush in more rapidly. But for a second Drew stood still, looking towards Montfort, his face, flushed a moment before, pale now with a strange look. In the light from the opening he could see at last how Montfort was held helpless.

"I can't leave you like that!" he exclaimed, his voice harsh and sharp. "Why didn't you tell me before?"

"Because it would bring the whole place down on her. For Heaven's sake don't stand staring there! Get her out! Don't you see there isn't a second to lose?"

There was a sound like a sob in Drew's throat. Truly he had been learning great lessons in love, for he understood.

This dandy—this man he had almost despised—must be left to fill up the measure of his self-sacrifice.

"I'll save you if a man can!" he said as he turned away to rescue Lettice.

But there was no answer, for Douglas knew that it was useless.

He heard the sounds of cheering, followed as quickly by a shout of fear and warning; then a strange surging noise, like the voice of many waters let loose outside his prison.

"And some have the thorns," he murmured. "Well, if others have the roses, it is—right!"

Then the murmuring voices grew closer, whispering into his ears, while the water, like the touch of some cool, soft woman's hand, laved his weary head, and a faint smile parted his lips as he entered into another country—which was that of love.

So when the earthly hands of his rescuers reached him at last, they found that he had already been lifted up into the Everlasting arms, with such infinite tenderness and love, that he was still smiling.

JABEZ GAUNT'S TESTAMENT.

By E. RENTOUL ESLER.

CHAPTER I.

OLD Jabez Gaunt lay dying.

The news had passed from the hill-farm down into the valley as fast as it could be borne from lip to lip, and it was discussed there by women leaning over cottage half-doors, by men resting from the labours of the harvest-field, by lads and lasses who could snatch a moment from the toils of the broiling afternoon to gossip and surmise.

People had not loved old Jabez Gaunt—how could they? a silent, lonely, unsympathetic man, who held the neighbours aloof, and neither asked a service nor rendered one; a man who had always lived austere, grinding himself and all who served him down to the narrowest margin of possible existence.

But still, dying! That one fact altered everything, brought his brotherhood home to them, lifted him out of his commonplace surroundings and into their interest and affection.

Now that he lay there, powerless to repel their overtures or defend himself, they said the best of him: that if hard he was honest; that no one in the world had suffered tangible wrong at his hands; that throughout his life he had defrauded no man, had never taken advantage of a neighbour's extremity to under-bury him.

A hard man surely, but as merciful to himself as others, asking no assistance when the whirlwind ruined his harvest, uttering no complaint when the pest slew his cattle.

Uncomplaining endurance appeals to human nature as nothing else does. Since old Jabez had never asked for pity, there were those who said the best of him: what a good son and brother he had been, how patient and industrious, how neighbourly, too, till he met Jessie Dean, and she spoiled life for him.

Old Jabez with a love-story! The young people could not realise that, it was too odd and unnatural in their judgment; but they drew nearer to him because of the suggestion, and strove to peer at him through the half-open door, as he lay motionless in the old four-post bed, with the face that was like a quaint wood-carving outlined on the hard pillow, and the breath fluttering on his colourless lips.

There was nothing repulsive in death as it neared old Jabez Gaunt. Sickness had not wasted him, because there had never been anything to waste. Living like an anchorite, and toiling like a slave, even disease had not known where he was vulnerable, till death stepped in and solved the difficulty. He had been labouring that day in the harvest-field with the best of them. Towards noon the stroke of sudden paralysis smote him; it was not yet evening, and he was dying.

Jabez Gaunt had not been old Jabez always, though a moment's reflection was needed to bring that thought home to the neighbours. As to the few who had known him once, a well-grown, active man, strong as a lion and tough as hickory, with a certain kind of homely handsomeness characterising his sunburnt features; why, those people suffered from a form of mental confusion that made them aware of two Jabez Gaunts, and kept them wondering where the one ended and the other began.

It was odd, now that the solitary old man at the hill-farm lay dying, to think of a time when Hiram Gaunt and his wife and sons had lived in comfortable abundance under the same roof. Of course that was in the memory of the oldest inhabitants only, but still to recall it even as tradition was odd. The wife had been in her grave for half a century, and Jacob, the favourite son, had turned out amiss, as favourite sons do sometimes, and old Hiram had sunk into his dotage a score of years before, and afterwards out of life; and Jabez was dying silently as he had lived, and there was no one left but Janet, the child who had come there unaccountably, and remained unaccounted for, long after surmise and question were over.

Of course people said she was Jacob's child, but, being Jacob's child, would Jabez have kept her? And where was her mother? And what did it all mean? The gossips had fretted against the hill-farm mystery, but without approaching nearer to its solution. Among the solitary rocks and upward-looking tufts of firs, Jabez had learned the secret of keeping his own counsel.

As to Jacob, through years his name died out of the circle of the hills. He had been bold, and bad, and handsome, and more than one escapade had drawn eyes of censure on the Gaunt household before that last worst freak which led him to enlist in the service of his country and his king.

"And good enough for him," the neighbours said, in whose eyes military service and barrack-life had assumed no heroic proportions.

But years passed, and the shame which had swept Jacob Gaunt beyond their ken was forgotten. Troubles at the hill-farm ended, and things fell back into their easy ways, and Jabez had grown to be a man whose word was as good as his bond; a man who made few friends, and lived his own life and was respected. As to Hiram, he had grown feeble now, and past work, just observant enough to notice fretfully that prices were lower and harvests worse than in his young days, and to wish impatiently, now and then, that there was a woman in the house who knew more than old Martha, and could be trusted to think.

Jabez heard his father, and smiled his slow, wise smile. If only some things had been different he would have brought a woman to the hill-farm ere this. There was little Jessie Dean down at the mill; Jessie, who had the brightest, darkest eyes, and the roundest, pinkest cheeks, and the gayest, sweetest laugh. Oh, it was a long time since solemn Jabez had noticed Jessie Dean, and if only fewer years than half-a-score had yawned between them, he would have tried his luck like other men. But she was far too young, and dainty, and pretty for him.

There was no vanity in Jabez, nothing of that which in other men passes for a just self-esteem. He knew he was but a rough farmer, silent, and grim, and taciturn, grown mature prematurely, as men do who have had a joyless youth. It took him a long time to realise that Jessie liked him, went out of her way persistently to make friends with him, and cut the foremost of his rivals for his sake; but when he did realise it, then the great, silent yeoman brought all he was and hoped to be, and laid it at her feet.

And Jessie had kissed him, of her own accord; she was proud of her conquest, proud to be wooed by Jabez Gaunt.

He had gone home that night exultant; she loved him—the girl who was fit for a prince. Never had the way up the hill seemed so short as beneath his fevered strides; never had the landrails cried as musically in the springing corn; never had the lights in the valley offered him such a greeting of friendship and good fellowship.

The mastiff fawned on him as he crossed the paved yard; his father's voice greeted him as he opened the door:

"Jabez—is it Jabez?"

"Yes, father." His great form was outlined like a silhouette on the threshold, his deep voice vibrated as he answered.

"Then come here. Jacob is back. I am holding his hand here by the hearth."

Jabez went up and welcomed the prodigal.

Such a good-looking prodigal as he was, with the boldest, merriest eyes, and a forehead as white as a girl's, and the frankest laugh, and the easiest way of bearing himself! Jabez was struck dumb with admiration, through which a little surprise ran. If people grew like this through disobedience and waywardness, of what use was it to stay at home dutifully, and grow dull as a clod toiling for the old acres and the old roof?

But in his wonder there was no germ of envy. He was proud that Jacob had redeemed the past, as he must have done if the tales of high heroism he told were true; proud and triumphant that such a splendid figure as his soldier-brother had entered on the scene of his life at its most dramatic moment. Of course there were bad things in Jacob's past, but Jabez was not the man to cherish old scores against the repentant.

Of course he told Jacob all about Jessie, and took him to see her, and introduced him. And Jacob praised her warmly—a little too warmly indeed, but perhaps that was only because Jabez was taciturn and sensitive.

Jacob had a month's furlough, and it was harvest-time, and Jabez was busy; and so the soldier devoted himself to his brother's sweetheart, and the sweetheart met the devotion prettily.

It was the last night of Jacob's stay at home. Jessie had come up to the farm early in the day, and had been in the gayest, merriest mood, flitting here and there like a butterfly, assuming pretty airs of authority in the house, petting old Hiram in a filial way, and bewitching her lover.

Towards nightfall she spoke of going home, and both brothers volunteered their company. She walked between them, giving her hand to Jabez at rough places, and holding it a little afterwards.

For once Jacob's fluent tongue was silent, and Jabez never had much to say, and so the burden of the discourse fell to Jessie, who bore it merrily. Had she seemed once to fail or falter, Jabez could have forgiven her better afterwards.

On the way home Jacob recovered his spirits and his tongue, and boasted carelessly, planting thorns in his brother's heart that would rankle during a lifetime.

With the next morning's dawn, while Jabez was still sleeping the dreamless sleep of weariness, Jacob Gaunt and Jessie Dean were speeding away from him together.

It took Jabez a long time to realise what had befallen him. To his loyal nature treachery was incomprehensible, and treachery from these two of all the world! Why, they must have been deceiving him from the very outset; she with her pretty blandishments and caresses; he with his frank, fraternal criticism. And that very walk that he and Jacob had taken to Groomsport but two days before, that was that the traitor might make final arrangements for his flight. Jabez felt as if they had killed him—killed every kind and human instinct in his breast, and at their door he laid the ruins of his better self.

He had no desire to follow them, and avenge himself. As their crime was beyond his comprehension, so their punishment was beyond his arm. He left them grimly to Heaven, ready to yield his faith in that too, unless Heaven meted them out a just reward.

It was after this that Jabez Gaunt grew an old man. He was only thirty, but a dead heart lines the face, and bows the shoulders, and renders a man weary of the sun.

He had no one to talk to, no one who could lighten his pain in sharing it. Once or twice his father had asked fretfully where Jessie was, and when Jabez had answered briefly that Jessie had gone off with Jacob, he had fallen to murmuring to himself of the fine lad Jacob was.

"But she was my promised wife," Jabez had burst forth once, in his intolerable pain; whereat the old man shook his head, and muttered: "Aye, aye, the Deans were ever treacherous. I could have told thee that always, but it is not the way of the young nowadays to seek counsel of the old;" and so muttering had sunk back into the indifference of old age.

CHAPTER II.

Two, three, four years passed without bringing much change to the hill-farm.

Old Hiram was hopelessly in his dotage now, with the circle of his pleasures narrowed down to basking in the sun in the summer-time, or sitting in a bent and

drooping attitude by the hearth when wintry blasts shook the casements.

Martha, who had been the "help" at the farm when Jabez was a baby, saw to the butter and cream, and cooked the homely meals, and practised on herself and others the small economies inculcated by long years of scanty earnings and few possessions.

As to Jabez, he was quite old now—old and indifferent to all but the matters of routine that lent form to his empty days. His face had a withered look, his eye was hollow and cold, and the line of his lips had grown narrow, as it does where the affections are meagre and the sympathies few.

It was a bleak November morning; the icy blast like a great sickle swept the hills, and everything that lived cowered backward from its reach. Jabez had slept badly that night; the growling of the mastiff had disturbed him, and the thought of prowlers about had disturbed him more. But it was a bitter night, and this queer, odd man thought that only cruel necessity had set thieves afoot in such weather, and that whatever they could lay their hands on they needed more than he did. So he had lain awake listening and thinking till it was almost morning; then he got up and unfastened the door to look out; he wanted to see what his pitiful mood had led him to lose. But as his hand lifted the latch, something propped against the door rolled forward and fell at his feet.

It was too dark for him to distinguish what it was, but as he stooped to lift it, it uttered a cry.

"A child!" Jabez Gaunt said to himself, trembling—he could not tell why.

He struck a light and laid the half-frozen thing on the table, and looked at it.

A letter, addressed to himself, was pinned to its breast; then he understood. He detached the letter and secreted it; then he called old Martha. When she had come he pointed to the child. "A foundling left to perish," he said. "Keep it till we hear further." Then he went out to feed the cattle.

All day long the letter lay unread in his pocket, and Martha's questions were answered indifferently. He had found the child on the threshold, and had carried it in; after that she knew more than he did.

"A beggar's brat," old Martha sniffed wrathfully. "I shall send it to the work-house."

"Not till I tell you," Jabez said, and went back to his labours.

He kept the letter unread for a week, until the child had shown itself good-tempered, and healthy, and pretty, as far as he could judge, and until old Martha had reluctantly admitted that by-and-by it would be less trouble; then, when its footing was secure, he unfolded the message it brought, and read it with a shudder of repugnance and pain.

"You need not hate me now," Jessie Dean wrote. "I have suffered enough. He left me a year ago. I have tried to feed myself and the child and live honestly, but I can't, so I bring her to you, and leave her in your hands. Whatever you do with her will be right; you were always just. I have nothing but her, and I give her up to you—it is my punishment." There was no signature, but none was needed.

Jabez Gaunt read the blurred lines in silence; then he flung the paper into the flames. It was years before he remembered that he had destroyed the sole proof, such as it was, of Janet's identity.

The child remained on at the farmhouse, and existed somehow. Such a poor little child as she was, with a long, sad face, and lank, light hair, and a furtive habit of gliding out of the way when anyone looked at her. No one liked her, no one desired her. To Martha she was a nuisance, one more mouth to feed, one more body to cater for; to Jabez she was an odious fragment left from the wreck of his fair possibilities; to old Hiram she was a little torment, constantly making overtures of friendship, constantly needing to be repulsed.

In all her childhood she never had a playfellow; in all her youth she never had a companion. No one reasoned about it, but unconsciously they all conspired against the irrepressible vitality that was in her. Life had tyrannised over Jabez, and unwittingly Jabez had become a tyrant in his turn.

But they could not suppress the activity that sent her scampering across the hills when the wind blew, and gave her the colts and young cattle for friends; and they could not uproot the affections that, strong as ivy, must cling to something.

It is hard to be fond through repulsion, and aversion, and avoidance; there must have been some adamant element in Janet's nature when, in spite of himself, it was possible for her to idealise Jabez Gaunt.

He never suspected it—how could he?—but it was to please him that Janet learned to milk, and knit, and spin, to attend the poultry, and dig and hoe in the garden; to cut potatoes for planting, and to acquit herself so well in the multifarious employments of a farm, that old Martha, in an unguarded moment, let out to Jabez that she was of more value than any hired girl.

"Then she shall have the hired girl's wage," Jabez said, and called her to him, and put a sovereign in her hand.

"You shall have that every quarter-day," he said.

Janet looked at him, her mouth trembling, and the tears smarting her eyeballs. He had paid her like a hired girl—actually like a hired girl—and she had thought she was something more, and better. She took the money out to the hay-field, and hid it and herself among the hay, and then cried herself into a lethargy.

But why should he not pay her? What was she better than the hired girl? Who had told her she was of his race—why had she ever suspected it?

She thought of this problem all that evening. Next day, when the cattle had gone out to pasture, and her morning's work was over, Janet started on an enterprise bolder to her timidity than that of Christopher Columbus.

The valley below the farm was an undiscovered country to her; she would not only invade it, but make friends with an inhabitant, and find out why Jabez Gaunt had paid her wages.

Mrs. Brown, of the little cottage just below the farm, was feeding a brood of young chickens that morning by the fire, when the door opened suddenly, and Jabez Gaunt's foundling came in. Her short skirts were tucked up for rapid running, her light hair was blown backward from her sharp face, and her breath came hurriedly.

"Lawk a mussy, child!" Mrs. Brown raised her hands in bewilderment. The girl's presence was alarming, as the unusual always is.

"I want to know what Jabez Gaunt is to me?" the girl burst forth, eager not to waste a second.

"Jabez!"

"Yes; am I anything to him, or am I a hired girl like another?"

"Sit ye down, deary, and I'll tell ye all I know," Mrs. Brown said coaxingly. It was not often an opportunity of making a sensation came so easily within her grasp.

"I'm in haste," Janet said doggedly. "Unless you can tell me what I want to know, I must be going."

Mrs. Brown was in a difficulty. She knew just as little about Jabez Gaunt and Janet as anyone else; but then, like all the neighbours, she had a whole treasure-house of opinions and surmises, and the prospect of opening it to this pale, eager girl was delicious. It was dangerous to be too fluent with the name of Jabez Gaunt, but the present opportunity, once lost, would be beyond recall; and then, was it not fair and right that Janet should learn something of herself?

"Why have you come to ask me?" she enquired, with suspicion born of her embarrassment.

"Because you were the nearest."

"And if I tell you what you don't like?"

"I only ask for the truth."

"I can give you no facts, remember; only opinions."

"If you tell me all you know, you can do no more."

Thus encouraged, Mrs. Brown told her tale of Jabez Gaunt's wrongs, and her suspicion that Janet was the child of Jacob and Jessie, found by him somehow, and saved because of the pity in him.

Janet stood by the door listening, and suffering, as only the young can. This was the punishment of her arrogance, and pride, and impatience—the knowledge that she was the child of traitors, and hurtful and horrible. At best she was but a foundling saved through charity; at worst she was the child of Jabez Gaunt's enemies. What a dreadful place the world was, since it harboured villains and let traitors go unpunished! What good was there for her to hate falsehood when the man and woman whose names were a bye-word still were her father and mother? Janet felt herself suddenly grown old and hopeless, and found herself stupidly wondering if it was only yesterday that she had raced with the young colt across the common, and sought blue-bottles amid the swaying corn.

"You'll not tell what I've told you, dear?" Mrs. Brown said, awed by the pale face and wide-open eyes that fronted her.

"Of course not."

She stirred as though awakened, passed her hand across her eyes, and then, with a word of muttered thanks, turned away.

It was after this that Janet's crisp brightness deserted her. Like all sensitive

natures, she was shy at self-justification, and now the consciousness of an inherited misdoing oppressed her. No wonder Jabez hated her; the only wonder was that he could bear her, even as a servant, in his presence. As to her, she only loved him better for his long martyrdom. But she must never show him that; her approval would be only added pain.

Jabez saw a change in Janet as the months passed. The old hostility between her and Martha was over, and the old bursts of irrepressible mirth, which had once jarred on him horribly, were silenced. Sorrow had touched Janet somehow. Could it be a love sorrow? he asked himself with a heart pang.

That was the one pain which Jabez regarded as never-ending, the one pain that was too cruel even for Jacob's child. Unconsciously to himself, he took to watching her furtively; unconsciously to himself he learned that Janet's life was laid on simple lines, and that all her thoughts were noble.

Old Hiram had been dead many years now; Martha was ageing fast, and as small duties fell from her relaxing clasp, Janet picked them up, and made them her own, uncomplainingly, willingly, as the merest matter of course.

Janet's character appealed to every sympathy Jabez had got. It was his own, in its silence, and strength, and self-abnegation. And yet she was the child of Jacob and Jessie Dean! Jabez could not understand it, and would not see that the bitter years had given him a blessing in spite of himself.

At eighteen Janet had been a plain girl; at five-and-twenty she was a handsome woman, stately, serene, reserved, carrying herself with unconscious pride, and walking with the free step of the hill-women. Jabez saw this too, and by-and-by other men saw it as well as Jabez; and one day young Eben Guthrie, from Brook Farm, stepped up the hillside boldly, and asked her straight out from Jabez as his wife.

"Let her decide for herself," Jabez said, turning away with feigned indifference.

And she did decide—that she would live with Jabez always; that she had no wish for love or marriage; that she was happy as she was.

Eben took his dismissal in good part. Where there is no rival, patience becomes easy. Eben was prepared to wait.

Things went on quietly at the hill-farm, and by-and-by old Martha died, and Janet

stepped into her place naturally. She still received her quarterly wage, and she still told herself she was the hired girl; but she wore a bonnet and a merino gown on Sundays, which no hired girl had ever done, and had trim aprons for the evening, and sat opposite Jabez to do her knitting after sunset.

Once Jabez, looking at her as she sat working in the firelight, said suddenly:

"My mother's room is empty; why not use it? It will be handier than the loft."

"So it will," Janet answered sedately.

But she trembled as though a sudden caress had touched her. He permitted her to take his mother's room—then he acknowledged her as a relative.

CHAPTER III.

THERE were three years of this peaceful life; three years of busy days and restful evenings; three years in which a drive to church was an outing, and the harvest-home a festival; three years in which the only acrid drop was that quarterly payment, made and accepted.

Jabez liked and needed her, the neighbours always spoke of her as his niece, and Eben Guthrie was faithful. It was the happy time of Janet's life; and then, suddenly, without warning, it was over, and Jabez Gaunt lay dying.

He had been out in the harvest-field watching the men at work as was his way, admonishing a laggard, directing the unskilled, proving himself eye, and ear, and judgment, when suddenly annihilation seemed to fall on his small world, and he lay among the sheaves, agonising in impotent effort and conscious defeat.

The reapers clustered round him, issuing a hundred conflicting orders, offering a hundred useless suggestions; their slow tongues fluent with comment, and question, and surmise.

What had befallen him? Was it apoplexy, was it paralysis, was it death? Had anyone suspected his seizure? Was anyone prepared for it? What would Janet say? As Jabez lay on the stubble, staring with sightless eyes up at the sky, the rustic mind had jumped from that moment to its consequences—the heir-at-law would have the hill-farm, and what would become of Janet?

"I suppose there is no will?" one hopeless person suggested in an awed whisper.

"Jabez Gaunt make a will! Is that all

you know about him?" was the contemptuous answer.

And then the door, for which a messenger had been dispatched, was brought, and the old man was laid on it, and with his face turned blankly up to the red sky, he was carried home.

By-and-by the doctor came and looked at him, and shook his head. There was nothing to be done.

Neighbour-women came to sit by Janet, and wipe their eyes, and talk in whispers, discussing her and her prospects in her absence. Jabez had never acknowledged her, and there was no will; what would become of her?

"He paid her as a servant; has she saved aught?" they asked each other.

"Who knows?—a pound or two, maybe; but it was more like her to put the money he gave her back into the housekeeping. Eh! but he was a curmudgeon to her always, and if he had been her own father she could not have loved him more."

"And to think of all he has going to a shopkeeper in the town, to deck out a lot of dressy lasses, and portion them for marriage."

"An' the poor lass thinkin' it a joy to serve him."

"But he brought her up," one protested faintly.

"Aye, but she paid for her keep since she was able to toddle. Don't I mind her herding the geese out of the corn, when she was just old enough to cross the ridges without falling?"

"And to think that he never asked himself what was to become of her after his death."

"Maybe he thought no harm could come to a brave heart like Janet."

"Most likely he never thought of her at all." And then they sighed in concert, shaking their heads.

That day, towards noon, the heir-at-law came; a burly, prosperous person, with a keen eye to his personal advantage, and a thorough comprehension of the value of the oxen in the sheds, and the corn stacked and standing. He had come on business, to learn the worth of his inheritance, and to make sure that little could be carried off without his knowledge before he came into possession. He went through the house appraising, looking at the linen in the oak presses, at the old silver, at the china in the cupboards; reckoning the value of the sheep on the hills, and the cattle in the sheds, and computing the developments of

which his business was capable when the price of Jabez Gaunt's possessions was poured into it.

He spoke with friendly condescension to the farm-labourers, and Janet saw scornfully how they deferred to him as the coming master. What time-servers they were! But no heart had ever loved Jabez but her own. And now he was slipping away from her—going out into the darkness where her love could not follow him.

She hated the rotund, rosy person who was to be his successor, she felt his presence in the death-chamber a desecration, as he stood with his hands in his pockets, whistling softly through his shut teeth. In his eyes death was very natural, and the death of an old man who had lived frugally and amassed money, was very beautiful. The heir-at-law meant no disrespect as he stood by Jabez Gaunt's death-bed, and thought of the future.

"I wonder is there any neighbour who would take the land at a fair value," he said, turning to Janet, and putting the uppermost thought into words.

He spoke softly, and bore himself decorously, and therefore the blazing eyes that she turned on him surprised as much as they startled him.

"Let the breath be out of his body before you dispose of his possessions," she said with a wild burst of tears.

He looked at her with new interest.

"Who are you, my good young woman?" he said condescendingly.

"I am nothing; never mind about me."

"H'm! nothing, yet so sorry! Have you lived here long?"

"Always—ever since I was a little child. But what does that matter to you?"

Mr. Jewlett stared her all over, traced something of the bearing of old Jabez in her, and drew his own conclusions. For the first time it struck him as very odd that Jabez had made no will. But possibly there was a will. The thought fell on him like a cold rain, and his golden visions seemed to shrink and shrivel.

But there was no will, never had been, and Jabez Gaunt lay as conscious of that fact, and all its consequences, as he had ever been of anything in his life. The acres that he loved with a personal affection would be sold by a stranger; the household gods would be scattered to the four winds; and Janet, the one human being who had ever loved him for himself, would be left, not only unprovided for, but unacknowledged.

His heart was aflame with rage and

despair; the anguish in him was strong enough to utter itself trumpet-tongued; passion, like a whirlwind, was battling in his brain; and all the time he lay inert and dead as a stone, his feeble pulse scarcely stirring in his chill body. Oh, to move, to utter a sound—to speak one sentence! Too late! For years he had kept silence, priding himself on it, and now—now!

Where was Jacob? where was Jessie? Why did this smug person call himself his heir, and appraise his possessions, and desire his death? Was his brother dead—the brother who had wronged him?—and, if so, how could he tell the world that Janet was Jacob's child? And even if he told it, and it was disputed, how could he prove it now?

He could not utter a sound, but all the time he was crying from the bottom of his heart that Heaven would retard the stroke of his doom, and give him one hour of conscious life again.

"I have no right to pray; my whole life has been selfish and wrong; it is for Janet's sake I crave a boon, as the vilest may. One hour of life for Janet's sake!"

If fervour could force itself an utterance, the prayer was heard. The twisted face stirred on the pillow, the heavy eyelids slowly unclosed, and two words came from the stiff lips:

"A clergyman!"

With the cry of a reprieved criminal, Janet was at his side.

"You are better; say you are better, and will live!"

His eyes sought her face in anguish. His tone thrilled with the agony of its entreaty:

"A clergyman! Time is short."

He wanted spiritual consolation; at last his mind was tending towards holy things. In ten seconds a boy was speeding like the wind down the hillside, and Janet had returned to her vigil by the bed.

He could not talk—not through pain of body, but through distress of mind. Was there time? Would someone come to do as he wished? No one on the hill-farm could write but Janet and the stranger. A will written by Janet in her own favour would be valueless, and how could he trust the man who called himself his heir?

"Pray for time," he whispered laboriously after a long pause. Then again later:

"Who went?"

"Ned."

He drew a breath of relief, and his

quicken'd vision seemed to see the boy scudding like a hare across the country. He saw him approach the parsonage door and knock, and turn away disappointed. Where was the clergyman? Could he find him? Would there be time?

"Pray," he kept whispering, and she prayed for life for him, for length of days, for pardon if there was aught sinful in his past. And still the moments dragged past, and the big clock in the kitchen ticked remorselessly on, and Jabez's life-sand kept falling—falling.

The cold perspiration had broken on his forehead, and was trickling like tears on to the pillow; his weak hands feebly twisted each other as he prayed, and his voice found utterance at intervals, asking in agony for time. And the crowd gathered gaping by the door, wondered what awful secret on Jabez Gaunt's soul made his parting from the body so bitter. And then suddenly there was a deeper hush in the anteroom, the crowd parted from about the door, and Mr. Lydgate stepped into the old man's presence.

"I am here, Mr. Gaunt."

"Yes; go, Janet."

The door closed behind her, and then the sick man's eyes fixed themselves with magnetical force on the clergyman's face, and drew him like cords towards him, till the faltering tones became audible:

"Pen, paper—write my will."

Mr. Lydgate was horribly disappointed. He had half expected to hear the secret of a sin-burdened soul, at any rate to be called on for spiritual consolation; and old Jabez, thinking of earthly things under the circumstances, was downright profane.

"I had thought your soul——" he began admonishingly.

And then Jabez made his terrible answer:

"I care less for my soul than for justice. Write!"

And Mr. Lydgate did write, after all legal formula:

"To my niece, Janet Gaunt, who has lived with me all her life, I bequeath all I possess in the world, personal and chattel property, stock, crop, money in the bank, in bonds, and in land, for her sole use and benefit."

"Now call witnesses and let me sign."

The trembling hand clutched the pen, the signature was executed weakly, and then old Jabez Gaunt gave a sigh and fell back on his pillow.

Dead! No, not dead, nor likely to die

for years. The doctor called it a miracle, but doctors are like other people, and sometimes term the unusual miraculous. Jabez seemed to take a new lease of life from the hour that he held Death at bay for Janet's sake. But he never was the hale man he had been, and, before the toil of the winter came round, it was found needful that a neighbour should assist him in his labour. And what neighbour so willing as Eben Guthrie?

The hill-farm and the brook-farm adjoined, and so it was found expedient to work the two together, and by-and-by, the hill-farm being the bigger, Eben came to live where he was needed most, and in time, he and Jabez having become the best of friends—why, in time Eben married Janet, and all the sad old memories at the farm died out in a sound of wedding-bells.

LUCY GREY.

By A. M. DALE.

CHAPTER I.

IT was a dark, rainy morning early in November, and I stood at the dining-room window, and looked out at the wet, motionless evergreens, the sodden grass, and the black and leafless trees, to which the fog clung dismally. It was a dreadful, dreary day! Yet, ought any outward influences, however depressing, to have had the power to depress a bride of only six weeks' standing—a bride who had come to her new home from her wedding-tour only the day before? And, perhaps, this wretched day did not depress me; perhaps if it had been a sunny summer's day, and I had looked out upon leafy trees, and a garden gay with flowers, and listened to the song of birds instead of the splashing of the rain, I should have felt just as miserable as I was feeling now. For I had been married only six weeks, and I already knew that it would have been better for me if I had not been married at all. Better—much better; for I loved my husband passionately, and I knew to-day that he did not love me, and had never loved me. I thought it all over as I stood by the window and watched the rain, and the memory of the past summer, once so sweet, had lost its sweetness now. And I wondered at the blindness that had prevented me from seeing that which was so palpable

to all my wakeful, quivering senses now. Of course he did not love me! How could I ever have deceived myself so far as to suppose he did!

He was an artist, and his name was already well-known. He had stayed at our little village on one of his sketching expeditions, and, being slightly known to our vicar, that hospitable gentleman threw open his doors to him, and it was at his house that he—Lionel Prynne—and I first met. He had been educated for a doctor, and had taken his degree, and practised for a few years in a country town; but having a small fortune left him, he gave up his profession, and turned to the one pursuit he really loved—his painting.

I was only nineteen when he paid his visit to our village, and I was a very unsophisticated damsel indeed. I lived with a deaf old maiden-aunt, and I had never been away from home in my life except for the two years I had spent at a "finishing" school. I had read many novels, and had worshipped the heroes thereof; but my ideas of the outside world were of the vaguest, and it was no wonder when a real live hero like Lionel Prynne presented himself before me, that I fell down and worshipped him at once. And it was only very ordinary kindness on his part that changed a silly girlish adoration to a woman's true and abiding love. He was one whom any woman might have loved, for his gentle and courteous ways had even a greater attraction than his somewhat sad but undeniably handsome face. He had dark, waving hair, which he wore rather long, and very large, dark eyes—eyes that seemed capable of expressing the deepest tenderness or strongest passion, but which habitually wore a sad, absent expression which never altered, and he did not seem to be a happy man. I was a merry, sociable girl, and when I got over my first timidity with him, he seemed amused with me, and to like my companionship. And then he asked me to marry him.

As I stood looking at the wet laurels this morning, I felt I could understand why he had liked me; my merry chatter had diverted his attention, and caused him to forget his troubles sometimes; and my innocent and unconcealed admiration of all his sayings and doings had naturally won upon his heart, and caused him to find pleasure in my society; but of the love a man should feel towards the woman he makes his wife, he had none—I could see it plainly now. Even during the days of

our engagement, he never praised me; never took any interest in my thoughts or feelings; never asked a single question about my past life, or anything concerning me, and never once spoke a word of love!

My love, however, blinded me to all these shortcomings, and supplied all his de-

Yes, for I was too happy and proud to notice anything wrong, and I was happy—oh, so happy, those few, short weeks. But, when we were married, I soon began to doubt, for I was taken into his confidence no more than formerly, and his heart and mind remained a sealed book to me. And never in all my lonely life had I really known what loneliness was until I was on my wedding-tour! I sat by my husband's side while he sketched, and he was so absorbed in his work that he seemed to forget my very existence. Once or twice I ventured on some show of resentment, but I might as well have shown resentment against the waves at my feet, for he never noticed me, and it made no difference to him whether I was silent or gay, and I slowly but surely realized the fact that in all his life there was no need of me. He did not mean to be unkind, and when he remembered me he had always a word and smile for me; but the effort was so palpable that such notice hurt me worse than his neglect.

But I determined to act as I thought right, and let no suffering deter me from my rigid duty; and, of course, in my heart there nestled warmly a hope that patience on my part would in time win to me entirely my husband's heart. And it was in this spirit and with these hopes that I returned to my new home, which was a pretty house, situated on the hilly side of a romantic and picturesque glen in one of the most beautiful counties of England. My husband had bought this little out-of-the-way nook when he gave up his practice and became an artist, and here he had lived alone for one or two years before he married me.

It was six o'clock on a November evening when we arrived at home, for we had lingered by the sea as long as the weather continued fine, and October had been unusually beautiful that year; but when the rain began to fall and colder winds to blow, we returned home at once. We had had a very long journey, and were almost tired out when we reached home, and it was too dark for me to see how beautifully my new home was placed—indeed, the impression made upon my mind was not agreeable—it was of nothing but wet trees tossing in

the wind and rain. Inside, however, it was bright enough, and I could see how perfect and artistic it all was; but Lionel said he was too tired to show me round that night, and would do so on the morrow. I also was very tired, and went wearily upstairs to change my wet and travel-stained garments, and when I came down into the dining-room again, Lionel was lying asleep on the couch beside the bright fire. A tempting repast was spread upon the table, but I felt unwilling to awaken Lionel, he seemed so soundly asleep. I stood beside him, and looked down into his face, and I thought how sad and careworn he looked, even in sleep, and with an impulse of pitying love I pushed the dark hair tenderly from his forehead, and bent and kissed him. This did not wake him, but caused him to stir uneasily and utter some low words. I bent down to hear what he said.

"Lucy," he murmured tenderly; "Lucy."

I drew back as if he had struck me a blow. Yet what was there in that tenderly-breathed name to drive the blood from my heart, as if a hand of ice had suddenly grasped it? Only this—my name was not Lucy, and no one had ever called me so!

How long I stood there in silence I do not know; but when I unloosed my hands, which I had clasped before me, they were rigid and stiff with long pressure, and I had had time to think of a great many things and to realise it all. Lucy, Lucy! who was Lucy? And why had my gentle touch brought her name to his lips? Had she ever touched him so? At this thought I again drew near my husband, and again smoothed back the wavy hair. He moved again; he evidently made an effort to awaken from some distressing dream.

"Lucy, Lucy, come back to me!" he groaned, and I bent my head to catch the low, broken words. "Come back to me or I must die! Lucy, my darling—Lucy Grey!"

Then he awoke with a start, and stared at me vaguely.

"Oh, Marjorie!" he said absently.

"Yes," I replied bitterly; "Marjorie, not——" but I checked myself in time, and remembered my good resolutions. "Tea is ready," I said wearily.

He arose with a sigh, and took his place at the table. And this first meal in my new home was a very silent one indeed.

In the morning Lionel showed me round the house; it was perfect in every way, but this only saddened me the more, for it

made me feel how happy and blessed I might have been if only I could have known that its beauty and perfection had been prepared for me.

It was too wet for us to go out of doors, and when we had finished our tour of inspection, Lionel retired to his studio, and I stood looking out at the rain as I have described, and feeling too forlorn, and miserable, and utterly heart-broken for any words to express. And one name seemed written on everything alike—on dreary trees and dreary sky; and the drip of the rain and the murmur of the fire seemed to say it: Lucy Grey—nothing but Lucy Grey.

CHAPTER II.

AND now a dreary life began for me. My home, though so picturesque and romantic, was lonely in the extreme. No other houses were near us, and the village was a mile away. Had Lionel loved me or made me his companion, I should have wished for nothing different; but he shut himself up in his studio all day and every day, and as week after week passed he grew less and less mindful of any duty towards me, and left me utterly alone. I had no society at all; the village was but a cluster of poor cottages, and the only educated people there were the rector and his wife—Mr. and Mrs. Lee—and they were not an exhilarating couple. They called upon us shortly after our return home, and although Mr. Lee seemed a pleasant, kindly-hearted little man, his wife was an appalling woman, and he stood too much in awe of her to be able to assert any individuality of his own when in her presence. She was a tall, large-boned woman, holding herself rigidly erect, and wearing a gloomy and depressing expression of countenance. She seemed to be a firm believer in the total depravity of the human race, and to glory in it. She had evidently the firmest persuasion that all she did was right, and that all anybody else did was wrong, and she had grown sour and embittered from the constant incapability of everybody else to see this patent fact, repeatedly as she put it to the fore. She sighed when she was introduced to me, and shook her head solemnly, and when in the course of our conversation I remarked that I feared I should find Glen House lonely, she sighed again, and said:

"We have all our trials, Mrs. Prynne,

and should take them as the fitting reward of our sins. No doubt you have been frivolous and fond of society, and this loneliness of which you complain will, I trust, have a beneficial effect upon you. You must not expect to have everything just as you want it in this world, Mrs. Prynne."

"I was not complaining, Mrs. Lee," I answered in mild surprise; "I merely said I feared I might find it a little dull."

"I am not deaf, Mrs. Prynne; no—but if I had given myself to the habit of listening to scandal and idle gossip, perhaps that affliction might have been visited upon me, as it has been upon so many others; but I never listened to scandal or gossip in my life; and I am not deaf—I heard quite distinctly what you said."

"You have misunderstood me, nevertheless," I remarked.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Prynne, but I never misunderstood anyone in my life;" and she looked at me calmly, as if that speech clinched the matter and annihilated me.

"And," I continued, just to show that I was not annihilated, "I think deafness does not so often arise from listening to scandal and gossip, as from a neglected cold in the head, or carelessly sitting in draughts."

Mrs. Lee rose from her chair, and intimated to her husband, who was talking to Lionel at the other end of the room, that it was time to go home, and one might have supposed from the tone of her voice that something very dreadful indeed had happened.

When they were gone, I told Lionel that I did not like Mrs. Lee.

"Indeed," he answered with his usual indifference; "I thought she was a very worthy woman. I know she does a great deal of work for the poor."

And I afterwards found that Mrs. Lee was always ready to help in sickness and sorrow; but she did it in such an ungracious way, and let it be so plainly seen that she did it merely because she considered it her duty, and not from any kindly impulse of her own, that she had every justification for her complaints of the ingratitude and thanklessness of the people she befriended; for those who had received favours from her seemed to dislike her more than those who had received none, so much did she mix words of bitterness with her otherwise kindly help. So, although she and I visited one another, and were on civil

terms, I never grew to like her, and I always preferred loneliness to her society.

In April my husband and I went up to London for the opening of the Royal Academy. It was my first visit to London, and I naturally felt some excitement; but Lionel was absent and apathetic as usual, and seemed rather annoyed with my eagerness, for, as I had discovered now, he was of a very irritable temper, and easily put out over very small matters, and sometimes it was impossible to avoid displeasing him, although I studied his slightest wish, feeling, as I always did, that nothing was too great for me to do, or suffer, if only I could have had the reward of seeing him loving and happy. But this reward was never mine. It seemed to me that nothing could please him or make him happy, and sometimes I feared that his gloom and irritability grew greater instead of less. Even the success of his picture seemed to give him no pleasure, and when a nobleman wanted to buy it, he appeared more annoyed than gratified, and refused to sell it, and I had never seen Lionel appear to so little advantage as he did, when they—the Earl and Countess of Chesterville—called to make the offer for it.

We were in our sitting-room at the hotel, just ready to start for the Academy, when they were announced. I had never been in the presence of a titled personage before, and I felt embarrassed and shy. I knew Lionel was not troubled with embarrassment, but, nevertheless, the ungraciousness of his manner amounted almost to discourtesy, and I regarded him with surprise, for both our visitors impressed me most favourably, and I saw nothing to account for Lionel's strange unpleasantness.

The earl was a courteous, middle-aged gentleman, and he held out his hand to Lionel in quite a friendly way. "Mr. Prynne, I believe?" he said pleasantly.

Lionel bowed, and either did not or would not see the outstretched hand; and the Earl drew it back and then introduced his wife, Lady Chesterville.

"Lady Chesterville has taken a fancy to your picture in the Academy," he said; "and we have called this morning to know if it is for sale."

"It is not for sale," replied Lionel coldly, and I looked at him in surprise, for he had told me he hoped to get five hundred pounds for it.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said the Earl; "I have been misinformed."

Lionel did not speak, and, to cover his incivility, I pushed a chair towards the Earl.

"Pray be seated, Lord Chesterville," I said.

He turned to me with a pleasant smile.

"Thank you, my dear," he said; and turning to Lionel again, continued: "Your wife, I presume?"

"Yes," answered Lionel stiffly.

I now offered Lady Chesterville a chair, but she did not take any notice. She was not friendly, like her husband, but I thought she had the most beautiful face I had ever seen—a face perfect in all but its expression, which was so haughtily cold that it made the face seem as if cut out of stone. She was much younger than her husband, and did not look more than five-and-twenty; but her manners were as stonily cold as her beautiful face. She took no notice of me throughout the interview; after a first cold glance, she never even looked at me.

"If Mr. Pym does not wish to sell his picture," she said to her husband, "there is no need for us to stay."

"No, my dear—of course not," replied the Earl, evidently feeling rebuffed; "but I should have liked the picture. Are you quite sure you will not sell it?" to Lionel.

"Quite sure," answered Lionel.

The Earl turned to his wife.

"Then, my dear, I cannot gratify you," he remarked; "you must do without the picture."

"I do not want the picture," said her ladyship sharply and haughtily; "I never wanted it!"

Lionel smiled—a most unpleasant smile—and then he bowed them from the room.

"Oh, Lionel," I burst forth as soon as the door had closed upon them, "how could you treat them so? And he was so kindly, and she so beautiful! How could you do it?"

Lionel turned quickly, and looked at me with such furious anger in his eyes that I drew back with a little cry. His right hand was clenched, and it trembled a little as he looked at me.

I burst into tears.

"Oh, Lionel, don't look at me like that!" sobbed piteously. "I did not mean to vex you!"

"Don't be a child," he answered sternly, nor provoke me more than I can bear."

"I did not mean to provoke you," I said, stifling my sobs. "I did not mean to do anything but what I could for I loved

him so devotedly, so entirely, that I would have done anything to have won a kind word from him, and an unkind one seemed more than I could bear. I dried my tears as hastily as possible, for I knew how complaining on my part angered him, and he walked restlessly up and down the room until my eyes were dry, and I was ready to accompany him to the Academy; but I knew his restlessness was not caused by any feeling of pity for me.

We returned home about the end of May, and my lonely, monotonous life began again. During the summer months we travelled about a little for Lionel to sketch, but life, wherever it might be, was all the same to me—lonely and repressed. Lionel was entirely self-absorbed; he had no need of me, and it never seemed to enter his mind that I had any need of him. He had married me, and provided me with a pretty home, and he seemed to think—if he ever thought about the matter at all—that his duty was done. He knew nothing of the bitter tears I daily shed—and if he had known he would only have been astonished and annoyed; he would not have tried to comfort me, or make me happier.

I often thought about Lucy Grey, for since that first time I had frequently heard Lionel murmuring her name in his sleep. But I had grown to think about her without bitterness, for I had weaved a romance of my own about them—Lionel had loved her, and she had died. I did not see how else it could have been, and so I was able to think tenderly, though very sadly, about them both. I often felt I should like to know the truth beyond all doubt, and indeed hear all about it, but Lionel never mentioned his past life to me, and I never dared to ask him questions.

CHAPTER III.

IN September, when I had been married a year, a cousin of Lionel's came to stay with us for a few weeks. His name was Geoffrey Hesketh, and he and Lionel had been brought up together, and regarded one another as brothers, and I thought perhaps Geoffrey might some time mention Lucy Grey, and then tell me all about her; but he had not been with us long before I came to the conclusion that he knew nothing of the matter at all. He, like my husband, had been educated for a doctor, and early in life had obtained a situation as surgeon on board a ship, where he had

remained until the ship was wrecked, when he came to us until he got another post; and he and Lionel had not seen one another for seven or eight years. Lionel told me, however, that our home must always be Geoffrey's as long as Geoffrey wanted one.

I was very much pleased with Geoffrey, and he seemed to bring a new and happier life into our dreary home. In looks he was rather like Lionel, but, instead of Lionel's languor, his face was expressive of life and energy. He was of a stronger, sturdier build; his ways were lively and energetic; and he had a singular, brusque way of speaking his thoughts out rather unguardedly, but quite innocently, and without any intention of giving offence. He had a ready, merry laugh, and a good-humour that was very infectious; only, alas! it never infected Lionel.

And it never infected Mrs. Lee. She took a dislike to Geoffrey when first she saw him, as she did to everything cheerful or happy, and, as Geoffrey quite reciprocated her feelings, there was a continual sparring between them whenever they met, which sometimes made me laugh, but oftener made me very uncomfortable, for I was afraid Mr. Lee might be offended on his wife's behalf, and I had grown to like the friendly, mild little man very much, and did not wish to lose his friendship. On this point, however, I soon grew easy, for I began to perceive that his sympathies were on Geoffrey's side, and that he was more annoyed at his wife's persistent unpleasantness than at Geoffrey's defensive mockery and fun.

Geoffrey had not been with us more than two days when he asked me what was amiss with Lionel.

"I do not know that anything is amiss with him," I answered in surprise. "What makes you think there is?"

"He is so dismal—so depressed," said Geoffrey. "He never laughs. Laughs! He never even smiles—no, not at my very best jokes! And he seems to take no interest in anything, and I can't imagine what on earth has come over him."

"Used he to be different?" I asked wistfully.

"Oh, very. He was never lively or talkative, but he was cheerful and good-tempered. He was always somewhat full of fads, and a trifle fidgety, but never irritable like now. Why, he seemed quite put out last night at seeing my dirty boots on the hearthrug."

"You must admit that my white hearthrug was not the most suitable place for them," I remarked with a slight smile.

"I had taken them off there, and someone ought to have taken them away," said Geoffrey.

"I think you want a wife, Geoffrey," I remarked.

"I think so myself, and perhaps, when you have known me a little longer, you will be kind enough to recommend me to one of your bosom friends."

"I have no bosom friends," I said; "and if I had, I am not quite sure that I could recommend you to their tender regards."

"Oh, I'll not leave my boots on the hearthrug again, if that is what you mean," he answered gravely.

"I found your meerschaum in my work-basket this morning," I said calmly.

"I'm thankful for that, for I thought I had lost it. But I remember shoving it in there when the parson's wife came last night, for, to tell you the truth, the first appearance of that woman startled me. She seems to be searching for your secret sins, and you can't help feeling that she has found them, and knows all about them, and you feel guilty and uncomfortable all through; and somehow I felt it was a dreadful thing to be smoking a pipe, so I popped it in there. I hope it didn't burn anything, and, if you have no objection, I will always put it there, and then I shall know where to find it. 'A place for everything, and everything in its place,' is a very good motto, you know."

"Very. But the place for your meerschaum shall not be my work-basket, if it is all the same to you. But about Lionel—what do you think has changed him so?"

"I cannot tell; I have not seen him for seven years. You are much more likely to know than I."

"But did he not write to you in those seven years? Or did you never hear anything about him from others?"

"Ah, now you speak about it, I did once hear a tale about him; but it certainly was not true."

"What was it?" I eagerly asked.

"I don't remember the particulars. They said a young lady had jilted him, I think."

"And why do you say it was not true?"

"Because I see with my own eyes that

you have not jilted him—you have married him."

He looked at me innocently. It certainly never entered his mind to suppose there had been any other "young lady" in the case.

I felt my cheeks flush painfully, and I saw a sudden look of suspicion come into Geoffrey's eyes—a suspicion that I was, perhaps, the thorn-in his cousin's side.

"Lionel is a very good fellow," he said gravely, "and I don't like to see him so miserable."

"Perhaps your visit will cheer him up," I said with a sigh; and I felt that when I knew Geoffrey a little better, I would take him into my entire confidence, and see if we could not between us find some way of restoring Lionel to a happier state of mind.

But I did not know him well enough yet.

For the next few days I believe Geoffrey watched Lionel and me very closely, to see if the cause of Lionel's irritability and unhappiness did really lie with me; and I think he soon saw that Lionel had nothing to complain of in me. I think he soon saw that Lionel might have been very happy if he only would have been; and I think he began to view his conduct with strong disapproval, for when Lionel was more than usually irritable, he would meet him with a determined combativeness that made me fear they would come to a down-right quarrel. But Lionel generally gave in, as if it was too much trouble to do anything else. And Geoffrey grew exceedingly kind to me, and we became very good friends, and quietly and unobtrusively he made my life happier in many ways.

A parcel of books came every week from a circulating-library in the nearest town, and although Geoffrey said they were for himself, I knew they were really for me, and he read them to me quite cheerfully in the long evenings when Lionel was shut up as usual in his studio. And Geoffrey always accompanied me on my morning walks to visit the poor, for Mrs. Lee had given me a "district" some ten miles in extent, and I went three mornings a week to read the Bible to a few whining old women, who seemed to think they conferred the favour on me by letting me read, and always took the donation that followed as a little under their proper due.

Geoffrey never entered the cottages with me, but would sit on a wall or tree somewhere near and smoke a quiet pipe.

"I wonder Lionel lets you come down

these lonely lanes and enter these dens all by yourself," he once remarked. "I know I should not if I were him."

"Oh, Lionel does not mind!" I said cheerfully.

"He's a queer fellow," went on Geoffrey thoughtfully; "and if it would not be impertinent, I should really like to know what induced you to marry him."

I laughed a little at this—I could not help it.

"The usual reason, I suppose," I answered quietly.

"You don't mean to say you fell in love with him?" he gasped with an air of sincere amazement.

"I believe that must have been the reason," I said.

"Well," he said slowly, "if I had been a woman, I don't think I should—as he is at present, you know."

"Oh," I exclaimed derisively, "if 'my aunt had been my uncle' it is universally admitted that no one knows what wonderful things might not have happened, and this seems to me a similar case. But instead of telling me the sort of husband you would not like, tell me the sort of wife you would like, and then, perhaps, I may be able to help you."

"Do you think you could find me a facsimile of Mrs. Lee?"

"I am afraid not. I think she stands alone."

"Then I must remain a bachelor."

"I am grieved to hear this, Geoffrey," I replied, "for I know several nice girls who would make good wives."

"You would recommend me now, then?" he asked quickly.

"Oh yes," I answered promptly.

"Well, at least," he said with sudden vehemence, "you might safely say that when I get a wife I shall treat her very much better than Lionel treats his!"

I stopped in my walk, and looked at Geoffrey with bitter reproach.

"You need not have said that," I cried with a swelling heart.

"I beg your pardon, Marjorie—I beg your pardon!" he cried in great distress. "I did not mean to say it—I did not mean to hurt you; but sometimes it is hard to keep a silent tongue."

I walked on in silence; I looked straight before me, and if the landscape was somewhat dim and blurred, I could not help it. That Geoffrey could have been so unkind! I was deeply offended with him, and I did not speak again until we reached home,

and he took my displeasure very humbly, for he knew he deserved it.

At tea-time Lionel was unusually silent, and after repeated attempts at conversation I asked him if he was ill.

"No," he answered shortly, and looked at me quite angrily.

"Then you are over-tired," I said gently, "and you must not work any more to-night. You must stay down here with me."

Lionel went into one of the sudden, unexpected passions that now and again came over him.

"How dare you interfere with me!" he cried, striking the table with his clenched hand. "I have told you before that I will not have it, and I will not!"

I felt my face whiten, and I glanced nervously at Geoffrey, but he was considerate enough not to look at me; indeed, I think he had forgotten me, for he was looking at Lionel with a strange, intent gaze that puzzled me.

"By-the-bye," he said to Lionel, in slow, indifferent tones, "what work is it you are doing that engages you so much! Can you paint by gas-light?"

Lionel uttered a very bad word, and got up and left the room as if in the deepest anger. And Geoffrey sat for a long, long time as if lost in the deepest thought. And he seemed very absent and preoccupied for the next few days. Then one morning he came into my sewing-room, and said he wanted to speak to me.

"Very well, Geoffrey," I said. "Sit down."

He seated himself by the big, square centre-table, put his elbows on it, and rested his chin in his hands, and looked at me. He looked so grave, so unlike himself, that I felt slightly alarmed.

"What is it, Geoffrey?" I asked nervously.

He paused, as if in deep consideration, before he answered, then he said:

"You see you and I have not known one another very long, Marjorie, and I hardly know how you will take what I am going to say. I don't want to frighten you, I don't want to offend you; and if you had a father or a brother I should speak to them and not to you; but you are very lonely and unprotected, Marjorie."

"Nay," I answered with a smile, "never lonely and unprotected, Geoffrey, while I have Lionel and you."

"I am glad you mention me as a protector. Try to imagine I am your brother,

Marjorie; and, believe me, no brother could have your welfare more truly at heart than I have."

"I know that, Geoffrey," I answered somewhat falteringly; "but do say quickly what you have to say, for you are frightening me!"

"I may be mistaken, Marjorie," he said slowly, "but I do not think I am—and it is my very strong opinion that your husband—Lionel—is going out of his mind."

"Going out of his mind, Geoffrey!" I faltered vaguely.

"Yes," answered Geoffrey.

"Do you mean going mad?" I asked faintly.

"I am almost inclined to think he is mad already, Marjorie—melancholy mad, and may, perhaps, become violently so."

"But—your reasons for thinking this?"

"His conduct, and my own experience in such cases. He shuts himself up in his studio all day and every day, and yet he does no work, and when he comes out at meal-times he is morbidly irritable. The very fact of being spoken to annoys him, and a newspaper left on the table, much more my unlucky pipe, throws him into a state of irritation quite painful to see. And would any man in his proper senses destroy his happiness as wilfully and blindly as he is doing?"

"But—going mad! Oh, I am sure you are mistaken, Geoffrey!"

"Then how do you account for his conduct?"

My heart sank heavily.

"I think, Geoffrey," I said quietly, "that Lionel has some great trouble of his own, of which you and I know nothing. I think it is a trouble so great that it absorbs all his faculties, and renders him quite unable to take an interest in anything else."

"What trouble can he have?" asked Geoffrey with a sudden sharp sound in his voice. "My aunt left all her money to him, and he is married to you—what more does he want?"

"I don't know," I answered sadly, but all the same I thought I did know.

Geoffrey walked up and down the room.

"I thought when I first came here and found him in this miserable plight that you had something to do with it—had married him for his money, or something of that sort. But it seems to me you love him with all your heart!"

I burst into tears.

"Oh, Geoffrey," I sobbed, all barriers

broken down under his unfeigned interest and sympathy; "I do—I do, indeed! And even if it is as you think—even if he went mad and killed me—if before he did it, he would give me one kind word, or one kind look, and say he loved me, I should think it worth it all!"

"Oh, Marjorie!" cried Geoffrey with a sort of sob, "and he can treat you as he does! But he is mad—of course he is mad, poor fellow!" he added hastily as if to himself.

I rose up, and seized Geoffrey's hand in my trembling ones.

"I have no one to help me but you, Geoffrey—no one but you has ever spoken to me about my troubles; but since we have spoken so plainly, tell me—oh, tell me, if there is anything I can do—anything you think I can do, to win Lionel's heart—to make him love me just one little bit!"

"Don't speak of him as if he were a sane man, Marjorie," cried Geoffrey vehemently; "don't, my dear! If I thought he was sane I should not stay in his house another hour."

"But what is to become of me if he is mad?" I asked in piteous despair.

"That is what I want to talk to you about," said Geoffrey gently, and he led me to a chair.

I sat down mechanically.

"Well, Geoffrey," I said, with a hopeless ring in my voice, "what would you suggest?"

"I have been negotiating to buy the practice of a doctor in London," began Geoffrey, "and I thought, if you approved, of trying to persuade Lionel to live in London too. Do you think you would like it?"

"Oh, indeed I should!" I cried eagerly; "it would be life itself to me, and if you can persuade Lionel to do it, I shall owe you a very great debt of gratitude."

"Don't you like living here?" queried Geoffrey.

"Like living here!" I cried. "Can you look out of that window, Geoffrey, and ask me that?" and I pointed to the leaden sky, the falling rain, the leafless trees.

"Any country place looks dreary in winter," he said. "But it is pretty here in summer-time, is it not?"

"It is always dreary, whether summer or winter. And it is so lonely. The village is a mile away, and even there I have only Mr. and Mrs. Lee."

"Well," said Geoffrey, "we must see

what Lionel says. And if he will not remove, I think I will stay here a little longer, Marjorie. I do not think you ought to be left alone."

"Oh, Geoffrey, I still think you are quite mistaken. But of course we shall be glad for you to stay."

"And we must try to cheer Lionel a bit. You must not be frightened at his temper, but insist on him going out with you, and having more of your society altogether. And you must try again to persuade him to buy you a piano; music would be good for him, and what objection can he have?"

"He says he hates music, and does not like women to sing."

"You can both sing and play?"

"Oh yes."

"I should like to hear you sing," said Geoffrey thoughtfully.

"I think I have forgotten how," I answered with a sigh, and just then the luncheon-bell rang, and we made our way to the dining-room.

Lionel soon joined us; he looked round the room frowningly, as if seeking something to find fault about, and then he seated himself at the table in silence, and began carving the cold meat. And the sadness and dulness of spirit that his presence always brought came over me as usual, and I sat in dejected silence. Geoffrey alone tried to be sociable.

"Aren't we invited to dine at the parsonage to-night?" he asked cheerily.

"Yes," I answered; "it is Mrs. Lee's birthday, and we must not forget. You will be ready about half-past four, Lionel, will you not?"

"I suppose so," answered Lionel ungraciously.

"And as it is so wet," I went on, "I told John we should need the pony-carriage, and he must put it up at The Golden Bull until we return, for it will not be fit to walk either way."

Lionel made no reply, so I knew my arrangements were accepted.

CHAPTER IV.

WE arrived at the parsonage about five o'clock. Mrs. Lee received us in the drawing-room, for Mr. Lee had only just returned from visiting a sick parishioner, and he was upstairs changing his wet clothes.

As I entered the warm room, I thought what a pleasant contrast it presented to

the wet night outside. But Mrs. Lee seemed uncheered by its comfort, and looked more aggressively austere than usual as Geoffrey shook her hand warmly, and wished her many happy returns of the day.

"I always think it nice to have a jollification on one's birthday," he said cheerily, and I really felt vexed with him, for it seemed so very irreverent to speak of a "jollification" in connection with Mrs. Lee.

The severity of her expression deepened.

"I should be sorry," she said gloomily, "to think of regarding anyone's birthday as a time for a jollification—I believe that was the term you used!—but I certainly approve of birthdays being remembered."

"Do you really?" remarked Geoffrey innocently, but giving me a glance that plainly said he was surprised to hear she approved of anything.

"Yes," she said with her usual sigh; "for I think it is well to be reminded that we are one year nearer the grave."

"Let us say nearer heaven," suggested Geoffrey cheerfully.

But the look on Mrs. Lee's face said plainly that that was by no means what she meant. And Geoffrey looked in my direction again.

Mr. Lee now entered the room, and seemed to bring a cheerier atmosphere with him, and after he had shaken hands all round we went in to dinner.

"I think, my dear," he said to his wife as we began, "that I have a piece of news that will interest you."

Mrs. Lee looked very grim, but made no reply; she did not like it to be supposed she was ever interested in anything.

"I saw it in the Times to-day," the little man said next; but even this elicited no sign of interest in his spouse; she merely tasted her soup, as if she suspected poison, and paid no attention to her husband.

I felt sorry for him.

"Pray let us hear your news, Mr. Lee," I said, "for I dare say it will interest us all."

"Oh no, you don't know the parties; but we do. My dear," again addressing his wife, and this time with a ring of triumph in his tone, "the Countess of Chesterville has at last presented her husband with a son!" and he looked at the stony face opposite to him as if he

expected some sign of life must be shown now.

But he was mistaken.

"Why should I be interested in that?" she asked, staring at him with cold, blank eyes.

"Why, my dear, I always thought you were interested in Miss Grey," he said mildly.

"It has occasionally happened," remarked his wife calmly, "that you have thought wrong."

"I know Lady Chesterville," I cried with eager enthusiasm. "She and her husband once wanted to buy a picture of Lionel's—don't you remember, Lionel?—and I thought her the most beautiful lady I had ever seen. I should like to see her again. Do they live near here, that you know them?"

"Oh no; they live very far away. But we knew the Countess when she was plain Lucy Grey, and only a governess."

My heart gave a sudden, terrible throb, and then seemed to stand still. I glanced at Lionel, and his white, anguish-stricken face told me that I knew the truth at last.

"She was a very beautiful girl," went on Mr. Lee, "but it was said she jilted some young fellow very heartlessly when she had the chance of becoming a countess. But I suspect most women would have done the same in her place—that is," hastily correcting himself as he met his wife's appalling glare, "some women—not most, and certainly not—"

"Mrs. Prynne," interrupted Mrs. Lee sternly, "I think, instead of listening to the praises of Lucy Grey, you will be better employed in looking after your husband, for I am of opinion he is ill."

Lionel's face had grown ghastly white, and as Mrs. Lee spoke, he bowed his head on his hands and groaned as if in bodily agony, while a strong shiver shook him from head to foot.

I was at his side in an instant, and I pressed his head against my breast.

"Oh, Lionel, my darling!" I whispered passionately as I bent my head to his, "why need you care for that false and wicked woman? She never loved you as I do, my darling—never, never!"

But he pushed me angrily away and stood up.

"If you will excuse me, Mrs. Lee," he said, "I will go home. I am not fit to stay."

Geoffrey rose too.

"I will go with you," he said with promptness and decision.

"I shall go alone," said Lionel doggedly.

"Oh no, you are not fit to go alone," answered Geoffrey firmly.

"I must go too," I cried, looking anxiously into Geoffrey's face.

"You can follow in the pony-chaise," he answered, without looking at me; "Lionel and I will walk—it will do him good."

Lionel submitted sullenly and they left at once, and while one of Mrs. Lee's servants went to fetch the pony-carriage, I finished my dinner with what appetite I had. Mr. Lee was full of sympathy for me, but Mrs. Lee simply remarked that she was afraid I had a deal to answer for. This neither surprised nor offended me, for Mrs. Lee always regarded the troubles of other people as distinct punishments for their sins, while each cross of her own was always trumpeted forth as the very immediate forerunner of the crown. But I was glad when the carriage was announced, and I could leave her uncongenial presence.

Mr. Lee, as in duty bound, accompanied me home to learn how Lionel was, and a wet, windy, and comfortless ride we had through the dark, rugged, winding lanes. Lionel and Geoffrey had not been in many minutes when we arrived, and Lionel seemed surprised and annoyed to see us.

"I am not ill that all this fuss should be made," he said irritably, "and there was no need, Marjorie, for either you or Geoffrey to have come home. I am quite well, but," to Mr. Lee, "not at all disposed for company, so I hope you will excuse me if I go and do a little work in my studio."

"You had better stay here and have a pleasant chat with Mr. Lee," remarked Geoffrey, but Lionel stalked from the room.

"I don't like it," muttered Geoffrey to himself as we listened to Lionel's retreating footsteps, and heard him lock himself into his studio.

"He looks very queer—what's amiss with him?" asked Mr. Lee.

"I don't know," answered Geoffrey shortly.

And then we all drew our chairs round the fire and sat in silence for a little while.

"Living in this place does not suit him for one thing," resumed Geoffrey thoughtfully, "and we must try and persuade him to leave it."

"It is very dull," agreed Mr. Lee with a sigh, "and why a man lives here of his

own free will passes my comprehension. Do you like it, Mrs. Prynne?"

"I hate it!" I said with a nervous shiver.

"And also——" Geoffrey was beginning, when a terrible silence fell upon us all, for clear through the quiet house rang out the sudden, sharp report of a pistol. We gazed into one another's faces with a growing horror and comprehension, for the sound had come from the studio. I tried to rise—I tried to speak, but only a low moan or two escaped me, and then a blessed oblivion came.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN I came to my senses I was lying upon my bed, and Mrs. Lee was sitting beside me, gently bathing my forehead, and one of the servants was moving softly about the room. Memory returned with my senses.

"Oh, tell me it is only a horrible dream, Mrs. Lee!" I sharply cried.

"It is not a dream, Mrs. Prynne," she replied, 'in her own grim tones, although the touch of her hand upon my head was so gentle, and although she had come at once through the stormy night to me in my extremity.

"Is Lionel—is my husband——?" I could say no more.

"He is dead," said Mrs. Lee.

I closed my eyes; I prayed to die; but no relief came to my overwrought senses now—not even tears.

In a short while Geoffrey entered the room.

"Has she spoken?" he asked Mrs. Lee in a whisper.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Lee.

"Sensibly?"

"Yes; she remembers it all."

Geoffrey took the chair Mrs. Lee vacated, and put his hand gently upon my wrist, and I opened my eyes and looked into his, and his, full of the tenderest pity, looked back into mine, but neither of us spoke one word.

At last he let go my wrist.

"You must keep very quiet," he said gently, "and think as little as possible. Let Mrs. Lee put you to bed; and you must stay there for many days, and leave everything to me."

I obeyed his instructions, for my head felt cold and numb, and I could not think clearly or exercise my will. And thus I was saved much terrible suffering, for Geoffrey and Mr. Lee took everything upon themselves, and I was saved from every

horrible detail of that most horrible time. On one day only I left my room and saw my husband's face for the last time. Oh, very calm and peaceful he looked, with a smile upon his face that had never rested there in life. His death had been instantaneous, for with skilful, unerring aim, he had shot himself through the heart. Shot himself for the sake of one false woman, while my great love had been powerless to cheer or save him!

I was very ill after this; a doctor came from the nearest town every day, and Mrs. Lee nursed me untiringly, but never gave me one word or look of love or sympathy.

Many weeks went on, and then one day I was able to leave my bed and sit up a little in my room. And Geoffrey came to see me. He came to tell me all that had been done; and after we had talked a little while, he put a worn-looking pocket-book into my hands, and there was a round hole right through it.

"Lionel wore it," he said, "and I was obliged to look into it for evidence; but I did not think it necessary to make its contents known."

I opened it with trembling hands, and took from it a photograph. This, like the pocket-book, had a round hole right through it, but it had not touched the pictured face—its beauty was unimpaired, and it smiled at me brightly—the proud, sweet, beautiful face of Lady Chesterville—once Lucy Grey!

"It is not you, Marjorie?" said Geoffrey wistfully.

"No," I answered, "it is not I—it never was, Geoffrey!"

"Can it be true?"

"What does it matter?" I cried in anguish; "it is ended now! But burn it, Geoffrey! Oh, burn that cruel face, and let no one know the evil it has done."

Geoffrey put it into the fire.

"I showed it to Mr. and Mrs. Lee," he said; "I thought it best to do so."

"Oh, you should not——" I began, when I suddenly felt how little anything mattered now; and, for the first time since Lionel's death, I sobbed aloud.

"Oh, Geoffrey," I cried in my desolation, "I think my heart is broken!"

And he sat silent and made no attempt to comfort me. And Mrs. Lee came into the room, and, seeing my tears, very grimly ordered me to bed again.

But, by-and-by, in spite of myself, I grew strong and well, and Mrs. Lee gave up her post of nurse, and went back

to the vicarage; Geoffrey went to the practice he had bought in London, and I lived on alone in my dreary home.

But why need I dwell on these lonely days? I have told the love-story of my youth and its disastrous ending, and that is all I intended to tell. Sometimes, when I remember how great my desolation was, I wonder that comfort could ever have come, or happiness have been mine again. Yet, when I remember how soon and completely the comfort came, and how perfect my happiness is, I wonder that the misery could ever have been so dark and deep. For I am truly happy now, safe under the care of a faithful love in which there is no sadness, no mystery—no Lucy Grey!

A HOLIDAY MYSTERY.

By W. W. FENN.

"COME down and join us; we are a jolly, albeit a domestic party. Myself and wife, her mother, our two boys, and a brother-brush, Stanwell by name, whom I think you know. The quarters are rather rough, but thoroughly comfortable, quite suited to our life in these wild regions, and we can get you a snug bedroom in the same house. So say you will come, and speedily. There is plenty of fine stuff—the cliffs and rocks are stupendous, quite up to all that one has heard of them both in form and colour, whilst the seascape is grander than can be imagined. Such breakers—even in the calmest weather—I have never beheld; clear green seas as transparent as glass right up to your feet, for the shell sand is so clean that it does not sully the water in the least. We may truly say that we are 'bound in with the triumphant sea, whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege of watery Neptune.'"

This was the paragraph in George Barford's letter which decided me. It was dated from the Lizard, August the 1st, 1882; and George Barford, as may be guessed, is a painter, and an old friend of mine. I was debating where I should spend my month's holiday; Cornwall was new ground to me; the company would be congenial in all respects; there would be rest and quiet without dullness, and I should be able to indulge my propensity for, and my amateurish talent in, sketching. I would go, and I wrote and said so.

The next day I met Ned Dawson, also

a friend of the Barfords, and a fellow infinitely in accord with our common tastes. He volunteered to accompany me, and also wrote and said so. The reply guaranteed him as hearty a welcome as the invitation had offered me, and in the course of a week, we rendered ourselves at the Paddington terminus, booking through to Penrhyn, the nearest point to the Lizard touched by the Great Western Railway. It was the Bank Holiday, which fell in 1882 on Monday the 7th of August, and that evening we found ourselves, a few minutes after eight, swinging along by the mail train towards the far west.

It had been one of the few really hot and sultry days with which we were favoured during that wet and windy summer, and the evening was equally hot and sultry. I am thus circumstantial, because a point in what I am going to relate, besides being strictly true, turns in a measure upon these facts, as will be seen hereafter. That particular journey is so familiar, and so comparatively easy, and so like most other railway journeys nowadays, that it needs no record. It is sufficient that we duly reached Truro at six a.m., quitted the main-line which goes on to Penzance, and got into a carriage on the Falmouth branch. Another hour's run brought us to Penrhyn, that is to say at seven-fifteen, a quarter of an hour late.

Here, just outside the station, ensued the usual scrimmage with baggage, passengers, and mail-bags, which latter, especially, are carried on westward by a ramshackle two-horsed omnibus. There was some delay in getting the cargo on board this inconvenient vehicle. The driver being responsible for time at the post-office, was in a mighty hurry to be off, and would scarcely listen to my protest that our baggage had not been brought out. He was already on his box, with Ned Dawson beside him, I being on the seat behind. We swore we would not go on without our kit, and in order to accelerate its arrival, Ned dismounted, disappeared into the station, and presently reappeared with a porter and a truck containing it. All this, together with the hoisting of the luggage on to the roof, making it fast, etc., caused still further delay, so that not only did the down train, from which we had alighted, proceed on its way to Falmouth, whilst we were still waiting outside the station, but the up morning-mail, from that place for London, ran into the shed, and started again before we did. It passed

out into the pale, watery morning sunlight clear before our eyes, and not a hundred yards distant. It was going in the same direction in which our horses' heads were turned for the time, so that we had a good uninterrupted view of it, as it slowly moved on, and we could see the passengers' faces plainly in several of the carriages.

I had not left the top of the omnibus, and Ned was by this time again in his seat beside the driver. Whilst we were watching the departing train, and were ourselves also just on the point of starting, we both simultaneously and suddenly exclaimed:

"Why, look! There is George Barford himself. Look! he is waving his hands to us! What a funny thing! That's the London train; where can he be going?"

And, certainly, there was George, standing up and leaning out of a carriage-window without his hat, and signalling to us with his arms, as if he had just caught sight of us. Again we exclaimed almost simultaneously, as we too waved our hands in reply:

"Why, what can it mean? He is never going up to town. Surely he expected us to-day; he knew we were coming. Good Heavens! how dangerous it looks; see, see, he seems to be hanging half out of window. He will fall out if he doesn't mind."

I know not exactly which of us uttered these words or their equivalent, but we were so actuated by the same impulse, so mutually scared by the perilous way in which our friend thrust himself out of the carriage in his frantic efforts to attract our attention, that Ned and I both spoke at once, and clutched hold of each other in a kind of agony as we continued watching the figure in the now fast-receding train.

"What an extraordinary thing!" we repeated. "There! you can almost see his knees; he'll fall out to a dead certainty if he doesn't take care."

The next moment a bend in the railroad hid the train from further observation, and our vehicle began to proceed on its journey.

"Well," said I, "something serious must have happened to take him off to-day of all days. He had a dark coat on, clearly as if he were going to London. Could you see if his wife was with him, Ned?"

"No," replied Dawson; "he filled up the whole of the window. I couldn't tell if anyone was in the carriage besides himself. It is very extraordinary."

"Very," I said; "he would never have left on the very day he knew we were coming, except on urgent business. In the letter I had from him yesterday (Monday) morning, he said he would not work to-day, but come and meet us at the place where the omnibus stops at the Lizard village, and that we should be there about twelve."

"Yes, he wrote the same to me," went on Ned; "I can't make it out. Perhaps the old lady or somebody is dead; there must be some grave reason for his going off so suddenly. Besides, he seemed as if he was on the look-out for us just now, and was wanting to explain to us that he was obliged to go."

"Precisely what my impression was," I answered; "he appeared so eager that we should see him, and that we should understand that he saw us, and that he knew we should be puzzled."

"Puzzled, indeed," said Dawson; "I was never so puzzled in my life."

For several minutes we continued interchanging similar expressions of astonishment and speculative remarks as to the cause of this unlooked-for behaviour on the part of our host. We conjured up all sorts of reasons, likely and unlikely, possible and impossible, which could have obliged him to leave so suddenly. A hundred doubts and fears occurred to us, but none led us any nearer the precise truth. Of course, whatever it was it must have been something very unexpected as well as serious which took him away on this particular morning, but beyond this broad conclusion we could not get. Then we began to wonder how he could have started from the Lizard, and reached Falmouth in time to catch the up-train leaving there at seven a.m.

"Perhaps he came to Penrhyn and was actually waiting in the station for his train when we were getting out of ours," suggested Dawson.

"Nay," I replied, "that could hardly be; we should have been sure to see him on the platform; besides, he would have been on the look-out for us, for he knew we were coming by that train. No, he must have started from Falmouth, and he must have gone over there yesterday; he could not have reached there from the Lizard in time this morning."

"But yesterday was the Bank Holiday," said Ned, "when I expect everything was at a standstill in these parts as elsewhere.

I don't believe he could have got over yesterday."

This discovery introduced another element of wonder which we duly debated. Presently I said to the driver:

"How could any one get over to Falmouth from the Lizard yesterday or this morning in time for that up-train?"

"He couldn't ha' done it no how yesterday nor this morning," returned the man curtly, for he had not yet recovered from the delay our luggage had partly caused, and he kept his eyes sulkily fixed on his horses' ears.

"He might have reached Falmouth on Sunday, I suppose?" interposed Dawson.

No reply was vouchsafed to this query.

"Yes, but if he had, Ned," said I, "he would have gone up yesterday morning, and not have waited until to-day, if his business was urgent. Are you quite sure, coachman, there was no way of going from the Lizard to Falmouth yesterday?" I added.

"He might ha' took the excursion steamer back last night, perhaps," replied the man after a sullen pause; "they comes that way back sometimes on holidays in calm weather."

"Then there was an excursion-boat from Falmouth yesterday?" said Ned.

"Yes," answered the driver, "and a rare cargo she had. I see'n scores of her people on the rocks about the Lizard all day yesterday."

Then we concluded that Barford had adopted this course in his extremity, and that consequently, whatever it was, it must have happened yesterday.

For a while our attention was here diverted from the subject by the exciting incident of having a third horse attached, to drag us up the steep hill out of the straggling little town of Penrhyn. Arrived at the top, the wild and desolate scenery which now opened before us and all around, still kept us from immediately reverting to Barford. A less populated and more dreary landscape it would be hard to find. A bleak hilly sort of barren moorland, heather-clad, and boulder-strewn, treeless, rugged, and forbidding, with every here and there evidences of deserted mines and quarries, in the shape of ruinous houses or sheds, tall, shattered chimneys and shafts, great wheels and cranes standing gaunt and bare, like misshapen skeletons of giants belonging to an antediluvian epoch. But for the softening influence of the fair, calm, tender-toned sky, studded

with thin, fleecy, misty clouds, and the distant stretches of quiet, pale, greenish-purple sea appearing on all hands, the aspect of this western land would have been weird indeed. Even as it was, it seemed to justify its legendary, superstition-haunted character, and fully bore out the possibility of any and every tradition one has associated with it; but, as a country for a painter—well, it was eminently disappointing. Still, the actual coast, which is, of course, Dick Tinto's stronghold, is not visible so far inland as where the road from Penrhyn to Helstone winds its bleak and lonely way, so my companion and myself forbore passing final judgment on Barford's wisdom in selecting this region for his painting campaign of 1882.

The mention of our friend's name once more brought our talk and thoughts back to his unaccountable departure. The coachman had recovered his temper by degrees, as he recovered his time, and had grown fairly conversational, so that when we were again reverting to Barford, I asked the man if he had not observed the gentleman frantically waving his arms to us as the up-train moved out of Penrhyn Station. "No, he could not say he had, he'd been too busy with his own business to mind the trains or who was in 'em. He only wished they'd keep time better, and not get him into ill-conveniences with the post-office people."

There were no other passengers outside the omnibus besides Ned and myself, except an old countrywoman and her little boy, and I did not think of asking her if she had seen the strangely energetic passenger. Dawson and I had seen him with our own eyes at the same moment. There was no doubt about that, and the fact needed no confirmation, but it was, none the less, still a puzzle to us.

Leaving the high land across which we had been travelling, we began, about half-past eight o'clock, to descend towards the straggling town of Helstone, at the inn in the main street of which we pulled up to breakfast. Ned Dawson devoted himself during that meal to the study of the legend given in the guide-book concerning the manner in which the place had acquired its significant name, and when we again started on our journey at nine-thirty, and, indeed, until nearly the end of it, our references to George Barford were few and far between. Not until after a further two hours' travelling over another long dreary stretch of high land, similar

to the first ten miles, save that it was more cultivated, and divided by low stone walls into a chessboard of ripening cornfields and root-crops, and the lines of white, slate-roofed houses of the Lizard village glittered in the distance under the strengthening sunlight, did we fall to talking again continuously of our friend.

But now, as we approached the solution of the problem which had been puzzling us so long, and we felt ourselves on the eve of learning, perhaps, that some terrible disaster or tragedy had suddenly overtaken the Barford household, our excitement and anxiety grew to fever-heat.

Punctually at three minutes to twelve, we were within sight of the halting-place of the mail-omnibus, as we could tell by the group of idlers waiting to receive us. Of course it was a matter of no surprise that we did not see George Barford amongst the number. We should have been very surprised if we had seen him after what had happened, notwithstanding his promise to meet us at the omnibus-office. But there were his two boys, looking as radiant and jolly as if their sole occupation lay with sand—as, doubtless, it had done during the past month—and this, at least, reassured us. Clearly, no terrible tragedy could have happened.

Making light, therefore, of the affair, we addressed them gaily as "young shavers," and, after hoping all were well at home, I was about to enquire what had taken their father away, when Barford, major, startled us by interposing:

"Oh yes, all very well, except father. He is rather seedy this morning. We left him asleep on the sofa."

Dawson and I looked at each other in blank amazement.

"What! Do you mean to say the governor is here at the Lizard?" was our next query.

"Yes, of course he is," said the boy. "We have been here six weeks, and he has been doing a lot of work, and we have had no end of larks—it's a jolly place."

My companion, who, ever since the beginning of this peculiar experience, seemed to be actuated by precisely the same sensations as myself, was now likewise so literally dumbfounded that we appeared to be incapable of speech, and we went about getting our traps together, and seeing after their conveyance to the lodgings, like men in a dream. I have no recollection of my surroundings until we reached the threshold of the house, where

we were met at the sitting-room door by Mrs. Barford. As she greeted us she added hurriedly, in an undertone, with a finger to her lip, "George hasn't been very well this morning, but don't say anything about it; he is better now." In proof whereof, the man himself came forward with outstretched hands, but looking ghastly pale, and strangely unlike himself. Somehow, we all appeared to be under the influence of a certain awkward constraint. Husband and wife were far from being at their ease, and our surprise kept Dawson and myself, for a moment or two, comparatively tongue-tied.

"I—we hardly—hardly expected to find you here," at length stammered Ned; "in fact——"

"Not find me here?" interrupted Barford with a sickly smile. "What do you mean? Where did you think I was?"

"Well," replied Dawson, "we thought you had gone—gone to London or somewhere else, for we saw you going away from Penrhyn in the train from Falmouth."

"What nonsense—ridiculous, impossible! How could you have seen me there when I am here?" cried Barford rather sharply, and this time without even the semblance of a smile.

"Well, then, it was your wraith, for I never saw any two people so alike in this world. Did you?" added Dawson, appealing to me.

"Never," I acquiesced; "it was most extraordinary."

"Wraith, wraith!" said Barford petulantly. "I don't know what you mean;" and then after a pause, and with a faint return of the sickly smile: "You fellows seem to have taken leave of your wits. But there, I am very glad to see you are all right. Did you have a pleasant journey?"

He said this with such an evident desire to turn the conversation, that for a while we dropped the subject, and passed on to ordinary topics, although still with some constraint. It was impossible, however, altogether to avoid speaking again, more than once, of the curious manner in which we had been deceived by the figure in the train at Penrhyn. But whenever we did so, both husband and wife became uneasy, and immediately talked of other things. Remembering Mrs. Barford's wish, we made little or no reference to her husband's indisposition, but presently I said:

"You have not been at work then to-day, George? It was a splendid morning, though

rather chilly at first, but it's warming up now. Don't let us waste your time."

"Oh, no, no!" he answered languidly as he again stretched himself on the sofa. "I shall not go out now till after dinner. I have been rather out of sorts this morning. I had a dip in the briny, and I think it rather upset me."

A significant glance from his wife prevented both Dawson and myself from pursuing this subject, and continuing to feel conscious that we had somehow arrived at an inopportune moment, and that there was an atmosphere of mystery hanging about, we rose, and suggested that the boys should show us our rooms.

Passing into the passage, we encountered Mr. Stanwell, whom we both slightly knew, and who, as Barford had said, formed one of his party. Laden with his sketching apparatus, he was returning to the mid-day meal, and after greeting us, followed us upstairs. He looked a little preoccupied, and when we had exchanged a few words, came into our room, saying:

"I am very glad you have come, for to tell you the truth, I have had a terrible fright this morning about poor Barford. Did they tell you about it?"

"No," I answered; "Mrs. Barford and George both seemed very strange and uncomfortable, and only made a passing reference to his being unwell. What was the matter?"

The boys had gone downstairs again, and Stanwell, closing the door with an air of mystery, began his account of what had been going on as follows:

"It was a lovely morning," he said, "and at six o'clock I routed up Barford and the two boys, and proposed that we should go down to the Cove and have a dip. Our walk lay through barley-fields heavy with dew, and down a narrow gorge, ending in a zig-zag sort of apology for a path, over and among huge granite boulders, on to the sandy shore then left clear by the ebb. We were soon all careering amongst the big breakers, which always come tumbling in round the Lizard Point as the tide flows. The boys had enough of it very soon, being too small to stand much knocking about from such waves, and they were nearly dressed, when their father followed them out of the water, and began his toilet. I, being the best swimmer, could not refrain from having another plunge, but had not turned my face seaward for more than a minute or two, before I heard a peculiar noise

as of heavy groaning proceeding from the shore. Instantly looking back, I saw that Barford had fallen forward, face downwards, from the rock where his clothes were lying, and was struggling and writhing on the smooth patch of sand. I rushed to him as quickly as possible, and placing him on his back, raised his head a little with my arm. He was violently convulsed, and his face became purple. I immediately began rubbing the region of his heart with sand, and used all the means I could think of to restore him. In a short time he opened his eyes, and then as suddenly was seized with another and similar convulsive fit. I hastened to slip on my flannel shirt, and to secure both our friend and his clothes from the fast-advancing tide. The boys were now dressed, and looking on in a greatly excited state. I dispatched them at once to the house, which was nearly a mile off, telling them to break the news that their father was ill to their mother, as gently as possible, and to bring her down with some brandy, and such restoratives as she might possess. Then, having hurriedly huddled on some more garments, I repeated the operation of rubbing the heart and body, and after a somewhat longer period, life seemed gradually to be restored. I say life, because for a time there seemed little left; in fact, for several minutes I thought he was dead."

"What time was this, do you think?" asked Dawson, interrupting the narrator.

"Just about half-past seven," answered Stanwell; "I happened to look at my watch as I was putting it into my pocket a moment before."

"The very hour," I muttered to Dawson. He nodded significantly, as Stanwell proceeded:

"After a period of the greatest anxiety I have ever experienced, I at last saw, to my infinite relief, Mrs. Barford and the boys hurrying down the steep path through the ravine, and by the time they reached me, I was thankful to have the poor sufferer in a more presentable state than he had been in hitherto. We proceeded to complete his dressing as well as we could, and to administer brandy, and in a little while began lifting and half carrying him up over the rocks.

"The sun by this time had risen considerably, and was beating down fiercely upon our backs as we ascended the gorge, adding not a little to the difficulty of our task. Happily for all, the patient now

rapidly gained strength, and assisted us by endeavouring to walk a little, although he did not appear capable of saying more than a muttered word now and then. At length, when we reached the heathery top of the cliffs, and we all sat down pretty well exhausted, we felt most thankful that we had got so far, at least, safely. By degrees, and after a further toilsome walk, we eventually reached home, and here, putting our poor friend upon the sofa, we were gratified by seeing him fall into a quiet sleep."

As Mr. Stanwell paused, Dawson and I looked at each other, and we then rapidly told him what had happened to us at that precise hour. His astonishment was no less than ours.

"Most remarkable indeed," he said curtly; "a most remarkable coincidence."

Remarkable coincidence indeed!—that seemed no word for it to us. Finally, after much confabulation, before going downstairs, we all three determined that, at any rate for the present, we had better say nothing more about our strange experience to Mr. and Mrs. Barford. It would be better to pass it over, together with his illness, in silence. Evidently they did not like to have it referred to, and as he very speedily appeared to be pretty well himself again, we refrained, as far as possible, from reverting to the matter. We often longed to ask him what his sensations were at the moment he was attacked, and whether any thought of us two journeying down towards him then crossed his mind. Once or twice, as I have hinted, during our stay at the Lizard, we approached the subject with this end, but he always displayed such an uneasy dislike to it, and so immediately changed the conversation, that we were forced to respect his prejudice, and have never directly spoken again about our perplexity and its cause. It would have been but natural, perhaps—it certainly would have advanced the story a stage—if we had been told that a momentary vision of us had presented itself to him at that critical moment; but knowing the man as I do—how utterly unimaginative and matter-of-fact he is—I am of opinion that he never gave us a thought. Yet if this was so, why should he have been so indignant with us for speaking of his wrath, and have accused us pettishly of having taken leave of our wits? It is all past comprehension, and throughout our month's sojourn at the Lizard, none of us appeared thoroughly at our ease: but, on the whole,

we had a pleasant time, and all returned to London together, without anything more occurring worthy of mention.

Here then is the story as far as it goes, absolutely true in all respects save in the names of the parties concerned. What is to be made of it? It is vouched for by unimpeachable witnesses. The writer and his friend, Mr. Dawson, are gentlemen of the highest integrity, and, like Barford, are straightforward, clear-sighted, clear-thinking, rational beings, with plenty of common-sense, and inclined to look at everything from a matter-of-fact point of view rather than from the romantic, sentimental, or imaginative. Their impressions are identical in this case, and we have two pairs of eyes simultaneously impressed in the same way by the same object. Could they both have been deceived? Could they both at the same moment have jumped to one conclusion as to the identity of the figure in the carriage, unless it had been such as would have convinced a dozen pairs of eyes that they were looking on Mr. Barford? Any number of persons, one may suppose, might have seen what they saw, and would have argued as they did, under the same circumstances. There was no particular tie or unusual bond of friendship between them and Barford to account for it on the principle of the Corsican Brothers,—that typical story of premonition and warning. What then is to be made of it all? Nothing more has come of it. Mr. Barford soon recovered, and is now apparently in as good health as he ever was; but had he died, it would hardly have strengthened or increased the strangeness of the circumstance. It certainly would not have altered it, for there can be little doubt but that for a while his life did hang in the balance. Was it during that little while that his released, or partially released, spirit was capable of reproducing his bodily presentment and impressing it on the optic nerves of his two friends? The time corresponded precisely, as testified by Mr. Stanwell. But then, why should that bodily presentment have been reproduced to them in the railway-carriage, so that it gave the idea of his going away to London? Why should it not have appeared on the road—in the omnibus—anywhere? Or was the whole affair one of mere coincidence, after all—the person in the railway-carriage merely accidentally closely

resembling Barford, and that person, further, mistaking the two gentlemen seated on the omnibus for friends of his own? If this be the true solution, surely it makes it but little less strange. By some, such stories will always be laughed at; by others, they will be considered to be fraught with the gravest importance and consequences. One thing only remains pretty certain, they will ever appeal to that vein of superstition ineradicable from, and inherent in, human nature, and in this way they will always afford valuable stock-in-trade to the story-teller and writer of imaginative fiction. In this capacity it is that I have become possessed of the above manuscript.

TOLD IN FLANDERS.

MAY, 1680.

By S. K. PHILLIPS.

WHAT! they have called the Stuart back again,
To put the yoke upon the necks we freed!
And all the blood that watered English fields
Was spilt for naught—well, I nor know nor heed.

Mine is no single story of life spoilt,
And hope laid waste, for either cause or king;
Or Charles, or Cromwell—one might laugh, one frown,
But either held a heart a useless thing!

The Stuart back again! and but for her,
He might be lying still enow I wot;
And round the head they crown the earth-worm's trail,

And in the heart they trust my errant shot.
Dost know the tale? How one October eve,
I, with my troop, was close upon his track,
This man, this king—how the old war-cry calls,
The fiery past and all its memories back!

Well, listen, boy, and gather from my lot,
Lessons, the first girl that you meet will scatter
To the four winds—for you will dree your word,
And spend your best for love—'tis no great matter!

Aye—we were camping out by Droitwich town,
And tidings came Charles Stuart lay concealed,
In Hindley Castle, a malignant Hold,
Whose master led his band to Worcester field.

Some chance had spared his head, and still he kept,
A sorry state in that grey tower of his—
My Mabel's father—mine—whose rosy lips
Erewhile had met mine in betrothal kiss;
Then civil war had struck our hands apart,
Though love held fast, albeit sorely tried;
She prized the white rose that she proudly wore,
And duty held me close to Cromwell's side.

Well, a scout beat my quarters up that day—
My curse upon him and his lying tongue!
And said, at nightfall—'twas a likely tale
For the sky lowered, and the moon was young—
Charles Stuart from the postern-gate would pass,
On Mabel's palfrey white, in woman's weed,
While in the forest trusty posts were set,
On to the seaboard, safe his flight to speed.

I knew the postern—our old tryst was there—
I knew the palfrey I was wont to guide,
Through many a happy idle summer noon,
In the great forest, down the grassy ride;
And with ambitious pulses throbbing high,
I laid my ambush, planned the sure surprise,
And thought how I could buy her father's grace,
And win my darling with my royal prize.

You see I deemed my Mabel far away,
Close in her convent walls, in sunny France,
So set my springle in peace, and would not fear
Of doom from her quick lip or angry glance;
I knew her father, crippled limb and purse
At Worcester fight, his threshold might not cross,
And thought to strike my stroke and win my
 game,
And in my triumph heal both wrath and loss.

She would forgive, for love will pardon all
"Done for love's sake, and we'd entreat him well.
How slow they lagged away, the weary hours!
How slow the shades of night around us fell!
As in the thicket with my troopers round,
With hungry eyes we watched the winding road;
The pheasant's whirring wing our pulses thrilled;
The hare's shy footfall echoed as it trode.

At last, at last, through the dim shadows loomed,
The woman's figure, and the snow-white horse;
"Stand, or we shoot!" clear rang the challenge
 out,
We saw him start, yet hold upon his course;
Once more the warning—reckless on he pressed,
Urging with whip and spur the desperate fight,
And then, the sharp ring of my pistol woke
The thousand echoes of the forest night!

He staggered, reeled, and from the saddle fell,
And bursting through the brushwood with a shout,
We rushed to seize him, just as from the clouds
With a wild ghastly gleam the moon looked out.
Him! On no swarthy Stuart locks and brows,
Glared that wild light. The iron soldiers round
Would shudder, telling of the cry I gave,
Falling, as death-struck, by Her, on the ground.

My darling, my lost darling! nine long years
Have wearied by me since that night accurst,
Yet as I tell it, the old anguish wakes,
And throbs and burns as fiercely as at first.
My darling, with my bullet in her side,
Who looked up at me with such pitying eyes,
As my stunned senses woke to agony,
On the stained turf, beneath the cruel skies.

She whispered, with the ghost of the old smile,
At the old jest, "For you, and for the king!"
She laid my hand upon her bleeding breast,
And there, and there, oh, God!—I felt my ring!
Murmured some fluttering words of love and faith
To hush the ravings of my mad despair,
And drew me to her for a last, long kiss,
And then she went, and left me lonely there.

What chanced the next? I scarcely knew or care.
They said my fatal shot a warning gave,
My troopers found the lair—the prey was flown;
So not in vain my love had died to save.
'Twas on that loyal errand she was bound,
The blundering spy had hit but half the truth;
So in the great State whirlpool sank the bark,
That held the golden promise of our youth.

I would not tread the path her blood had dyed,
Flung my commission back in Cromwell's face,
And while brows bent and limbs were clutched
 around,

I broke my sword across, and left the place;
Over the seas I found a refuge, where
Where men found a refuge, where
And tidings of the land that was
To stir my memory, the English name,
The grave,
 the name.

Love, is my penance almost over now?
Is the wrong cancelled, and the hand washed
 white?

Will the grey hairs and weary lines of pain,
Change in the radiance of the heavenly light?
Do priests speak sooth? and shall we meet again,
Happy, and young, and trusting? meet, we two,
Just as we did on the sweet summer eves,
In the green forest, where—I murdered you?

By God's good grace we may—how long—how long!
And war, and woe, and states, and laws, and kings,
And all the stir we make about them here,
Will show to us as very little things.
Only I'm tired—something snapped I think,
Just as I fired that pistol, in my brain;
I'll try and sleep, one should not wake the past.
And so—they've got Charles Stuart back again!

THE SAILING OF THE PSAMATHE.

A ROMANCE OF 1881.

By PAUL CHALLINOR.

CHAPTER I.

"YOU are the very man we want," said
Milner.

"Because I hate the sea with more than
classic hatred, don't know one end of a yacht
from another, or the name of a single rope
or spar, and inevitably get in the way and
give occasion for wrath whenever anything
critical has to be done to a sail?" I
enquired with gentle satire.

"Only for a fortnight," Milner pleaded.

"Don't I know what that means on
board a sailing yacht! Didn't I start
once from Cowes for the Hebrides, take
six weeks getting round the Land's End,
and come home ignominiously by train
from Bristol at last? If you must take
me to Scotland, why not invite me to
a Pullman car? I should know then
exactly how much suffering to expect."

Milner looked cast down.

"Well, Everett, if you won't come, you
won't. I knew you were the laziest beggar
living, but lying about a deck reading
novels in the sunshine is the extent of the
exertion required of you—you needn't even
talk, there'll be plenty to do that without
you—and if you don't feel equal to it, I
have no more to say. I didn't think it
was much use asking you, somehow. Nora
settled it."

"My dear fellow, why couldn't you have
said so at first? If Mrs. Milner gives an
order, I know it's for my good, even
though its wisdom be not apparent to my
limited vision, and forthwith obey with
simple, unquestioning faith. When do we
start?"

"Next Tuesday. But you are to dine

with us to-morrow, to talk over matters and meet Desmond Heron."

"The Irish M.P.—the Home Ruler? Is he of your party?" I groaned.

"Of course he is. If you had listened to a single word I have been saying, you would have heard that the cruise is undertaken solely on his account. He has been ordered by the doctors to strike work for some time, and above all to keep clear of the House—not an easy order to obey just now. Poor fellow! he has had a good deal to try him."

"Didn't Kilmainham agree with him?" I asked innocently.

"Don't be such an idiot, Everett. The Queen has not a more loyal subject than Heron. Kilmainham!"

"I beg your pardon," I said humbly. "The last time I read a speech of his he seemed on the road there—that was all."

"He has stood by his party like a man, and gone as far with them as he could with honour, and they have rewarded him as is the nature of the animal to do. But remember, not a word of Ireland to-morrow, or of politics of any description, if you can help it. Don't forget. To-morrow, Wednesday, the 27th. Can you undertake to recollect so much?"

"On my head be it. Eight o'clock, I suppose?"

I did remember, and was more than punctual. Eight had not struck by the "grandfather's clock" on Milner's staircase when I entered the pretty drawing-room in Cromwell Road. It was perfect in its way, like its mistress, charming according to no particular rules of art, but bright, quaint, altogether satisfying, full of traces of a thousand whims and fancies indulged to the full, as they well may be by a young couple happy in the possession of a full purse and empty nursery. I sighed to think for what all this was going to be exchanged: for one room the size of an inferior butler's pantry, a deck scorching or slippery as the case might be, the chances of wind and wave, and deliberate exile from half the comforts of everyday life.

Mrs. Milner, unconscious of my presence, was idling gracefully about the room, a slim, girlish figure in golden-brown draperies, touching her pretty possessions as if she loved them, adjusting an artistic arrangement of dandelions and dock-leaves in a brown kitchen-pot, turning the easel with Milner's last acquisition in water-colours a trifle more to the light, redraping the folds of a brocade portiere. I came up just as

she was lightly touching the white shoulders of a marble nymph with a peacock plume.

"You dirty girl," I heard her say.

"And you will leave her for weeks and weeks to the mercy of housemaids," I murmured reproachfully.

She turned round on me laughing merrily. She always was laughing, except when she was talking, or eating, or drinking. I never in my life saw Mrs. Milner working, or reading, or listening, and can't imagine her asleep.

"It will do her no harm to wear her holland pinafore for a month. So you are coming? Walter was really pleased when you accepted, under protest. You see, we particularly want a pleasant party, for poor Desmond Heron's sake."

"Why 'poor,' and what can I do to comfort an Obstructionist?"

"A heartbroken man!" she said softly, sinking into a chair. "Don't you know he was shot at the last time he went down to his own home? He, who always believed that, come what might, his people would stand by him! The disappointment is crushing him. Then he has been denounced as a traitor by his party, because he supports Government on the Land Question. Yes, I know how infinitely absurd it must appear to you for a man to be affected by anything not relating to his own personal welfare, and to distress himself because a few thousand of his fellow-creatures are letting themselves be led blindly to their own destruction, but some men are so constituted, and Desmond Heron is one. Love of his country is the one passion of his life, I believe."

"Unrequited, it appears," I gently suggested.

Mrs. Milner gave me a scornful look, as she well knows how to do. She is a happy, innocent-faced creature, as full of play as a kitten, and as ready to scratch on occasion. I adore her, and she knows it, and Milner knows it, and we are none of us any the worse for the fact. I gave in, and hastily petitioned for details.

"You should hear Walter tell Desmond Heron's story," she said, "and of his first visit to Corrig Diarmid. Desmond had just come into the property unexpectedly, by the death of a distant cousin. He didn't want it, a young officer in a crack regiment with a handsome income of his own; but he was Irish, and patriot above all, and started to take possession in high glee, little thinking what awaited him, poor fellow! It was the famine year,

and Walter says their journey to the west haunts him still like a bad dream. The last man had been an absentee, and no one in Dublin had been able to tell them anything about the place. They found their way to it through awful scenes of desolation; through wide green valleys, with great, solemn hills around rising to the sky, and not a human voice or sound to break the silence, only the scream of the wild-fowl, until once, as they passed a cluster of ruined-looking smokeless hovels, he heard, for the first time, the 'keen' over the dead. 'But it's past keening they are, the craturs,' said the driver. 'Not a decent burying, let alone a wake, since Father Moriarty was down.' Dead and dying everywhere, all the young and strong gone to seek their fortunes abroad. It was terrible. When they got to the shut-up, dilapidated old house, they found the news of their coming had somehow got wind, and there was a little crowd to welcome them. Poor, starved tatterdemalions! They crowded round the car, and tried a feeble little shout of 'Long life to the young mather!' 'Long life to reign over us!' And then, Walter says, Desmond fairly broke down, and cried like a child. He grew years older in those days, and rose to the work that lay before him like a man; but he had the evils of three generations to undo. He sold every acre he had in England, and gave himself and his to his Irish people. I saw nothing of the place till five years ago, when we spent our honeymoon there. Such a lovely spot, like a scene in a romance, with Desmond and his wife for hero and heroine!"

"He is married?"

"She died soon after our visit. She was the only descendant of the old family. There was a poetical fitness in the marriage, you see; and a perfect wife she was—a typical Irish beauty, witty and winning beyond all English imagining, and devoted heart and soul to her husband's work. He was almost indignant at the extent of her personal influence with the people. When they had driven him past all patience by obstinately persisting in some pernicious old practice, or by refusing even to try some new labour-saving device, all at once they would give in, "to oblige the mistress"—an utterly wrong principle. Not a bit of the place was like an English model farm; nothing half so hideous; but the farmhouses were comfortable, some handsome, and the labourers' cottages tidy and cosy. There were schools, with

rosy, barefooted children trotting in and out; and at the chapel on Sundays as well-to-do-looking a congregation as you could meet anywhere. Poor Aileen! she was like a young queen among them; and they broke her heart at last! Hush! Why, Walter, how late you are! And where can Desmond Heron be?"

I was interested in the man by this time, though predisposed to detest him. Didn't she call him "Desmond," while I am always "Mr. Everett"?

'Here he was at last. Quite an old foggy, grey-haired and bright-eyed, with an arm in a sling; a tall, rather bent figure, and a singularly soft, sweet voice. Inoffensive, at any rate. And here was dinner.

We were a gay little party. The Milners' new yacht, their pet and plaything, the Psamathe, of course engrossed the conversation. Her rig, her behaviour generally, her stores, were all exhaustively discussed, and the three weeks at Walter's disposal were to include more than the mind of any yachtsman had ever conceived. The original scheme, to which we eventually reverted, was to sail up the east coast as far as we could for a week, and then—weather permitting—return as we came.

"Don't leave Ernescliffe out," said Mrs. Milner. "Remember I shall want a whole day with Madge, and you all may go fishing the while."

Madge was Mrs. Milner's elder sister, married to a Yorkshire vicar, whom we were to visit in passing.

Heron talked little and ate less. He brightened up whenever Mrs. Milner addressed him, but sank again directly into moody silence.

When she left the room, he turned to Milner, saying very gently:

"Will you and your wife forgive me, Milner, if I beg you to leave me out of this?"

"Why, what's the matter? Your hand isn't worse?" asked Milner anxiously.

"On the contrary, I am to be allowed to use it a little in a few days. It's not that; but being better, I ought to be in my place."

"The Bill will have gone up to the Lords by that time," returned Milner; "and what good will you be doing in the House? I'll promise to get papers at Yarmouth, Scarborough—anywhere we can, all the way—and if you're wanted, which you won't be, you can get back by train. Now, on your honour, are you not under

orders to try a cruise to the South Sea Islands, as the only way of refitting?"

"Something of the sort; but life's too short to waste in the experiment."

"I'll tell you what it is, Heron. If you won't behave with ordinary common-sense, you'll break down utterly. Your nerves are going, and your brain will go after them. Rather costly sacrifices in the interests of your precious countrymen. They'll be the death of you yet."

"They will," said Heron in an emphatic undertone. "And let them, and welcome!" he flashed out suddenly. "They have taken from me all that I lived for—my home, my wife, my belief in the future of my country—all gone! I gave them the best I had in my life, and they drive me from them now, a crippled pauper!" And he brought his left hand down with a force that made Milner's Venetian glass ring, and then covered his eyes for a moment with it.

I objected strongly to such a public display of feeling, but when, as if in extenuation, he tossed a dirty little note over to me, saying, "That came to me at the House this morning," I felt somewhat hot and indignant as I read.

"To the Tyrant of Corrig Diarmid!" it ran. "Tyrants beware! Remember Leitrim and Mountmorres! You've had your warning. Send Sinclair back where he came from, or——"

It was too hideously foul to repeat in full.

"Sinclair is my agent," he explained; "an honest fellow, who won't be terrified out of the country. I must stand by him at all risk; but, Milner," his voice dropped and quivered, "do you know when I was shot at, my servant, who was with me, would not stir a step in pursuit of the man. I followed him as far as I could, and then just managed to creep to one of my own labourers' cottages, and the wife would hardly admit me!"

"The blackguards!" growled Milner. "All the more reason for getting away from them."

Heron shook his head.

"I'm a doomed man, Milner. I feel it. Keep from me, if you love me, as if I were plague-smitten! Let this be our parting."

"Do you think we daren't stand by a friend in trouble!" said an indignant voice from the door. "Do you think we're Irish conspirators?" and Mrs. Milner, in a pretty little flash of generous wrath, laid

her hand protectingly on Heron's shoulder. "Give me this fortnight, it is all I ask, and then we part, if you will, for ever."

He took the pretty fingers and kissed them with infinite tenderness and chivalry, and gave in, as I always did, and everyone else too.

Gravesend, in a bright little gleam of sunshine at high tide, is an exhilarating sight. I felt almost reconciled to my doom as I watched the Psamathe dancing at her moorings from the window of the Falcon, where we four had just dined. Milner and Heron were going to and fro, transporting their possessions on board. Mine had been duly stowed away, and I was left to take charge of Mrs. Milner and an enormous hamper of flowers which Heron had brought down, and which she insisted on repacking on a plan of her own for preservation for an indefinite number of days.

"More moss, if you please, and damper. Thanks, these buds needn't blow for a week to come. You little country beauties, how I love you! Apropos, do you know Venetia Dennistoun?"

"Apropos of rosebuds, do you ask?" I replied. "I suppose, in common with some hundreds of my fellow-countrymen, I am pretty well acquainted with the young lady."

"Now, that speech is meant for a veiled sneer, and I am not sharp enough to find it out," mused Mrs. Milner. "I was thinking of country beauties, everything fresh and sweet. Please explain."

"Well, when one knows how a girl looks in a swing, drinking tea, cuddling a kitten, making eyes at society over a big muff, or swinging her legs perched on a table-corner, and reads once a week what she has been wearing wherever she went, with whom she has ridden, danced, flirted, one may say that one knows her—slightly."

I stopped. Mrs. Milner was in real anger.

"Do you happen to know in addition to all this that she is my most intimate friend, and is to join us this evening—and that the greater part of what you have been saying is—is——"

"Lies, I suppose," I suggested humbly; "but, you see, I believed them. I am very sorry; what can I say to make you forgive me?"

"Just suspend your prejudices one fortnight—no, a week, a day, an hour! That is all I ask; but first admit that you

never, in a photograph or out, saw Venetia looking anything but a lady."

"N—no, perhaps I haven't; but one sees her exhibited amongst the goodly company of professional beauties, and hasn't time to discriminate amongst their various ways and manners."

"I know Venetia's portrait has been everywhere. It's too lovely to suppress, and she can't help those society papers romancing about her doings. I met her last night and told her our plans. She asked if we wouldn't take her in. She is invited to some place in Scotland for August. I couldn't refuse her, even to oblige you."

I hadn't time to reply, for, turning round, I saw standing near us a young lady very quietly dressed, with a big, shady hat, and the sweetest face I ever beheld looking from under it; and I could not help thinking that she must have heard a good deal of our conversation.

I was glad to bury myself in the hamper during the greeting that ensued; but though Mrs. Milner's blue eyes danced with mischief as she introduced us, Miss Dennistoun's face was impenetrable in its gracious calm. Happily the Psamathe's gig appeared nearing the shore. The hamper was finished in a scramble; wraps, books, and small packages collected, and in a few minutes more we were on board. I made myself as useful as a land-lubber could during the transit, being honestly anxious to earn my pardon; but Miss Dennistoun received all my attentions with exactly the same sweet civility that she bestowed on the steward, and left me in doubt whether, after all, she did not consider my opinion of her of exactly as much importance as his.

The Psamathe looked "a picture" that evening, Mrs. Milner said. I suppose she did, but I modestly refrain from attempting to describe it. Miss Dennistoun was equal to the occasion, and admired and criticised with a zest and knowledge of things nautical that bewitched Milner completely.

"A big, bouncing, chattering, brainless school-girl," was my mental verdict.

Handsome she was. Handsome enough to take one's breath away, even in these days of beautiful women, with a tall, strong, graceful figure, and the bearing of a young princess. I understood Mrs. Milner's wrath at my confounding her with the ordinary professional beauty. At her most audacious she looked like royalty on a frolic, dignified in spite of herself.

So we glided swiftly past the low-lying green shores to the sea, through the lingering sunlight.

"A fair beginning," said Mrs. Milner to me; "will it last, I wonder?"

So did I.

I awoke next morning brimful of good resolutions. I was going to be as nautically jolly as I knew how; I would fall in love with Miss Dennistoun as madly and hopelessly as she could require; and I wouldn't mention Liverpool or dynamite in the Home Ruler's hearing as, impelled by some cruel fatality, I did whenever I was short of small-talk. A yachting romance by a master of the subject lay ready to my hand, and there in the cold, grey, morning hours did I conscientiously strive to get myself into the appropriate frame of mind for the situation.

When I got on deck I found a day to try one's philosophy to the full. Soft, steady rain was falling, a dim mist drifting about us, cutting off all sight of the shore, or of anything but a few square yards of murky water, dimpled by falling drops. Miss Dennistoun, looking bigger and handsomer than ever in a white mackintosh, and Milner, were on deck. Heron followed me, excusing his late appearance by explaining that this was his first attempt at dressing without a servant, and exulting in his success. He felt quite happy, he declared, to think how completely his one-handedness exonerated him from any obligation to bear a hand in anything, pulling, or hauling, or belaying, or splicing the mainbrace, or shivering his timbers, or any other nautical manoeuvres.

Breakfast and Mrs. Milner awaited us, after which Milner carried me off to unpack and arrange certain stores. This accomplished, we joined the rest. Weather the same as before, and everyone rather astonished to find it only eleven o'clock. However, we were persistently cheery, and luncheon came at last. After luncheon—a blank. Some wind sprang up, I don't know from what quarter, but it served to amuse Milner. Heron had letters to write, to be posted at Yarmouth, and Mrs. Milner insisted on acting as his secretary. Miss Dennistoun and I were left in possession of the deck.

"Smoke if you like," she said coolly, "I want to read. It's a pity to expend conversation; we shall want it all before we see land."

"By all means," I replied, and withdrew from the neighbourhood of the umbrella,

thinking that good resolution Number Two might as well go overboard.

I couldn't help looking at her now and then, she made such a pretty bit of colour against the dark umbrella, with her knot of red-brown hair, soft pink cheeks, and long, dusky eyelashes slanting downwards. I was glad to see that the book evidently bored her immensely. She tried again at a page, looked back to the last one, then on to the end of the volume, then gave it up and glanced at me, and then looked straight out to sea again into the haze. I began to pace the deck, stopping with ostentatious caution just short of her seat. Backwards and forwards I went, with eyes carefully averted, wondering how long Heron could have the assurance to keep Mrs. Milner immersed in his correspondence. I think half an hour passed in this amusement, and then I took a surreptitious peep under the umbrella. Miss Dennistoun's head had fallen against the taffrail; she was fast asleep. I took a mean revenge for all snubs, for I descended and procured a big Shetland wrap, which I dropped lightly over her, and then securing the umbrella, which was struggling from her grasp, sat down and awaited events. I looked at her once or twice, and was struck by the extreme youthfulness of her face. She was dreaming evidently, and unhappily, for her lips curved like a grieved child's, and presently the soft, curly lashes grew wet with more than spray, and a big tear rolled over the Shetland wrap, and splashed down on to my ungloved hand. I sat looking at it in comical amaze, not caring to brush it off somehow; till I found her eyes wide open, fixed on me.

"Have I been crying?" she asked. "And—and—who put this over me?"

Our eyes met, and we broke into a hearty laugh, infinitely cheering and invigorating in the grey gloom.

"Why didn't you come and talk to me, and keep me awake?"

"Because I thought you wanted me, and I might never again get such a chance of disobliging you."

Then we laughed again, but she seemed cramped and chilly, so I descended in search of tea, bringing back the information that Heron and his private secretary "weren't half through their work."

"How mean and despicable to keep us out of the cabin this wretched day," said Miss Dennistoun discontentedly. "I'm sure I could have written those letters for him in half the time."

We took to walking the deck smartly.

"Three o'clock," I observed presently.

"You needn't mention it," was the reply. Up and down, up and down. Miss Dennistoun's fine flow of spirits seemed in abeyance. "Your watch must have stopped," she observed presently.

"Three fifteen exactly," I returned.

Then we both sat down and gazed at the cabin skylight, in which, to complete our disgust, a light now glowed.

"I hope Heron's speech on the Amendments is getting on prosperously," I observed viciously.

"A precious lot of help Nora Milner will be able to give him," said the fair Venetia spitefully.

Silence, and another turn or two.

"Where are we now?"

"Off the coast of Holland, I should imagine," I replied cheerfully. "I don't know, and I don't suppose anyone else does—least of all Milner."

Silence again, and a surreptitious glance at my watch. Three forty-five! Up and down, up and down. It was a trifle lighter now, and the rain stopped by degrees.

"The rain ceased, the decks dried, the air became full of warmth and colour, and the shore broke out in all sorts of atmospheric effects," said Miss Dennistoun, evidently quoting from memory. "What impostors yachting novelists are. I should like to review some of them."

"Perhaps we shall find all that in Scotland," I suggested.

"Scotland! Do you think we shall ever see Scarborough?—I don't."

"Miss Dennistoun, why did you come?"

"Mr. Everett, why did you?"

"I? I'm a pressed man, but you're a volunteer."

"Well, I suppose I was led away by these deluders," she said, extracting a volume from each pocket; "I thought some of it must be true."

I recognised the author whom I had been blindly consulting as an oracle that very morning.

"But," I hazarded, "you know you ought to sing—no, hum songs all day; not beginnings or ends—only middles."

"And you," she retorted, "ought to tell anecdotes; they needn't be new, you know. No one remembers last year's Punch."

"Wait till we get to Scotland," we remarked simultaneously.

"Why, it's past four," I added jovially.

Some thrilling moments followed. Milner

appeared, shouting, "Nora! Heron! Mick! Look out!" Up they rushed, and we too.

"The Leith steamer! Over there!" and we all contemplated with wild excitement a big, splashing monster that took shape for a brief moment, and then became one with the mist again. "And they'll be at their journey's end on Friday," I sighed.

Next day rose fair and bright, the perfection of yachting weather; a calm sea and a fair wind. Heron's speech, or whatever it was, being happily disposed of, Mrs. Milner was free to make herself charming in other quarters, and he looked absolutely gay and careless, lying on the deck reading Tennyson to Miss Dennistoun, who had appeared in a striking and distractingly becoming get-up of white serge and red stockings and fisher-cap.

We reached Yarmouth that afternoon, and sent a boat off for letters and papers. Heron sent his share, when it reached him, away, "not to spoil a holiday," but Milner and I threw ourselves with avidity on the newspapers, and Miss Dennistoun sat on the deck, and opened envelope after envelope, till she was fairly snowed-up in a heap of invitation-notes and At Home cards.

"What a foolish girl you were to give up all this, Venetia," said Mrs. Milner. "Aren't you sorry you came?"

Miss Dennistoun looked up, smiling brightly.

"Sorry! Do you think I ever want to see another London season? I'm glad to have had my day, but, oh, so much more glad that it's done!"

"Bless the girl! what next?"

"A sisterhood, maybe. I've thought of that often, unless I can do better. Heigho!" she ended with a sigh that set me pondering.

A calm, bright evening. The future "sister" appeared gorgeous in Venetian brocade and velvet at dinner. We ordered coffee on deck, but, before joining the ladies, Heron opened his parcel of letters. He gave an impatient half-laugh, half-sigh, as he turned them over and spread them out on the table.

"Look at them, Milner—Everett. Aren't they just heartbreaking? Sinclair, my agent, writes that he is boycotted, of course, and has had threatening letters sent him. A shot was fired at Mrs. Sinclair through the dairy-window, but he

thinks that was only done to terrify them. Peter Mahon, the old herdsman, has been badly beaten, and lies in a critical state, for driving Mr. Sinclair's cows to market. Poor old Peter! I must get back, Milner. Listen! 'The Floyds have had their ricks fired, and the Learys' team were driven into the lake and drowned. None of the following have paid rent, alleging that their lives wouldn't be safe for an hour if they dared'—a shabby excuse, nothing more—and a notice has been stuck up, calling upon all honest men to rise against landlordism, and to begin with the traitor, Desmond Heron.' Here's something politier—a notice from the Land League, calling on me to evict at once Denis Conran, and reinstate the sons of Mary O'Shea in their holding. Their father died two years ago, leaving three years' rent unpaid, and his land gone to the bad. I let the widow and her sons take what they could away with them, and paid their passage to America. There, there, what use in going over it all? It's sick to the heart I am. I'm almost beat, Milner."

He crumpled the papers up and thrust them into his writing-case. One unopened remained on the table.

"What's this?"

His face grew white and set. He put it down and looked from me to Milner with terrified gaze.

"I must go! Can you put me on shore at once—to-night? Look here!"

"You're a dead man. The width of the seas won't save you; you'll never see land again," was the purport, stripped of its garnish of hideous expressions.

"A last attempt to frighten you. Put you on shore! Not a bit of it," said Milner. "The villains had your address at Yarmouth, but that's all they can do by post, so let them. And now listen!"

A strong, beautiful contralto voice began to sing a little Irish ballad, and we with one consent kept silence during a verse. Then it stopped.

"Is that right, Mr. Everett?" laughed Miss Dennistoun, "or might I go right through just for once?"

Heron dropped the letter and his cares simultaneously, it seemed, for he was on deck in a moment, begging for some more of the song.

"Oh, bold Rory O'More!" carolled Venetia. "Come and prompt me with the brogue." And she sang to us like a throstle till coffee came.

CHAPTER II.

I FOUND her alone on deck next morning.

"I want you particularly, Mr. Everett. Look at what blew into my cabin last night." And she held out the note that had so disturbed us all. "What does it mean?"

Her face was white, with dark shades under her eyes, and two anxious lines denuded her white forehead.

"Nothing to be alarmed at, I assure you. That sort of thing arrives as regularly as the daily papers. Heron is quite accustomed to it. Threatened men live long, you know."

"I don't know it, and I don't believe it," she said impatiently. "I'm frightened. Others have been murdered for no better reason. Oh, why—why didn't he try the South Sea Islands? They couldn't have reached him there."

"And they can't reach him here, either," put in Milner, who had been listening unobserved. "I'll put him in irons if he attempts to go on shore. He'll be safe for a fortnight, at any rate, and the troubles will have blown over by that time."

"But—but——" She hesitated, glancing round and lowering her voice. "Are you sure no one can come on board unobserved, and hide?"

"Not unless he's packed in the ice—that is the only corner Everett and I did not overhaul yesterday morning."

"And your men?" she said, only half assured.

"Well, you shall satisfy yourself on that point, too," said Milner with admirable patience. "You know Beckwith? He was with the Psamathe when Lord Sedgewick had her, and so were Webster and Murdoch—not one of them has the slightest interest in the Irish question that I can discover. Hannigan is a friend of Murdoch's, I believe. He brought him, and Beckwith engaged and approved him, and Hannigan brought Lowry, and that's the history of the whole crew."

"Which is Hannigan? That's an Irish name. And where did Murdoch get him?" she asked suspiciously.

"He's not Irish though, and Beckwith says is steady enough, if not over bright. I'll point them out to you presently. Now do make yourself happy, like a good girl. If you're afraid of being in Heron's company——"

For all answer she tore the letter into a

shower of small pieces, and scattered them on the water.

"There, that's an end of the subject. Now for breakfast."

For all the girl's bright looks and gay chatter that day, I could see that the morning's scare had left an impression on her not easily to be shaken off. I saw her start at every unexpected noise, and found her deep in conversation with Beckwith, much to that important personage's gratification. She was always watching the men at their work, especially "O'Donovan" and "Rossa," as Milner persisted in calling them, and, as if in defiance of Milner's suggestion of cowardice, kept as close as she unobtrusively could to Heron, at whom I saw her gazing once or twice with a curious intensity of expression that made me think it was rather a fine thing to be a man with a Doom.

Scarborough came in due course. To go ashore or not?

"Who wants to see Scarborough in July?" said Venetia contemptuously, but it appeared everybody did.

"Only for a few hours," I said to her, "and I promise you I'll not lose sight of Heron for a moment."

She gave me a kind little look, blushing rosy red the while, and ashore we went.

The party divided, Mrs. Milner being on shopping bent, and we met at dinner at the hotel. I brought my Home Ruler back in safety, and expected at least a look of recognition, but Venetia was absent and tired, and anxious to get afloat again; so we bade farewell to Scarborough in the grey twilight, and set sail for Ernescliffe and the Madge who began to figure prominently in Mrs. Milner's conversation just now.

When Heron opened his letters that evening the Irish correspondence had dwindled to a report from his agent, neither better nor worse than the previous one, while the "literature of assassination" was conspicuous by its absence.

"They've lost the trail at last," said Milner triumphantly. "I told you so."

We felt as if the moral atmosphere of our party had suddenly lightened. Heron looked ten years younger; Milner and Miss Dennistoun were wild with light-heartedness; Mrs. Milner, the only one who had never been depressed, was the only one not unduly elated. Venetia sang for us, and appeared in resplendent toilettes, and declared she didn't care how much time

we expended creeping up the never-ending line of the Yorkshire coast.

I remember being rather startled by one of her pranks. It was the only summer day of all our holiday, a dead calm and a bright July sun. We were idly rocking on the water opposite a long line of bold black cliffs, with indentations here and there forming tiny bays of warm, brown, boulder-strewn sand. Not a sign of human life was visible on the wild lonely shore, and I turned away from the contemplation thereof, and descended in quest of light literature. I entered the cabin suddenly, eliciting a startled little shriek from Mrs. Milner, who was absorbed in the contemplation of a dazzling vision.

Miss Dennistoun in an amazing dress of white, crimson, and orange, tuniced, trousered, and cross-gartered, with her hair tucked away under a jaunty little cap bedecked with a rosette of the same colour. She was not in the least disconcerted, but drew herself up to her full height, her hands on either side of her striped belt, and laughed at me.

"Isn't it a pretty fancy dress?" she asked. "Just help me on with my ulster, please;" and she pocketed the cap, replacing it by a shady straw hat, and ran lightly up on deck.

"She is going to get old Webster to take her for a swim," Mrs. Milner explained. "You'll see something pretty presently."

So I did when I got on deck. The crimson cap was dancing about on the waves between us and the shore—diving, reappearing, floating quietly, shooting ahead at a tremendous rate; finally it made for some rocks, up one of which a white figure scrambled and disappeared.

"She's like a water-dog," said Milner. "I believe she got a Humane Society's medal once for some plucky feat."

Webster had beached the boat, and was serenely smoking on a boulder. After an interval I saw him returning, with a dignified young lady in a neat and proper serge costume steering; the bathing-dress lying like a moist, unpleasant body all of a heap at his feet.

"I felt inclined to swim back to you," she said. "I know I could have done it. Getting on board was the difficulty."

"You won't get another chance of astonishing us," I replied; "the wind is rising. We shall anchor in Ernescliffe Bay to-night."

She grew suddenly grave.

"Ernescliffe! Do you know what happened at Scarborough, Mr. Everett? Nora was so long over her purchases that I got tired, and went off for a ramble through the old town. I lost my way, and asked a man who was loitering under a shed full of fish-baskets to direct me. He said he couldn't. I didn't like his looks and went on, but as I passed I was sure I saw Lowry's face looking out of the shadow behind him, and heard some one say 'Ernescliffe' just as I came up. Beckwith declares no one went ashore that day but himself and Webster. I wish we were rid of those men, or safe in Cromarty Firth. No one gets shot in Scotland."

We dropped anchor about midnight, and next morning were hailed by a boat from the shore containing Madge and her vicar, the Rev. Eustace Sandys. Mrs. Sandys was very like her sister grown stout and matronly.

We went on shore, of course. Ernescliffe consists of a row of fishermen's cottages at the foot of a tall cliff, on the top of which the church is perched. A rough pier runs out to sea on the north side of the little bay, and close by is the vicarage, an embellished farmhouse. The parish extends miles inland, we were told, with a scanty, scattered population.

We strolled about on the vicarage lawn that evening, watching the little fleet of fishing-boats depart.

"The fish are in shoals out there to-night," said the vicar, joining us, fresh from his parochial round. "Everything that can swim has gone out. There isn't a boat except your own left in the place, or a man to pull it."

"Beckwith has asked leave to go out fishing," said Milner, "so I suppose I ought to go on board. When shall you be ready, Nora?" The sisters looked blank.

"I thought you all were going to stay here all night," said Mrs. Sandys in dismay.

"I can leave Nora and Venetia if they like," said Milner. "I'll send the boat for them to-morrow."

So it was settled, and we three departed.

The Psamathe looked very forlorn and empty when we reached her after the bright little vicarage. We missed the two fair faces and gay voices unspeakably. Milner fell asleep. Heron actually produced a blue-book, and fell to making extracts, and I, in solitary possession of the deck, leant over the side watching three figures pacing up and down under the verandah of the vicarage till it grew too dark to distinguish

Venetia's dark gown from the two white-robed sisters. I smoked, and meditated, and watched the movements of the nearest fishing-smacks with languid curiosity. We were about a mile inshore of them, and nearly as far from the end of the pier. The moon was getting up, bright and clear, and lights were moving about in the vicarage windows.

"Ten o'clock. Bedtime, I suppose, in these primitive regions," I yawned. "No, there's some one coming out on the lawn again. Miss Dennistoun!"

A dark figure sped across the grass and disappeared down a flight of rocky steps that led to the pier, which was in deep shadow except the extreme end, which just caught the moonlight. The dark figure emerged from the blackness, became at once a white one, and scrambled rapidly down a ladder at the end of the pier.

"Going for a moonlight swim, by Jove! Extraordinary young person she is!" I was indiscreet enough to use my glass, and could make out the red cap presently coming out in our direction. "She can't mean to swim to us. What will she do when she gets here, and how will she ever get back again?" I speculated in amazement, while stroke by stroke the dark speck on the water drew nearer. "Shall I call Milner? No. Better not say anything about the escapade. She's sinking! No, only resting. Confound it! Why don't I know how to get a boat round and go to meet her? It'll kill her this cold night. I will try and get the dingey. It's not there! What can I do?" I gazed distractedly at the red cap, becoming every moment more distinct, wind and tide helping her along. She must have seen me, for she waved a white arm as a signal—of what? "She is being carried out by the current," flashed across my mind, and I was on the point of calling for help, when I saw that she was making steadily for the Psamathe. Up she came at last, and seized one of the side-ladders. I helped her up, for she was utterly exhausted. I shall never forget her standing, tall and white, in the moonshine, the water streaming down her, and the hand imperiously raised to check all remark or question.

"Send Walter Milner to me at once," she gasped.

I threw a big cloak over her shoulders in silence, and obeyed. He came up wondering.

"You must leave the yacht directly! Every man of you!"

"Are you mad, Venetia? How on earth did you come?"

"Don't stop to ask me. Every moment brings you nearer to— Oh, Walter, in pity believe me! Those men—I knew it. Oh, where is Desmond Heron?"

"Come down below and I'll listen to you," he said.

"I shall spoil your velvet cushions," she said with a hysteric laugh as her pretty feet splashed in the pool of water on the deck.

I rushed down in advance, turned up the cabin stove, and put on the kettle and had routed out brandy and a tumbler before Heron raised his eyes from his notes.

"Venetia!" I heard him exclaim.

She had regained her breath and composure, and spoke quietly and convincingly.

"You must leave the Psamathe at once. Before midnight not one of us will be left to tell the tale. I heard Hannigan boast of it. He is on shore now, with Lowry. Go and see, if you disbelieve me."

Milner stood looking doubtful. Did he mean to drive the girl crazy?

"I believe you, Miss Dennistoun," I said. "We'll do whatever you order. It isn't eleven yet."

She gave me a grateful look.

"It has driven me frantic to think that perhaps, after all, you would only laugh at me. If you had heard those men and seen their faces! I can't tell you all they said, but it meant murder! Oh, why are we wasting time?"

"Where's Eustace Sandys?" said Milner; "and how did you come?"

"Called away to a sick person. I came as I could. Walter—Walter, do believe me! I was sitting down among the rocks there, Nora and Madge had gone in, when I saw the boat coming, and stayed to meet it; but when I saw Lowry's face—I don't know why—I waited; and instead of going to the pier, they beached it just by where I was standing, and then I crept near and heard them."

Milner hurried off, and Heron, who had been standing by the table listening, with a face as white as Venetia's, sank into his chair with a groan.

"Come," she said imperiously, "every moment is worth a life." But he shook his head hopelessly.

"Best leave me. I knew it would overtake me at last; but you——" He sprang up again suddenly. "What are you going to do? Get her away, Everett. Has Milner gone to get the boat?"

"Boats! They are all gone," I replied, and then the full meaning of my words rushed upon my mind and I stopped aghast.

"Can you not return as you came?" I asked Venetia.

She shook her head.

"I couldn't do it again, and I would not. Whatever comes I will meet it here."

Her hand dropped as if unconsciously on Heron's crippled arm.

"Everett! What are you saying?" Heron cried wildly. "What does it all mean?"

"Death!" said Venetia solemnly, turning and laying her cold right hand in his.

I turned away and rushed up the cabin stairs.

"Hullo!" shouted Milner. "They're off, sure enough, and the dingey."

"What are you going to do?"

"Slip the cable, of course, get up the jib, and run her alongside that smack over there. Come and lend a hand, and tell those two to get their goods together if they really mean to clear out. Venetia, will you go and get some dry clothes on! If you'd make her drink that hot grog, Heron, instead of kissing her hands, it would be more to the purpose."

I must be excused from relating what I did that night under Milner's orders. We did slip the cable, and we did get up sail enough to carry us out to the smack, and I suppose my efforts contributed to the result, but I am quite unaware how. Milner kept up a grumbling soliloquy of incredulity the whole time. "Just a mad freak of the girl's, and I'm a big fool for minding her. Glad Beckwith isn't here. He wouldn't have been moved so easily. Wonder what those two rascals really are up to. Perhaps you had better go below and bring off anything you care about. What's the time—half-past eleven? Nice fools we shall look going on board to-morrow," and so forth.

When I returned with my portmanteau, I found the smack alongside, and the fishermen helping Milner to transfer the more valuable of his and Nora's possessions from the Psamathe, while Venetia stood leaning on Heron's arm, white with impatience. When we were safe on the fishing-boat, I noticed that she clung to a bundle of papers which she declined to relinquish to me, but which Heron took into his own keeping presently.

"My dear girl," I heard him say, "did you think of them?" And if they weren't his notes and his precious old blue-book!

We stood off some distance from the Psamathe, and watched her swaying to and fro on the wavelets, a graceful black outline against the moonlit sea.

"Poor thing!" I heard Milner say, "it's a dirty trick to leave you. I've half a mind to go back. I wonder where Beckwith is? I wouldn't be you, Venetia, when we tell the tale to-morrow!"

A crash, not loud, but sharp; a wave that lifted the smack and pitched her over on her side. When she righted, we looked for the Psamathe.

Gone!

There was a foaming eddy in the water, a few black fragments tossing here and there—that was all. Some spars and shattered pieces of timber came ashore by the morning's tide, the only relics of Mr. Milner's beautiful pet and plaything, the Psamathe.

We were a doleful little party on the vicarage lawn next morning. Mrs. Milner was still tearful and trembling at the thoughts of her husband's peril, Heron remorseful, and Miss Dennistoun meek and shy beyond all comprehension. The vicar had gone early, to set the county constabulary on the track of the two sailors, with small hopes of success.

"They're in Liverpool by this time," he said. "We shall hear of them in New York, hailed as heroes and patriots by the 'dynamite faction,' and most likely presented with an address and testimonial from the 'Skirmishing Fund.' Why, the feat, if it had been successful, would almost have guaranteed Hannigan's return to Parliament one of these days."

Desmond Heron turned away. I saw the vicar's pleasantries cut deeply.

"Don't mind it. It's only nonsense," whispered Venetia eagerly.

"It's the Truth in it that stings," he said.

"Remember your promise," she murmured in a lower tone. "Let it all go. You have done no good by standing by your people. Let them take their own way now. The day will come when they will welcome you back, and know their true friends from their false leaders. You will go away, and wait for the good time coming," she pleaded.

"My good time will have begun, my darling, if you come with me."

I withdrew in haste. I had thought I was only listening to a political discussion. As usual I turned for refuge and consolation to my fair liege lady, Mrs. Milner.

"You brought me here," I complained.

"My affections have been tampered with, my luggage lost, my holiday spoilt. You have the insurance to console you. The two yonder don't seem to need any consolation; but what remains for me?"

"Go and win fame and fortune by making a magazine story of it all," was her reply, and now, as always, I have obeyed.

THE OLD STORY OF HARISHAL CHASE.

By MARIA L. JENKIN.

CHAPTER I.

No one could be more surprised than we were ourselves when we were told that father was heir to Harishal Chase. The news came one morning when mother, and he, and I, their only child, sat at breakfast. A village doctor does not look for many letters, not such a village doctor as father was, at least, for I verily believe he had no interest whatever beyond the village.

However, the news was a fact, and our simple life became what was to me a grand one. So many new things came to be done, that in my ignorance I wondered fifty times a day to see how calmly mother took it all. The fact was, she never changed at all. She talked to the Earl and the Countess, the Duke and the Duchess, in just the same sweet way as she had talked to the untitled folks of Warbury.

She rather disconcerted me one day by saying she was sorry so much grandeur had come to us. She was bound to accept facts, she said, but she thought law had travelled a long way round to arrive at such a distant offshoot as my father, and to find in him the heir of the Payntons. To "hark back," so to speak, for four generations, and then to toil forward to a village—for Warbury, if it called itself a town, was scarcely more than a village—and then to alight upon him, Thomas Warton, it was strange.

However, no thought or desire of hers could change what the law decreed, so father gave his practice to Cousin Horace, who had been studying under him, and one day we drove away from Warbury, and arrived at the Chase.

Such a dear old place! Sunset in early spring brought out all the beauties of it, I remember, when we drove up the long avenue to the great portico. The avenue was of limes, and on one

side you could see between their trunks over the vague distance of the park, while on the left came the thickness of a copse. So far, Harishal Chase was well known to me; had I not been familiar with all that could be seen of it from the lodge-gates below the avenue? But of what came behind the portico I knew nothing.

Ever since I had been old enough to sit securely in the seat by father as he drove on his rounds, I had known the place, and the big gates with the curious winged animal in stone on the supporting pillars.

But to be within—to be the young mistress of all—to learn the name of the winged monster, to see him carved over doorways, to see him on the liveries of the servants, and to know that he belonged to me!

Father said he was a griffin rampant regardant—that was Greek to me, but it sounded grand.

One thing more he told me I did not like so well—to be Millicent Warton was all very well, but to be turned into Millicent Warton-Paynton I did not like.

Now I think mother rather liked this part of the business.

Anyway it had to be done. The title of the Payntons "lapsed," she told me, but the old name must be kept up. Another point I discovered soon after that she liked also, and this was that the old Harishal property, which had dwindled a good deal, was to be built up by father's wealth, and by her wealth.

We had been such simple folk that though I was seventeen at this time I had never grasped the idea of wealth as concerning ourselves at all. I did not in the least comprehend one speech mother made on the day I was packing up my private treasures at Warbury.

"Quite a burden for these shoulders, Milsie dear," she had cried.

"Burden, mother! I am equal to it." I lifted my untidy head proudly, for I felt every inch a Harishal dame at that moment.

"The heir and the heiress in one." Mother's voice was gay, but suddenly she was grave. "It is a foolish speech, dear; forget it."

Which I did directly after, but somehow it cropped back into my brain, puzzling it.

Life became supremely delightful at one bound. Even supposing no one had come to see us, the dear old house was a mine of pleasure. I got the old housekeeper to take

me into every hole and corner, and in a week I knew the history of every Paynton who stood pictured within the old frames round the dining-room. One was of a young girl kneeling on the ground, with her arm round a fawn's neck.

"Ah, she is pretty!" I cried.

"You think so, miss?" and the old woman looked oddly at me, I thought. "You see that other one?" she pointed to another, where again a young girl was pictured. This second stood erect, and she looked both proud and sad.

"Yes," I answered.

"The minnit as I set eyes on you, miss, I said there's no mistake about the old blood; she's like the picture without the name."

"Who was like, do you mean?"

"Who but yourself, miss!"

"Me?"

"Aye, just that. Them two, you see, have no name, for they are the same."

"The same?" I echoed. One was a playing child, and one was a stately maiden.

"Aye;" she nodded her head wisely. "She was Lady Diana, we all knew that, and grief took her somehow. Grief or sin—who knows? They blotted out her name nigh a hundred year ago, and they two pictures only come down from the loft through some mistaken order of the late lord's. Being down they need not go up again, he said."

Now, what girl of seventeen is not ripe for mystery? I made the old woman's life a burden to her for the next week trying to learn the story, but she could not tell it to me for the best of all reasons—she did not know it.

However, by persistent questionings I learnt what ghostly traditions hung about the place. There had been a ghost, of course, but she could give no reliable history of its being seen in the ken of living man. There was a ghost, too, belonging to the laurel path—a path that led away from the copse to a waste of uncultivated land called the heath. She—that was a she-ghost—had been seen.

"When some one is going to die, of course," I irreverently ejaculated.

"No, miss; it comes at a birth. If the babe is to have a good life, it—she—dances; but, if not, the creature falls to weeping and wringing its hands."

"Is that all?"

"Enough, too."

"And no secret passages, or trap-doors, or——"

"Hist!" the old dame stopped me.

"Ah, there is something!" I sprang forward and seized her hands. "Tell me."

"There beant nought to tell, as I knows of," and her mouth shut with a jerk.

"Then why did you bid me 'hist'?" I urged.

She shrugged her shoulders.

"I suppose I was getting a bit worried, miss," she said with the most simple manner; "it's all a folly to me, this sort of thing. We han't no call that I see to ferret out the ways of folks who'd nothing but the Dark Ages to live in, and all the rooms are done up most fashionable, and as to cleanliness, none'll beat Harishal Chase at that, I know, though the maids are set up nowadaya."

I could get nothing out of her. But in my own mind I was convinced that the Chase held some secret, some hidden room, or passage, or cupboard—who could say what? I was determined to hunt up every likely and unlikely place, and to make the discovery for myself.

This was in the first week of our being in the house, and though for another full week I held my purpose clearly and firmly before my eyes, yet there was no chance thrown in my way of carrying it out. Every obstacle was rather set against it.

Now all the world knows that the most adamant obstacles are those which appear soft, and yielding, and pleasant, which must account, I suppose, for my never surmounting any of them. I was seemingly beset with pleasure and enjoyment.

In the old life at Warbury, to be seventeen was a charming fact, but it did not bring of itself a marked change of existence. Now, for the daughter of Harishal Chase to be seventeen, meant that she was not only a girl with the delight of youth about her, with her new lovely home, too, but she must be launched at once into society. No more schoolroom days for her!

But I must not say so much of my own story—I must travel on.

Three weeks in my dear Harishal Chase then we went up for the season, just a short season, to London.

I forgot my search after the mysterious—utterly and entirely forgot it. But I did not forget my sudden love for the Chase. If it was a love at first sight, it was also a continuing love, and perhaps it was, a Mrs. Marley, the housekeeper, had once

said, "the old blood" in my veins, which so strongly made me take the place to my heart, and so entirely to weave the fibres of my being round every stone of it.

London was lovely! Do not laugh at my word, to me everything was "lovely." Certainly I was childlike enough. Once, when I put on a new hat which, in its modern way, copied the old fashion of that unnamed girl's portrait, I saw myself just like her—like the girl who played with the fawn. And I laughed at myself, wondering how it would ever be possible that I should also look like the second portrait, the grave, sad maiden.

There was but one trouble in that delightful time.

It all came from my being unluckily both "heir and heiress." I was Miss Paynton of Harishal. I cried angrily when I saw how I was, so to speak, ticketed and labelled in this fashion. Actually, people came and made love to me! And lovers, too, that I could never dream of marrying. One was a grey-headed man, and another was a boy with a lisp—but he was an earl's son.

"You are quite sure, Milsie?" my father said in his easy, kindly way.

"Sure! I should think I was," retorted I, giving much more of my attention to Toby, my pug, than to the subject of lovers.

"I cannot say I am sorry, child." He evidently was relieved, and turned his newspaper as if he had now every intention of enjoying it undisturbed. "An evil of the future, my love," he said to my mother; "the future, not the present."

"An evil and a good at once," came the answer, in mother's calm, gentle way. "She is a child now."

"Dear mother, I am seventeen!" and I tweaked my dog's ear.

"Yes. Some day you will understand, Milsie—I hope you will understand," she went on quietly. "But there is no hurry."

"That old fossil presuming——" I began.

"Sir Gerard Milnes! Ha, ha!" and my father laughed. "I knew him in petticoats. I'll tell him what you call him."

"Do," and I laughed with him.

"There is time," mother went on, half to herself. "Only we will hope for a wise love when the love does come—a wise and a suitable love."

"That is because I am labelled 'Harishal Chase!' I felt my face hot, and I

drew up my tall self. "I have a great mind to say I will never marry. I half wish the Chase had gone to someone else! No," and I hugged my fat Toby, "no; I don't mean that!"

On the evening of that very day we were at a ball, and a certain Mr. Dacre danced with me. All my other partners had a title of some sort, so, having a persistency in my character by which I held to my wild and ignorant rebellion of the morning, I snubbed all these, and talked comfortably only with the said Mr. Dacre.

The day after, he, with the rest, slipped out of my thoughts, from the simple reason that I was obliged by the very force of circumstances to go to other entertainments, and to see quite another set of people.

At last we went home, and I was full of delight at the country, and often said I should be content never to leave my dear old Chase again.

When the shooting began we had visitors, and some of the tiresome London people came—tiresome only to me. But I—I suppose time naturally brought it to me—did not trouble so much about these things. I think I could make myself quite as haughty when I chose as any one of the former maidens of Harishal Chase had done.

In November came an event. I should be eighteen on the twenty-sixth, and I was to have a ball. Everybody came. Last, but not least, came many officers from the Warford barracks. And amongst them came a—my—Mr. Dacre. Only a lieutenant; only a man of no family at all; only a penniless young soldier.

I saw him a few times after the ball—only a few times. Then he absented himself. Duty kept him at Warford, but it was not regimental duty which kept him studiously away from any of the roads leading from that town towards Harishal.

Shall I ever forget the day when, after calling on mother, he met me along the avenue of limes?

Early December may be as warm as summer—that day was so. The earth was moist, and the aromatic, pungent smell of the prone leafage and bracken filled the air. The low yellow light of the day was reddened by the westering crimson sun; along the path of his rays danced a million radiant motes on a misty floor—"Good-bye" was the word it all carried to me.

And why? Just because I was heiress of Harishal Chase, and he—he—was nothing.

I dallied till the twilight came, and then, passing the door of the big drawing-room where we had danced together, I turned in and paced it alone.

I had forgotten mysteries and ghosts, I cared naught for the darkness.

I went to a corner window, and I looked out—so looking my feet must have kicked impatiently. They lifted a corner of the heavy carpet, they got entangled, or rather, by some sudden wakefulness of my brain, I knew that one foot touched iron and neither the carpet nor the wood of the floor beneath it.

I started. There was an iron rusted ring fastened on to a plank of the floor—nay, it lay in a carefully made groove cut in the wood. The circling crevices were filled with dust and flue, and all was so close and compact that a hundred feet might have passed over it and never have felt a variety of level.

I all at once remembered the house-keeper's half-terrified "Hist!"

CHAPTER II.

WAS I likely to let my discovery slip? By no means.

All the household was told of it; and, behold! my news fell flat, for all the household knew of it. Instead of curiosity, I met shrinking. No man or maid had the least desire to see if that old ring would move.

My father laughed at me; but mother—I should never have given her credit for it!—really flushed, and was, for her, quite excited. She so entirely identified herself with the ownership of the Chase, you see, and being of a county family herself, no doubt made her the more ready to magnify the importance of the old histories of the place. Sweet, good mother! if there were anything in her composition which bordered upon the nature of a fault, it was this pride of family. For the honour and glory of one's family our sacrifices should be unmeasured.

Ah me! I am writing this with the knowledge and experience of a few years behind me.

The first of those years might be said to begin at this time.

I had given away my love. And my lover—he was so proud—could not declare himself. The others who came I flung

aside as one dashes away gnats on a summer day.

And I said I would solve the mystery of that iron ring. Though I was growing a little sad at heart, I made much show of gaiety, and scorning lovers, talked of this purpose of mine.

It was strange, but I could get no workman to help me.

So time went on, and the obstacles grew stronger than my fading spirits. You see, I hoped and hoped for what could not come. I could not unmake my heiress-ship, neither could I make Paul Dacre a noble.

A winter and a spring passed over my head, and I was changed. To take Mrs. Marley's verdict, I was just a copy of the Lady Diana. "More's the pity! For your face, miss, is prettier with the smiles."

I did not pay much heed to her. I had too much to think of.

Then, in the summer, Sir Gerard Milnes presented himself again, and my father had to give me his message. Now, Sir Gerard had the finest property in the county, and mother had set her heart on my marrying him. My kind, easy father would not force me; but mother's persuasions, and, I think, her very tenderness and ambition for me, conquered my utter carelessness.

Yes, I had grown utterly careless, and had changed from a child Milsie to a proud Millicent.

I said I would try—he might come.

He was a noble and a worthy man. He did come to me out on the terrace, and I had to listen.

How my heart and soul rebelled! All the fire which had seemed quenched in me rose into hotter flames. How I vexed him with my wild, laughing words, and would neither say "Yes" or "No."

"I am tired," I cried; and, turning from him, I went straight into the drawing-room by one of its long windows.

My dignity had entirely left me for the nonce, and as I sprang in my foot caught the very corner of carpet it had once before caught.

There was the mysterious iron ring in the floor once more uncovered.

"There is a trial for you, if you are a chivalrous knight," I cried.

I knew Sir Gerard was close behind me.

"For my lady, no trial is too great."

He caught my humour. "What is it? I conquer it, and come for—"

There he stopped, and looked at me with his brave, true eyes.

"For the prize, the guerdon!" I was wild, and yet even on that warm June day I suddenly grew chill. "Give me the secret, and I give you myself! I am not worth the taking."

At the moment I cared for nothing.

"Worth much to me," he said gravely, and, before I knew, he had lifted my hand and kissed it.

Now, no Harishal man would obey him for this work, so he sent for London men to do it.

Such a little thing, after all—only to soften the rust, to lift the ring, to press and to shake, and to use just a man's natural force. A neatly-fitted plank moved, and, being lifted, showed a space full of dirt and rubbish; then some groping, and a tin box came to light. Anything more?

Only a bundle of papers, with a faded ribbon tied round them.

"My!" exclaimed Mrs. Marley, who, of course, was present. "The ribbon is like what ties the fan in Lady Diana's picture! I never!"

The tin box father opened, and found some old jewels—rare ones, and valuable, and of antique fashion. He laughed and he gave them to me, saying:

"Finders must be keepers."

The papers mother read.

And my promise—my promise! How could I ever keep it?

Here is what the papers told.

At the top was written:

"THIS IS THE TRUTH.

"No one knows the whole truth of what I, Diana Paynton, have done. Someone will, perchance, open the secret hiding-place. They will brave the curse set upon the opener, but the curse will be powerless then, for I am the first who has opened it. The curse of an unknown ancestor is naught to me, for did not my own father set his curse upon me last night?

"But my heart will not tremble under it—no! Only this morning, too, I read that 'The curse causeless shall not fall,' and I have done no wrong. If to me love stands before wealth, who shall say that is wrong?

"I am ordered to my room; I am a prisoner, but freedom will come. While I wait, I write.

"In a sense I am dead. Oh, that there could be love and trust between father and child! I have never known the day when aught but fear came into my soul when I was carried into the stern presence of my father.

"Perhaps he was proud of me. Now that I am dead there is no heiress to Harishal Chase, and it will go to his nephew's son. Stay—the future may cure the past.

"It has all happened in so short a time.

"We were in London. We, like the rest of the quality, must go once a year, though it is such a weary journey. Father must be in his place at the House, and aunt and I must go to routs and assemblies, and give the same ourselves. Our house by the river and by the Chelsea fields is happily on the outskirts of the noisy town.

"It was Lady Betty Carew's drum. Now, Lady Betty is not to my taste. She belongs to the past days, when dames of fashion used language we think coarse and rude now. But aunt affects her, I suppose because the two are so exactly opposite. Poor weak auntie must surely be under some fascination of strong Lady Betty.

"For some reason, her ladyship can command the first society. One is sure of meeting people of ton there. Men, too, give up other things for her, and at one of her drums you are sure to meet what she is pleased to call 'the sprightliest blades about town.'

"She fell upon aunt and me that day with her loudest laugh.

"'Glad to see you, Nan Paynton!' she cried. 'And my Lady Diana looking her freshest. Who would not be a Paynton to live outside the smoke? What did it cost your father to build his mansion? But there, it is no use talking, I've lost too many guineas lately to think of building! Besides, I'm hardened to the smoke and din of my quarters. I call my chair, and I'm in the Strand in two minutes. Who here is strange to you? None, I believe.'

"'I see Mistress Dalaney,' aunt put in. 'I have been dying to ask her how she succeeds with her new silk work.'

"'Silk work? Ah, she'll tell you. I never was good at such things!' Then some one else was announced, and Lady Betty went off.

"I sat down and talked, and looked about me. There was but one stranger in the room. A tall, dark young man. How can I describe him? He was hand-

some, and he bore himself with a cool dignity. Certainly he was a gentleman, and he was dressed in perfect fashion, though there was something about him totally unlike the foppish or rakish look of the men Lady Betty affected. His dress was of a dark sombre hue, and the cambric of his exquisitely set shirt-frill was of the finest. I did not think I was noticing him as pointedly as I must have been doing.

"I was shocked by a laugh of Lady Betty's.

"Ha, ha, ha! My dainty Diana is amazed! And well she may be. Now, my friends all, I have bid you here just to make you acquainted with a star—a star, and my friend, Signor Paolo!" The stranger flushed, but he bowed quietly. He must have been accustomed to many ways of this varied world.

"He's no signor, though we have settled that a foreign name tickles folk's ears; he is English to the backbone. He has already taken the town by storm. You have heard of him?"

"I had certainly heard of a celebrated musician who had played at Court. One or two said as much.

"Ah well, that is one thing. He means, and I mean too, that he shall line his pockets well with gold before he goes off to Italy. Spoil the Egyptians, I call it."

"A quiet smile crossed his face.

"You, my Lady Bruton, and you, Nan Paynton—that means you, Diana," came in an aside, 'are leaders of fashion.' She jerked her hawk-like face in another direction and shook her fan at some young officers. 'And you, gentlemen, you'll give your military concerts, and you'll have a civilian to fiddle for you till you grow white with envy.'

"By all means, Lady Betty; by all means!" laughed one. 'May we ask Mr.—Mr.—'

"Signor Paolo," she supplied.

"The signor to play us a measure now!"

"Such playing I had never heard. It carried my very soul away with it.

"Presently, when aunt and I were taking leave—we had had the good fortune to exchange a few words with the stranger—Lady Betty pulled her back by the sleeve.

"She nodded her head at me, and her sharp old eyes twinkled,

"You'll take him up, Di; you can

do it. Nothing like a girl with manne to back a man who wants to rise. I back you when it comes to the permission of Paynton for your concert.'

"Thank you.'

"Don't go in for meekness, Dian. Speak out. But,' she actually winked did this disagreeable old woman, 'so far and no farther. You know! No philandering, mind; nothing of that sort. N philandering!'

"I would not answer this, was it not beneath me? I saw, too, that the stranger was close by. I grew scarlet at the thought that he might have overheard Lady Betty coarseness.

"He it was who, with a deep bow, led aunt and me to our coach.

"Signor Paolo became the rage, in assembly was complete without him. People said that his engagements, as the first violinist of the day, were so numerous that not half of those who invited him could secure him. That was not my experience. To me he seemed to be everywhere.

"Now I am proud to know the reason of this. He always knew where I would be. Soon he spoke bravely and openly to me, and I saw no shame in aiding his desire to meet me. If rank of one sort was mine, he held rank by his great genius. Besides, though I wished no such declaration on his part, he insisted on telling me his family history. He comes of a good south-country family—aye, he bears a name as good as my own. Soon it will be my own.

"We left London before my father died, and we, aunt and I, were glad to accept the escort of Signor Paolo—I call him by the name the world knows him by—an of Sir Harry Milton, our neighbour. The roads are too insecure for ladies to travel in assurance, even though our servants are trusty and brave.

"Both gentlemen rode by our coach the whole way down, and whether by the valiant bearing, or to the fact of the northern road being deserted for the non-compliance by the gentlemen of the road, we suffered no molestation, and reached the Chase safely.

"The dear place! Shall I never see again? To leave it is surely like leaving one's mother. I never knew mine; but still, for love one is willing, aye, and glad to leave even father and mother!

"Being the guest of our neighbour Paul—I am weary of the foreign name—was at the Chase night upon every day.

"A week hence my father came home.

"He came upon us suddenly. He had chosen to dismount at the lodge and to walk up the avenue of limes. Aunt was gardening, with Sir Harry in attendance. How kind he was! Paul and I sat on a bench under a reddening beech-tree.

"Our story was in our eyes.

"Shame is upon me when I recall my father's words. I cannot write them down, I only know that he, a gentleman, called another gentleman a 'cur,' and threatened to 'horsewhip him off his land.'

"Paul rose quietly, and answered as quietly, that 'No man should touch him. But I obey the Lady Diana,' said he.

"Go, go!" I cried.

"He turned white.

"No, no, I could not really have him go, and I seized his hand. He bent his head low over my two hands, lifting them and kissing them with a noble reverence.

"The spinney, to-night," I whispered.

"Was this unmaidenly? I hope not. I knew my father, and could I bear that Paul should go without some softening of that cruel scorn and disdain?

"Two days have gone by—only two days, and I know that I shall never again see the golden Harishal fields, or wander again in the grand Harishal woods. But I am glad—so glad. The rich harvest is blessing the land, and it seems to me that all my growing life is perfected in my great harvest of love.

"There is nothing more to say. I have untied the tansy ribbon from my fan ready to roll round my papers.

"Last night father cursed me.

"To-night I am a prisoner in my room, but I can pass by an inner door into the ante-chamber, and so out on to the passage which leads to the back stairs, then through the still-room and the buttery—it is the only way—to aunt's parlour and the drawing-room. There I will hide my story, and then— Then I shall have my dark hood on, and a brown muffler about my face, and I shall fly like the wind, down the lime avenue, across the spinney, and on to the open heath; horses will be there, and Paul will be there."

CHAPTER III.

"THE future may cure the past!"

How those slight words of the old story clung to my brain!

Mother read it to us; she cried a little once, at which I wondered, for I was flush-

ing with my own sympathy for Lady Diana. Whether it was so or not, I felt that now there was more alike in our two selves than old Mrs. Marley had discovered. I built a vast edifice of romance about the love of Mr. Dacre and myself.

Of late I had not seen him at all, so there we were unlike Lady Diana and her signor. Paul, I was sure, would be too proud—I think also I should be too proud myself—to run away. But, you see, neither running away, nor an open marriage, came within my questioning, for Mr. Dacre would not declare himself to my father.

My lover surely was a most noble man; he held my promise, but though I saw him during the whole time of the discovery, and the consequent excitement; though I heard his words about the Lady Diana; though he stood by me as we looked with a new and a sad interest at her two pictures; though he said in his courteous way, that though he saw the likeness which I bore to the paintings, yet they were as a shadow to the substance; still—he never claimed my promise.

It seemed to me that he was waiting for a sign from me. And I could not give it. I was hot with rebellion and cold with despondency at the same time.

On the morning after we had read the old story I wandered out beyond the copse to the open heath; I fancied I would tread over again the very path which Lady Diana's feet had trod that autumn night.

Again it was the same grand and glorious autumn, young autumn, when the richest wealth of fruit, and corn, and radiant colour is poured on the earth by teeming Nature; an August sun burned over the purple heather, and caught flashes of golden light from the patches of gorse which are always to be seen all the year round. I had gone there thinking I would dream and see the moonlight and the lovers of that olden time—I could picture nothing at all of it.

I only thought of myself, and though they could not possibly have any connection with me and my troubles, those words of the story that "the future might cure the past" came ringing in my ears.

When noon made the sun too hot to bear, I sauntered back through the shady copse and lime avenue.

My father and Sir Gerard Milnes, with another gentleman, Mr. Bright, the lawyer from Warbury, were standing under the great portico talking—and talking gravely. Sir Gerard saw me first.

He took my hand.

"Am I to have my reward to-day?" he asked in a low voice.

"Oh!" I exclaimed; I am sure my manner was not gracious. "I cannot break my word," I answered after recollecting myself. "Father must answer for me."

"Milsie, Milsie! That is what I cannot do," his face shadowed.

A flash of my wild humour crossed me.

"Who will, then?" I cried. "Will you, Mr. Bright? I cannot answer for myself—not as people seem to wish, at least."

"Have you heard, child? Why do you refer to Bright?" asked my father hurriedly.

"Simply because he happened to be here."

"The discovery of last night, my young friend, entails——" began the lawyer in what was, I suppose, his business manner.

"Entails nought in this matter," Sir Gerard stopped him.

"Nay—nay, let her know."

"Another mystery," I cried, holding my gayest manner as a sort of mask to my real feelings.

"We do not know. If so, it is one which we must disentangle at once, I hope in such a way as to keep things in their present happy and—yes, Mr. Paynton, I must add—most suitable condition."

"We don't know—we don't know," hurried my father. "Milsie, do you understand how it is that Harishal came to me?"

"Simply because Lord Paynton died without children or grandchildren, or nephews or nieces."

"Just so. But, child, I am a descendant of that nephew's son to whom the property fell by the loss or death of that Lady Diana whose story you found."

"Then, as she did not die, and very likely had sons, and grandsons, and all the rest of it, Harishal is not ours, but theirs!"

"You seem glad, child."

So I was—so I was! Ah, if the heiressship were to slip from my shoulders! But I was ashamed almost of my gladness so plainly declaring itself.

"I shall hate—yes, hate to leave Harishal! The dear place!"

This impulse of mine was as real as the other. I buried my face in my hands.

"I must have it all well searched out, Bright," said my father, ignoring me. "Lose no time, and spare no trouble. What was the signor fellow's name?"

"At present I do not know. I am

ignorant of the men who, at that time, were the fashion in the musical world. But we have the date, and the name will be found in a trice. An Englishman, we know. But these musicians, or more truly their families, often drop down in the social scale. I should be sorry to see Harishal go in such a way."

So the search began.

It must have been difficult to trace, for some weeks passed before we knew all.

Can you imagine the truth?

We had no guests for the shooting that September, and time went slowly. Restfully and peacefully to me, though, for I had father on my side, and he would not have me marry Sir Gerard Milnes as heiress of Harishal, when probably I was nothing but what he laughingly called "an old village doctor's daughter."

Sir Gerard submitted, but we all knew it was no heiress he sought, but just a girl to whom he had given his love.

In the brisk September air I loved to scour the country on my pony. One morning I came in, and throwing the reins to a servant, held up my habit with one hand, and with the other brushed back the wisps of curly hair which, like so much wind-blown tow, were flying over my eyes, and tickling my nose.

"Will you go into the library, miss?" I was asked.

I went, and who should be there but—I took no heed of my father or of Sir Gerard, or mother, or Mr. Bright—but, Mr. Dacre!

"Ah!" I exclaimed, and my face burned like fire, and then, I am sure, went white like ashes.

"This is my daughter——" father began.

"We are old friends," was the answer.

"Ah yes. You've been our guest; but, my good sir, can I be expected to remember all the faces who came that night? Thank goodness, I shall have no more of that!"

There was a deprecating gesture for answer.

"No, no. No sorrow, and no regrets. You are far more the man for it than I am. We'll come and see you—always supposing you invite us!" he ended in his cheery, easy way.

"Miss Payn—Miss Millicent," said the little lawyer, "this is the heir."

What I looked like, none can tell.

"Who shall tell the story of the heirship?" he looked to Mr. Dacre. "Will you, or shall I?"

"You," my old friend nodded.

"Lady Diana Paynton, or rather, Lady Diana Dacre, had a son. Like her husband, he was Paul, and a musician. Wealth grew, and ambition was fostered by the mother. That son had a son, also Paul; but by his grandmother's will he was sent to college, and was made a clergyman of. You follow me?"

"Yes," I gasped.

"That clergyman, the Rev. Paul Dacre, died four years ago, leaving one son and three daughters—here is the son, again a Paul Dacre. I never saw so clear a business!" Mr. Bright rubbed his hands in glee.

"I remember my great-grandmother, I think," mused Mr. Dacre; "she was far past ninety when she died; but I clearly remember a tall old lady, who awed me very much, putting her hand upon my head. It is a dim, but I believe a sure memory. I must have been no more than three years old. I am twenty-five now—still I can remember it."

They talked together a little longer, those four men.

Mother thought I was troubled, and slipped her hand within my arm. I was not one whit troubled.

Then she whispered one little word.

It was like a flash of lightning to me. It illumined everything—all I had understood, and all I had failed to understand. By this last I mean that not for one moment had I felt I was not still, as society would say, "above"—how I hate the word!—Paul Dacre.

I saw now. He was owner of Harishal, and I was—nothing. I drew myself up, and I slipped away from mother's touch. Her ambition for me, that tender, loving ambition, stung me!

"I am myself," I cried.

My eyes sought no one, but Sir Gerard's pained face struck me. I could not help a low cry bursting from me, and I threw myself on my knees before him.

"Forgive me—forgive me!" I cried.

His hand lifted me.

"Nay," said he, "there is nothing to forgive. We—I—made a mistake. Warton," he turned to my father, and somehow that giving of the old name seemed to bring back the old times, "you will forget our talks—our talks about—"

Mother's face flushed, and I thought she almost looked angry, but, you see, she could not understand, knowing nothing.

"About Milsie?" blundered father.

Sir Gerard left me, and laid his hand on father's shoulder.

"Let us wait, my friend. I am called abroad for a few weeks."

I think Paul must have understood the whole matter at a glance. I should have done so had I been in his place.

He flushed slightly. But in the presence of all he told the other secret—his and my secret which we had thought to hide away.

Sir Gerard did go away, but not for long, because both mother and Paul wrote to him, and asked him to be sure and be at the Chase one morning in October.

That morning was our wedding-morning. You see, I never left the Chase. Father built a house on the edge of the park, and he says he is happier there. I only half believe him, because every day he comes sauntering in to Paul and me.

The likenesses of Lady Diana are put in the place of honour now. I wonder whether she knows how "the future has cured the past"?

THE CAPTAIN'S COXSWAIN.

By F. TALBOT.

HAZE and darkness hung about the river-mouth, while a lurid patch of light, where the sun was invisibly setting, brought into sudden prominence the little low-lying spit of land with the tall masts of the ships of war; the old hulks sullen and motionless; the cluster of houses, with the gaunt-looking forts, and the cloud of white steam from the funnels of the great armour-clad Terrible, as she lay slowly forging ahead against the incoming tide. Every pulse in the huge leviathan had begun to throb, the men were at their stations, the engines slowly moving; but still it seemed as if the great ship were hesitating to plunge into the cold sea mist and the rising surges that were before her.

A group, composed of women chiefly, with an old boatman or two among them, were gathered at the pier-head, and watched every movement on board the ship with interest, recognising every now and then some familiar form among the group of seamen gathered on the fore-castle.

"There's Jack—bless him! Tommy, shake your hand at daddy. He sees us—bless his heart!" And Tommy was almost

dropped into the water, in his mother's anxiety that he should be well in evidence before the crew of the *Terrible*. Why the ship thus dallied over the parting, so painful to many both on board and ashore, was quite evident to the onlookers. The captain's gig still lay by the stairs, bobbing, rolling, and ducking in the unquiet waters, while the smart man-o'-war's men who manned her, lounged easily on their seats. They, as it happened, all hailed from distant parts, and had no friends or relations on shore with whom to exchange last words. All but the coxswain, that is, a dark, handsome young fellow, who was standing under the lee of the round-house on the pier, a little apart from the rest.

Tom Brettle, the coxswain of the captain's gig, was as nearly unmanned as such a fine manly fellow could be. He was holding his wife's two hands in a firm and fervid grasp, as in tones which he tried hard, but not very successfully, to make firm and coherent, he poured into her ears his last parting words. The pair had not been long married, and Tom thought it the hardest thing in the world that he should have to leave his little wife, on whom he looked with an almost reverent affection. Her cleverness, her pretty ways, her organising power, were to him a matter of perpetual wonder and admiration. And now they would not meet again perhaps for years, and who could say what might not happen in the interval? As for the wife—who was young and rather good-looking, with features of a sharp vivacious cast—although there were tears in her eyes, and her face was white and wan, yet she retained more composure than her husband.

"Now you must write to me every week, Tom," she said, "and the time won't seem so long after all, perhaps."

"It feels like for ever, Penny," groaned Tom. "My girl, I can't bear it! I shall desert at the first port we touch at, and come back to thee."

"Don't talk nonsense, Tom!" rejoined his wife; "you don't mean it."

In another moment Tom had given his wife a hurried, passionate embrace, and had leaped into his place in the captain's gig. The captain himself was to be seen hurrying towards the pier-head, and presently he took his seat, and the boat rapidly cut through the rough water till she reached the ship, when in a few moments she seemed to become absorbed in the great mass, swinging quietly on her davits, out of the way. Penelope could

make out her husband's figure for a moment as he appeared in the rigging. Then a few wafts of white smoke rolled from the dark sides of the ship, and before the echo of the roar of the great guns had died away in the distance, the *Terrible* was steaming away on her voyage, and was presently lost to sight in the gathering mists.

Penelope turned away with a shiver and a sigh, and as the group of spectators melted away, she followed in the wake of them towards the town. Just then the dockyard-bell began to ring, and the dull, quiet street, with its long dead walls, its guard-houses and grog-shops, was all of a sudden occupied by a dark and sombre-looking mass of workmen, who tramped along in a dense unbroken column, that seemed to have no end. There was no escape from this army on the march, for the way, lying over military bridges and between jealously guarded bastions, was single and undivisible, else Penelope, with swollen eyes and white, sad face, would gladly have escaped observation. Presently she was overtaken by a middle-aged workman, who unceremoniously nudged her elbow.

"Hallo! what, he's gone then? Well, you see what comes of marrying a sailor."

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Ames, is it," rejoined Penelope, who had turned round sharply at the brusque address.

But this was Tom's brother-in-law, the husband of his sister Mary, with whom the young couple had taken up their quarters. And William Ames was an easy-going, good-tempered man, whom Penelope rather liked, although, secretly, she despised him a little for giving way to his wife in everything. Now, between Mrs. Ames and Penelope there was very little love lost.

In former days, when Tom was a bachelor, in his sailor-like, free-hearted way he had been very generous to his sister and her household. Coming home from foreign service with three or four years' pay to draw, and finding his sister Mary a good deal behindhand and overburdened with a lot of young children, Tom had come to the rescue with his spare cash. The youngsters had all been re-clothed in the smartest sailor-suits, whose melancholy remains still clung about the youngest of the family, and the little shop, whose profits were supposed to eke out the wages of the dockyardsmen, was put on a more satisfactory footing.

Tom had no thought of marrying at this time; "a sailor's wife should be his ship," he used to say; besides, as a proud and

rather sensitive young fellow, he was not attracted by the young women who are to be found among the resorts of seamen. And then, one day, having taken a letter from his captain to the port-admiral, he had seen Penelope, who was the orphan daughter of an old quartermaster who had long served with Admiral Blake.

Now, Penelope had been brought up in the Admiral's family, a friend and companion rather than a mere servant, and Tom really thought that she was one of the ladies of the house when he handed her his despatch. But Penelope placed herself on a proper footing with him so prettily and gracefully, and was so kind and pleasant, that Tom fell over head and ears in love at this first interview; while so handsome and genteel was Tom in his smart dress, and with his dark, expressive eyes, that Penelope could think of nothing else but his good looks till she saw him again.

Very soon Penelope demurely apprised the Admiral that she was going to be married; upon which her master flew into a great rage. Of all ungrateful and thankless hussies he declared Penelope to be the worst. She had grown essential to his comfort, had come to know all his ways, and now, after all the trouble of bringing her up, she would abandon the family to marry a seaman. Lady Blake and the girls were more reasonable, but they were sadly grieved to lose a girl who could make and alter dresses so nicely, and was always useful without being presuming.

The Admiral did not relent; he could be generous enough to those immediately about him; but when it came to deserting the ship, as he termed it, he had no forgiveness for the culprit. In his position he might have helped the young couple by pushing Tom along the thorny road of promotion, or have got him some appointment that would keep him ashore. But no; he took no more notice of Penelope, and meeting her one day, soon after her marriage, he looked sternly over her head and passed on.

But in spite of all this Penelope had been happy enough, for it was so much to feel that she had somebody to care for her, somebody whose life was wrapped up in hers, for Tom was almost foolish in his adoration of his little wife. And they had a pleasant room all to themselves at Mrs. Ames's house—an upper room, from which they had a glimpse of the harbour and dockyards, and the broad river with its busy traffic. Tom had told her, in the

last days they were together, that he should picture her to himself sitting in that little room, and watching for the ships as they rounded the headland, and that one day she would see the Terrible poking her black nose round the corner, and would hurry off to the wharf to welcome him home. But in this matter Tom had reckoned without his sister, for as Penelope and Mr. Ames reached the little house in Trueblue Street—they were all little houses at Chatness, many of them wooden and weatherboarded, but too insignificant to be picturesque; well, behold over the door was a big card, "Lodgings to let with a full view of the sea."

"Hallo!" cried Mr. Ames, "Mary's been sharp!" And, indeed, on reaching her old room Penelope found all her things cleared away, and the room in that state of rigid discomfort which showed that it was prepared for visitors. And on the stairs was Sister Mary herself, ready to do battle, for it could never be said that she shrank from the combat. There was her least defect. But Penelope did not feel equal to the occasion, but terribly sad and lonely, and only anxious to hide herself somewhere to give way to her grief.

"Yes, Mrs. Brettle," began the other, "I've had your things put in the top room, seeing as I can't afford to stand out of my letting any longer for the best room."

Now, Tom's notion had been that, in consideration of the money his sister had received from him at various times, amounting to fifty pounds or so, she would keep that room for his wife till other arrangements could be made. And when Tom had suggested this to his sister, she had appeared to acquiesce. And now the moment that Tom was out of the way, this was how she treated her guest. For the upstairs room was a miserable garret under the tiles, reached by a step-ladder. However, Penelope gallantly climbed her ladder and hid herself in the little cock-loft, and did not appear any more to human eyes that day.

But next morning Penelope was able to face the situation. She had felt from the first that her position with the Ames family was quite untenable. It had cheered Tom's last moments on shore to be persuaded that his wife's immediate future was provided for. But with poor, struggling people like the Ames family, it was hardly likely that they would care to keep an unprofitable lodger, even to cancel a long-forgotten debt. And if Tom's fifty pounds

had ever been put into the business, it certainly was not there now. Indeed, the business seemed to Penelope to be little more than the ghost of one. When there was a customer in the shop, Mrs. Ames would be chasing her children. When these last were unable to go to school by reason of their ragged garments, "How can I mend their things when there is that shop always to be attended to?" Mrs. Ames would demand in an aggrieved manner.

And yet to set up for herself on the small monthly pittance that came from her husband's pay, Penelope felt would be a dangerous experiment. What kind of people would she be thrown amongst in her poverty among the cheap lodging-houses of a seaport town? Her innate delicacy of mind recoiled from such contact, and yet what better prospect was there before her? But, anyhow, the cock-loft with the accompaniment of Sister Mary's constant reproaches would soon be unendurable. And then what could Penelope do?

The day was fine, and to avoid Mrs. Ames's tongue and the deafening noise and quarrels of the children, Penelope made her way to the beach—there is a seashore at Chatness, a narrow strip between a fort and a sea-wall, where shells are sometimes picked up, that may possibly have been washed ashore from the ocean, or may be simply the shells of periwinkles cast overboard by steamboat excursionists. Anyhow, there is the beach, with its half-dozen bathing-machines, its row of benches, and its wooden shanty called the bazaar, which does a fitful trade in buckets and spades for small people. But beyond the little strip of beach, there is a long range of sandy dunes covered with wiry vegetation; and here the Naval Brigade had set up targets, and the sailors from the ships in port were marched down to practise with carbine or rifle.

The sound of firing in that direction attracted Penelope's attention, and she wandered on, hoping to see some of the blue-jackets, with whom she felt as among her own clan. She came upon the firing-party rather suddenly, the men lying down concealed by some low hillocks, and waiting for some adjustment of the targets; while the naval lieutenant in charge reclined indolently against some sand-bags screened off in a little nook where the targets were visible, but not the men below—while he smoked a cigarette and read a novel.

But next moment cigarette and novel were thrown aside.

"My dear old Penny!" cried the young officer, and in the enthusiasm of the moment he put his arm round the young woman's waist and kissed her.

"You should not do that, Mr. Paul," said Penelope with a glance of dignified reproach. "You are getting beyond such childish things now, you know."

But Paul Blake, the Admiral's son, be it known, and an old playfellow of Penelope's, did not take much notice of her new and dignified manner.

"My dear Penny," he cried, "the sight of you makes me young again. Come, let me be a child once more."

"Ah, Mr. Paul," rejoined Penelope, turning away from him, "if you knew what trouble I am in, you would not be so unfeeling."

Lieutenant Blake, seeing that his old friend was really in trouble, was serious in a moment. What had happened? Her husband gone away on active service? Oh, how he envied him! Here he was losing his time at home because his mother was too nervous to be left alone, for the Admiral had gone away that very day. He had obtained a command in the Mediterranean; but his wife had only permitted him to accept it on condition that Paul should be left her.

"But, oh," cried Paul, "if you would go back to her, Penny, I am sure she would not mind being left."

"Oh, I couldn't," said Penelope proudly, "after what the master said, and his never taking the least notice of me; and then I am sure he would be dreadfully angry."

"He need never know!" cried Paul. "Oh, come back to-night with me, Penelope dear, and you'll fill poor mother's heart with joy. You know how ill she has been, delirious at times, and then she would call out for you; and she was very good to you, Penny."

Yes, that was true; Lady Blake had been very good to her, Penelope acknowledged, and was more than three-parts persuaded to go back. Indeed, before the targets were arranged, and the seamen had begun to fire, she had promised to meet young Blake at the station, and go back with him to her old place. Only she must keep it from Tom, because he would be dreadfully hurt at the thought of his wife going into service again.

"Well, I am going to leave you, Mary,"

said Penelope when she got back to Mrs. Ames's house. "I can see you don't want me, and so I've made up my mind to earn my own living."

Mrs. Ames was a good deal put out at this intimation. Her brother would indeed be angry if he heard that his wife had been driven away from her home.

"Well," she rejoined tentatively, "you'll have fine tales to tell Tom about me, I suppose?"

"Not unless you want me to, Mary," replied Penelope, who here saw a capital chance of arranging matters as she wished. "I don't want to bother Tom with our falling out. Why should he know anything about it?"

"Ah, why!" said Mrs. Ames, who here saw a course open to her that could not possibly harm her, and might prove to her advantage. "I'm not such a scribe that I should be writing off to tell him this and the other."

And thus it was agreed between the two women that nothing at all should be written to Tom on the subject. But Mrs. Ames was very curious as to Penelope's future plans, about which Penelope gave her very little enlightenment. But that same afternoon Penelope drove off with all her belongings, and Mrs. Ames dispatched her eldest boy with instructions to keep his eye on Aunt Penelope till the train went off, but without letting her see him.

"And, mother," reported the boy on his return, "she was met by a young swell—an officer he looked like. And he was awfully kind to her; and he put her into the train, and went off by it himself, only he went first, and she went third."

"I expect that was a blind," said Mrs. Ames, repeating the story to her husband that night. But she was very well content to be relieved of her unprofitable inmate.

The Terrible had a boisterous run across the Bay of Biscay, cutting through the cold Atlantic billows, and then after basking in the sunshine for a day or two at Gibraltar, she ran on to Malta, where orders awaited her to join the squadron in Egyptian waters. At Malta Tom found a letter from his wife, not saying much about herself, except that she was well and happy, but with some loving words that sent Tom about his duties with a light heart. But after that he did not get a letter for nearly a month, while the Terrible was still lying at Alexandria, and something low-spirited in the tone of

the letter made Tom vaguely uneasy. All the voyage out Tom had mooned a good deal, and indulged in more sentiment than you might have expected. In his watches at night, as the moon shone splendidly over the placid Mediterranean, Tom had fancied he could see his little wife sitting at her window and watching the same moonbeams silvering the wide roadstead of Chatness, and thinking of him who was away over the wide sea. And now that there was a certain amount of liberty ashore, Tom hardly cared to take advantage of it. Messmates who had remembered Tom in other days, the laughing, reckless, impetuous seaman, declared that he was bewitched. And so he was—under the spell of a woman, and quite helpless in the matter. But the passion which had hitherto been a source of pure, unmixed delight, now began to torment him. How could he expect that this girl, young, pretty, and so much superior to him, and who had known him but a short time after all—how could he expect her to go on remembering him always, and keeping faithful to the memory? He had not the art to express all he felt in writing, but he sent his wife a homely, touching letter, begging her not to forget him, or to let her thoughts of him grow cold for want of some visible token of his love. And Penelope's next letter was written in a more cheerful strain. He was not to think any nonsense about her forgetting him. But as it cost money for postage, he was not to grumble if letters were few and far between.

Tom tried to believe that everything was as it should be; and then he had not much time for evil forebodings. All of a sudden there had been an access of activity both afloat and ashore; signals were constantly exchanged between the half-dozen men-of-war; boats went to and fro; stores were landed and embarked; and of all this work Tom had his full share, and perhaps more. Once or twice he had seen Admiral Blake, who was now on the station, but he did not suppose that the Admiral noticed him; if he did, he made no sign.

But after the Terrible had been lying at Alexandria for some months, with only an occasional short cruise to relieve the monotony of existence, one of her lieutenants was invalidated home, and the vacancy on her books was filled up by the appointment of Lieutenant Paul Blaka. Tom did not attach much importance to the event. At one time, indeed, during the period of his courtship of Penelope, Tom had been

madly jealous of Paul, on account of his easy, affectionate manner to Tom's sweet-heart. But all that had passed over; neither Penelope nor he were likely to have anything to do with the Blakes again, and Tom rather avoided the young officer, although the latter took every opportunity of showing a friendly disposition.

Then Tom's watch was changed, and he fell into Lieutenant Blake's, and the very first night they were on duty together, Blake sent for Tom to speak to him on the quarter-deck. Tom followed the messenger rather reluctantly. He thought that Mr. Blake intended to make some enquiries after Penelope, and Tom had received no letter for six weeks now, and was becoming horribly uneasy. But he did not intend to let Mr. Blake see anything of this. He would reply, to any enquiries, that Penelope was all right, and that he had heard from her by the last mail.

As it happened, however, Lieutenant Blake did not ask any questions. He seemed rather embarrassed, stammered and coloured, for, with the best intentions, Lieutenant Blake was puzzled what to say. He was forbidden to say that Penelope was with his mother, and yet he wanted to encourage Tom, whose gloomy, preoccupied looks he had taken notice of more than once.

"Oh, Brettie," said Blake at last, after an awkward pause, during which Tom stood silent and respectful in manner before his officer. "Ah, I saw your wife not long before I left home. She was looking very well—prettier than ever, I think—and she sent her love to you."

Tom received the information gloomily enough. How should his wife have come to have aught to say to one of the Blakes? he wondered. But he was not in a position to cross-examine his officer about the matter.

"Is there anything else, sir?" he asked coldly enough; and Blake, who was a generous young fellow, and knew that, as far as he and the majority of sailors were concerned, gloom of countenance generally proceeded from empty pockets, thought he would cheer Tom up a little.

"Well, yes, Brettie," said the lieutenant in reply to Tom's question, drawing his purse from his pocket; "she has sent you a little money, just a trifle—a couple of sovereigns."

Tom's face suddenly lighted up with a glare of rage, but he repressed his emotion with a strong effort.

"My wife has sent me money!" he

repeated slowly, in a constrained voice; "a trifle of a couple of sovereigns! Sovereigns are not a trifle to sailors and their honest wives. Why, sir, she keeps me without news of her for weeks, to save a few pence. There must be some mistake."

Lieutenant Blake saw that he had made a mistake, but did not mend matters in his efforts to explain that the money was a present Penelope had received, that she wished to share with her husband. Tom firmly refused to touch the money, put his hands behind him when the lieutenant tried to force it upon him, so that the sovereigns fell, and rolled about the deck.

Lieutenant Blake stamped with indignation, as he called one of the ship's boys to pick up the money; and he dismissed Tom with a haughty wave of the hand.

And yet, with all his jealous fears, Tom had, in his heart, no real suspicion of his wife. It was strange she had never mentioned meeting Lieutenant Blake. If he could only have had a reassuring, explanatory letter! But none came; not a scrap of paper or a line to tell him of Penelope's welfare. Tom was almost out of his mind with fear and suspense, and even thought of deserting and concealing himself on board some steamer bound for England, that he might satisfy himself as to what had happened to Penelope.

But at this juncture the Terrible was ordered into the Red Sea, after embarking a strong force of marines. It was expected there would be fighting, and the whole ship was in a buzz of pleased excitement. Tom felt he could not run away then. When the Terrible had disembarked her marines at Suakim, a certain number of seamen were called for to do duty on shore, and Tom eagerly volunteered to be of the number. But his captain would not let him go. Lieutenant Blake went in charge of the party; and presently news came to the ship of a big fight in the desert, in which the Arab hordes had been almost destroyed.

Tom was sadly disappointed to think that the fighting was all over now, and that probably the Terrible would go back to her dull, monotonous duty at Alexandria without a chance of seeing more service. But things turned out differently as it happened. For one day the captain sent for Tom, and told him that he, the captain, had been placed in command of a naval brigade to co-operate with the troops on shore; and that he wanted to take some of his best men. Tom would go, of course.

And it was at his captain's right hand that Tom marched across the hills towards Osman Digna's camp. And when the troops halted for the night, Tom shared the captain's frugal meal of biscuits and preserved meat as they lay sheltered on the ground, while the rattle of distant musketry sounded in their ears.

As for what might happen on the morrow, Tom felt utterly reckless and careless. It would be a mercy, he thought, if he were knocked on the head, and an end put to all the doubts and troubles that beset him. Blake lay near him, stretched on the same hard couch of Mother Earth; but the two did not exchange a word. "A sullen brute," was Blake's thought of Tom; while Tom, on his part, was full of dark suspicions of the lieutenant.

The night wore on without any striking incident, and then at the first blush of dawn the troops were under arms. There was a strange, overpowering excitement about the march, with horsemen galloping about, and everybody on the look-out for the enemy. As generally happens in such cases, they came at a moment when they were not quite expected. There was a shout from those in front, and then the open ground was covered with a mass of dark forms rushing upon them. It was difficult to tell what happened just then, but in the end Tom found himself in a crush and press of men, something like the crowd that is trying to get into the pit of a theatre—only in this case the crowd were digging into each other with spears, bayonets, butt-ends of rifles, cutlasses, or anything that came to hand in the moment. The sailors, however, were forced back by sheer pressure of numbers. Tom lost sight of his captain, who had been hitting out right and left at the savages with the instinct of a practised bruiser; and then he found himself lying on the ground, but unhurt, while in front of him were scattered groups, struggling and falling. On the ground, near one of the Gatling guns which the sailors had been driven from, lay a naval officer, apparently wounded and insensible, while a couple of Arabs, with their murderous spears, were making in his direction with the evident intention of putting an end to him. Tom sprang to his feet and rushed at the Arabs, dealing one of them a blow with his carbine that brought him to the ground. Next moment, Tom saw his captain by his side, who dealt the other savage a tremendous left-hander that stretched him senseless beside his

companion. And then Tom saw that the wounded officer was Lieutenant Blake.

"Catch hold of the other end of him," cried the captain, "and we'll run him into the square."

And Tom grasped the lieutenant by the upper part of his uniform, when a letter tumbled out of his pocket.

In all the turmoil and confusion of the time, the sight of that letter seemed to burn itself into Tom's brain, for there was Penelope's handwriting plainly to be read on the address, "Lieutenant Paul Blake, R.N."—that handwriting for a sight of which he had been hungering for so long.

"Look out, Tom!" cried the captain, seeing a rush of savages coming in their direction.

Tom let go the lieutenant's head and turned upon the foe.

"Come on, you beggars!" he cried, willing to die rather than live under such torture.

And next moment he was rolling on the ground, transfixed by a spear.

Tom was not killed, after all, but had a narrow shave for it. But although he did not die, neither did he get well. Fever came on, and the wound refused to heal. Tom had not strength to rally, and the doctors, to give him a chance, ordered him home, thinking the voyage would either kill or cure him. But it did neither. Tom was landed at Chatness and carried on a stretcher to the hospital, more dead than alive. None of his friends knew of his coming, so there was nobody to visit him. But before long it was found that Tom was a Chatness man, and a note was sent to Mrs. Ames, who lost no time in coming to see her brother.

All through that troubled time of pain and delirium, one tormenting trouble, which he could not define or bring to any form or shape, weighed upon him like an ugly nightmare. Tom had talked and raved incessantly about Penelope, sometimes adjuring her in the most loving terms, at others full of menace and reproach. But in his lucid moments he was altogether silent and morose, trying to fit things together in his fevered brain, and make out what was really the trouble that overwhelmed him.

But when Tom saw his sister sitting by his bedside he had the clue; everything came back to him in a moment.

"Where is she?" he cried, struggling to sit up. Mrs. Ames shook her head in a most dolorous manner.

"I really don't know nothing about her, Tom," was Mrs. Ames's raven-like strain. "The moment you was out of port she left me, and where she's been since I don't wish to know. She never came near me, not except once a month when she came to draw your pay. Then she'd look in as bold as brass—'Just come over for Tom's money,' she'd say. 'Oh, are you?' said I, just like that. I never said more than that—it wasn't my place, you know."

Tom groaned a sad, hopeless sigh.

"Well, it's all over with me, Mary. I sha'n't get over this."

Mrs. Ames sighed dolefully. She could not gainsay him. Tom looked so worn and grey, that she felt sure his last hour had come.

"You'll tell her," faltered Tom; "tell her I loved her to the last, and wouldn't have lived any longer if I could."

"Oh yes, I'll tell her," said Mrs. Ames. "But your bits of things, Tom—your kit, and all that, and what bit of money there might be due. You wouldn't like her to have that, dear?"

"Oh yes, I should," rejoined Tom; "she has had all of me—body and soul—and she may have that as well."

After that Tom fell into a deep sleep, and his sister stole gently away. She thought there would be no harm in having a little paper drawn up for him to sign, for he wouldn't in his calm senses think of leaving what he had to that woman.

When Tom woke again, he felt somehow revived and refreshed; his pillow was smooth and comfortable; there was a soft perfume of delicate flowers, and a cool, soft hand parted the locks on his forehead. Tom opened his eyes in a gentle delirium of delight. There sat Penelope by his side, looking brighter and prettier than ever, and with a look of love and pity on her face that seemed to Tom quite angelic.

Tom feebly opened his arms.

"One word," said Penelope, laying her face against his; "I have heard what your sister Mary has said of me. Do you believe it?"

"No," cried Tom fervently. "By Heaven, I don't!"

After that embrace, Tom's face clouded again.

"But you might have written to me, Penny," he whispered; "never a line nor a word."

"I did write to you, Tom," said Penelope, "two long letters, telling you all I was doing, for I would not keep you in the

dark any longer. But I sent them under cover to Lieutenant Blake to save postage."

Tom muttered something disrespectful about postage. Penelope laughed.

"Dear Tom," she said demurely, "you are getting quite your old self again."

"I shall never be that, Penny," said Tom. "No, Penny, I feel I am going to die, and I am glad of it. Yes, for I should never be fit for service again, and I should only drag you down into poverty. No, don't pray for me to get better, Penny; pray that I may die now, happy in your arms."

"Nonsense, Tom!" cried Penelope; "you're not going to die. The doctor told me just now that he was sure it was some trouble on your mind that was keeping you back; and now you have got me, Tom, you will be all right. And look here, even if you are not fit for service, we shall not starve. You say I'm stingy, Tom, about postages, and so on, but for whose sake is it, I should like to know. Now here's a little book, Tom, I've kept since you have been away. Every month, you see, here's a month's wages that I got from Lady Blake, and every month, too, your month's pay. And the two together, and with interest, what do they come to?—a little over fifty pounds, you see, and we can have our own little home, Tom."

Tom actually sat up in bed and shouted, "I shall get better now."

But here the hospital-orderly interfered, and bade Tom lie still, or he would fetch the assistant-surgeon to him.

However, there is no doubt that Tom did get better—in fact, recovered so completely that he was able to remain in the service, gaining promotion for his gallantry, and the rank of a warrant-officer. And Penelope has her pretty little cottage in the environs of Chatness, and lets lodgings in the summer-time to visitors; and anyone would be lucky who chanced to take up his quarters with her and her husband, even though the shore at Chatness is not unlimited, and the sandy dunes not particularly inviting.

AN EASTER VACATION.

By MARY SEYMOUR.

I.

It is probable that few sufferers from an accident could give any clear idea as to the exact nature of the misfortune which befell them. Certainly, Gilbert Drayton, when he was knocked down and run over in the

neighbourhood of the London Docks, was unconscious of anything but a sudden shock, which roused him from his reverie, and then robbed him of all power of thought before he had time to wonder as to its cause.

The driver of the van, who clambered off his perch with dismay and anxiety in his face, was quite unable to guess how the collision came about. Of one point only was he certain—he had not been asleep, a statement which the police received with an incredulity they did not consider it necessary to conceal. But protestations, explanations, and contemptuous silence were alike unheeded by the victim, around whose motionless form a crowd soon gathered.

A dim sensation of blue overhead and around him slowly crept in upon Gilbert's consciousness. He was swimming in the sea, which had closed over his head, and shut him in at a great depth. As he struggled to the surface, he gradually became aware that the blue of the ocean was broken here and there by patches of white, at which he gazed dreamily, until a sudden sharp pang aroused him to a full consciousness that he was looking at the blue-checked curtains and canopy of a bed.

"There! that is all right!" he heard; and before he could protest alike against the sentiment and the tone in which it was uttered, he became unconscious again, and nurse and surgeon were uninterrupted in their work and their sense of satisfaction.

As soon as Mr. Drayton recovered himself sufficiently to consider his position, two dominant ideas kept recurring to his mind, the first being that he had shown considerable folly in leaving the safe end of town merely to see off a friend who was sailing for Australia. The second thought, which was a more satisfactory one, and had even a flavour of self-congratulation about it, was that if he was fated to be laid up in an East End hospital, he could not have chosen a more convenient time than the Easter vacation, when everyone was out of London.

"Thank you, I want nobody," he had replied to the surgeon's offer of sending for a friend. "I have plenty to see and to interest me here. In fact, instead of apologising for having no private room you can offer me, you ought to congratulate me on the fact."

As may be imagined, it was some time

before the patient was able to make so long and so rational a speech. There were weary hours of pain when he lay in a half-stupor, and even more suffering nights when he moved his head half deliriously to and fro, intent on finding the square root of eighty-three, or constructing an island in the Mediterranean out of three unequal-sized pieces of stick.

He could never tell at what point of his recovery, whether in real delirium or in a broken dream, that he first began to associate ease from pain, and a pervading sense of happiness with the presence of the sister in charge of the ward.

At first he attributed his longing for her to a desire for a drink of water or a re-arrangement of his pillows; but as the fever left him and he could think clearly, he constructed a fanciful theory that she exercised a subtle mesmeric influence over him, and he used to long for her coming in order to test the existence of the power he suspected.

She was by no means the ideal nurse of fiction—a pale, fragile girl, with large dark eyes and delicate, wasted hands—on the contrary, Sister Mansell was a tall, well-grown woman of thirty, with a pair of rosy cheeks, which reminded her patients of the pleasant country, and a smile which made sick men and women feel as if life were something worth struggling for, after all. The grey gown fitted her badly, Gilbert soon noticed, and her cap was hideously ugly. He thought it all the uglier because it hid a quantity of brown hair, which was plaited closely away, as if its owner's only care was to put it out of sight. Plentiful as it was, Gilbert once saw two grey hairs on one side of the narrow parting as she bent down to pick up something he had dropped, and he took a malicious pleasure in noticing them and looking for them again. After all, she had not the secret of perpetual youth amidst the suffering and anguish around her. His mind revolted from the idea of such unfairness, and he consoled himself by thinking that she, too, would grow old, and that they two—he and she—would be equals some day. She was only five years his junior now, but he knew in his heart, as he watched her passing to and fro with her quick step and bright eyes, that no lapse of years could ever bring them to a level. It was a pleasure to see her move, and every day as he watched her he became convinced more firmly than before that there were deeper truths in mesmerism than he

had ever believed possible, for he was restless and miserable until she came, whilst her presence gave him calm and contentment.

But after a time he found the magic fail, for as he improved in health, and every day brought fresh cases, and too often serious ones, into the ward, the sister lingered longer and oftener by other beds than by his; and as he waited with all a sick man's impatience for her coming, he became more critical than before as to the fit of her dress and the set of her cap, although all the old sense of healing returned for a time when she stood by his side, and he could surreptitiously take hold of a fold of her grey gown.

There were about thirty beds in the ward—Gilbert counted them once, and then calculated to an exact fraction the portion of Sister Mansell's time that fell to his share. Like a usurer exacting his dues, he watched the minutes she gave him, and raged inwardly when she deprived him of his just amount. At last—it must be remembered that he was still very ill—he hit upon a happy expedient for detaining her; he obstinately refused to allow her to carry out the surgeon's directions. She looked at him a little anxiously to see whether he were feverish, laid her hand an instant on his pulse, and then finding the result of her investigations satisfactory, began to coax him to be good. But he would not be persuaded, possibly he could not be, for it is strange how soon in illness a scheme of action begun voluntarily passes beyond control; and, perceiving that he had reached this stage, she left him to attend to her other patients.

It only needed a few minutes of silence and want of opposition to convince him of the nature of his conduct, and when the sister returned, he not only submitted to her wishes, but apologised for the trouble he had caused her.

"Oh, it did not matter," she made reply; "only it seems a pity to waste any time."

Waste any time! He had not delayed her five minutes. Why, he knew dozens of men, and of women too, to whom minutes and hours were too often burdens which seemed intolerable. She had not intended to do more than utter the barest truism by her statement, but no sermon ever sunk into Gilbert's heart as did those simple words. What had he done with his time—with six-and-thirty years of life! That question recurred to him over

and over again as he lay silent and motionless during the long hours of convalescence. That absence of active wrongdoing, which constitutes the sole claim to a merciful judgment of some lives, seems to lose its potency when brought into contact with the active principle of good which animates others.

"I am afraid you must find these Sunday afternoons very tiresome," said Sister Mansell, coming up to him as she saw the puzzled, anxious look upon his face. He was only revolving the question of the difference between his life and hers, but she thought he was in pain.

He smiled for answer, hoping to detain her a little longer; he knew that she could only stay a minute, for the ward was full of the patients' friends, and the nurse in charge had to answer innumerable enquiries, to say nothing of keeping a careful watch upon the visitors, who, in a spirit of cruel kindness, would smuggle in all kinds of forbidden luxuries.

"No, indeed," he answered at last; "I have so much to see and to hear; perhaps the room is a little close, but there is a great deal of reality here."

She hardly understood him, for life had never been anything but real to her, but she was glad that he was contented. The situation did not seem a very happy one. On his left a woman was relating volubly to a convalescent how her youngest son had made her flesh creep by falling into the water-butt, whilst on his right a young wife was sitting as silent and almost as motionless as the figure on the bed which she was watching with eyes full of her unspoken anguish.

"Can one do anything to help?" asked Gilbert suddenly, remembering with a pang of remorse how often he had grudged the hours which Sister Mansell had given to his neighbour.

"Do you mean by giving money? Oh no," was the answer; "but I cannot help hoping still."

She left him and went up to the silent watcher. Gilbert could not hear what she said; but he could see the look on her face, which, reflected back from the other, seemed to brighten it like a ray of sunshine. It was as if Hope itself, in a grey gown and a large apron, had descended into the ward.

"She's a right good sort," said one of the convalescent patients, when, the visitors being gone, he hobbled to the side of Gilbert's bed; "and she's got pluck enough for anything. Why, there was a poor

crittur, mad from drink, got away from the nurse and policeman who was watching him upstairs—it must ha' been just before you come in—and he come screaming through the ward with a poker in his hand; it was two o'clock in the morning, and the night-nurse, she give one shriek and was off before you could say Jack Robinson, but the sister, she was in the ward just as soon, and she walked up to him as he stood in yonder corner a-muttering and a-cussing awful. She walked right up to him, spoke to him very gentle-like, and took the poker out of 'is 'and, and when the policeman came in, the poor crittur was as quiet as a lamb. I can tell you the bobby looked small."

The narrator laughed as he remembered the discomfiture of the policeman; possibly he had his own reasons for viewing the individual and the race with distrust. But Gilbert was not thinking of the speaker; everything he heard and saw of the sister made him wonder more and more whether she was an ordinary specimen of a class which he had never before met, or whether she was as distinct from all other members of her profession as she was from every woman he had ever known.

It was a perfect day of May, the sun was as warm and bright as if it were July, only out in the fields and on the river-reaches the trees and bushes were full of that sweet promise which July forgets, or only fulfils in part. In East London, only the heat of the sun and the chill of the wind mark the changes of the season, and St. Nicholas is not lucky enough to be a fashionable hospital patronised by royalty, and gay throughout the year with gifts of flowers.

"It is a lovely day, is it not?" said the sister as she paused by Gilbert for a few moments; he was nearly well, and did not need her for longer now. "It makes one think how lovely the wild hyacinths must be in the country."

It was the first semblance of a personal feeling she had ever expressed, and even in that she did not utter a wish. Gilbert thought with a pang how much joy those flowers, which were blooming round his country home, might bring to lives barren of colour and sweetness, and as soon as he was allowed paper and ink, he wrote home directions which were to be immediately carried out. When the basket arrived, he would not unpack it himself, but waiting for a spare moment of the sister's time, told her the contents were for her. He emphasised the pronoun, but he might

have spared himself the trouble, for she made them all—hyacinths, wood anemones, late primroses, golden cowslips—common property at once. The whole ward was bright and sweet with the woodland spoils, and everyone had a little special nosegay to admire—everyone except the sister.

"You have got none for yourself," said Gilbert with the privileged petulance of a sick man. "I want you to have one."

She gratified his whim, and fastened a bunch of flowers in her buttonhole, but next time he saw her they were gone. One of the servants had admired the nosegay, and the wearer had given it away at once. There are natures like that, which cannot have or know any sweet or precious thing without giving it away, careless of what they themselves may lose.

The last day of Gilbert's stay came; most people about him had wondered at the patience with which he had borne his detention, but he felt himself that the time had been all too short for him to learn half the lessons which might have made him a different man.

"And to-morrow you will be at the sea," said the sister, smiling kindly at him as he murmured some broken words of thanks. "Oh," with a great sigh, "how I wish they were all going!"

It was the only wish he had ever heard her express.

Two days later the secretary of St. Nicholas received a large donation to the funds of the hospital, and a cheque, the proceeds of which were to be employed in sending the inmates of the Mansell Ward to the seaside.

So the two lives met, touched, and parted.

II.

August was nearly over—an August which had been the hottest month of a hot summer. London was intolerable, so all the world agreed, but Gilbert was surprised to see how many people were not only enduring but enjoying London. The sun had already set, and in the twilight men and women were lounging in their doorways, or chatting in the streets, whilst energetic children were dancing to the strains of a barrel-organ. There was a faint, half-baked odour from the walls of the houses, varied not agreeably by the smell of fried fish. Two small urchins were revelling in the delights of watching a woman cutting ham at a cook-shop, but

they were soon aroused by Gilbert's enquiry, for St. Nicholas.

"I can show it yer," cried the smallest. "You mean the ospital? I've seen ladies holding little kids in red shirts at the winder."

He proved a faithful guide, and led Gilbert to the iron gates, where a stern porter enquired his business as closely as if the wards of St. Nicholas were a second Paradise, from which Mr. Drayton had been expelled, and to which he desired re-admittance.

Whilst he was speaking a female figure glided in at the gate. In the dim twilight, with her long cloak and dark veil, the sister looked almost ghost-like, but her voice was as cheerful as of yore:

"Mr. Drayton, have you come back to see us? That is good of you. Come in with me now."

He did not answer, for he could not speak. Quite suddenly, at the sound of her voice and the touch of her hand, all his mysterious longing to get back to London, the irresistible influence which had led him on the evening of his arrival to the East End and to St. Nicholas, were clear to him. He followed her with a dim sense of rebellion against the injustice which during three months—months when he had been wearying for her presence and thinking of her hourly—had made her work on unconscious of his feelings, forgetful of his very existence.

She led him through the long corridor and into her little room beside the ward. Then, when she had lighted a candle, she turned and looked at him for the first time. Her quick survey told her all she needed to know: he was well, walked and moved freely, and looked happy and contented.

"That is good," she said, unconscious of his rebellion against the calmness of her look and words. "It is a great comfort to see you are really well again. Now sit down and tell me what you are doing."

He obeyed her and spoke easily of those superficial subjects which a man of the world can always discuss without putting strain on brain or heart, and while he spoke he looked at her with enquiring eyes, wondering whether or not his mind, now that he was strong and healthy again, could criticise her appearance coolly.

She was not beautiful—he resented the fact hotly, or rather he resented the world's probable statement of the fact—but surely never before had any face mirrored a soul so perfect and so serene.

"You are not changed," he said abruptly in the midst of an account he was giving of his adventures in Scotland, "and yet I suppose you have been working as hard as ever."

"Oh yes," she answered, smiling, quite unconscious of the stab she gave him by her speech; "my life has been just the same since you left as it was when you were here; there has been no change."

"And my next-door neighbour," he asked, speaking eagerly to cover his disappointment, "is he recovered now?"

"Ford? Oh, I am very glad you remember him. I wish you would see him; he is quite wonderful. Mr. Mackenzie is very proud of him, and his case has been in all the papers. We hope to send him to the seaside in a month. Oh, by the way," with a sudden light which made her eyes beautiful, "they never told me, but I could not help guessing that we owe the Mansell convalescent fund to you. We do, don't we? Ah, I thought so! I wish I could tell you how grateful we are."

He would have told her if he dared that every possession he had was hers, and that they were dear to him only because he could so lay them at her feet; but such words do not come lightly to the lips of a man nearly forty years of age. Besides, if he were to speak them, what could such speech do but startle and pain one whose life was complete without him, and had need neither of his help nor his love?

"Are you going?" she said, as he arose after a little further talk; "then I will show you the way to the station. I have to leave a parcel at the post-office—I forgot to take it with me when I went out, and that brought me back quickly. I am glad I came, or I should have missed you."

They walked side by side down the Whitechapel Road, which not even the imagination of a lover could convert into a paradise. Flaring gas-lamps shining on groups of shabby, tired men and women, busy about their Saturday night's marketing, cannot compare with the moonlight sleeping on a bank of violets; and yet by the alchemy of a true love, Gilbert managed to convert these surroundings into fresh reasons for devotion. Empty, barren, miserable, were many of these lives, but how much harder would the burden have been to some but for the woman at his side!

"May I come back and see you again?"

"Indeed, I shall be very glad. Few of our patients come back twice to see us—"

one, of course, do—but most, after one visit, never return.”

“I am sorry to be one of so ungrateful a class.”

“Oh,” she made answer hurriedly, “you must not say that. I cannot bear to hear that word. I have never found such a thing as ingratitude, but I have often, very often, been oppressed by a thankfulness I had done nothing to deserve.”

Her voice dropped a little; certain tender memories filled her eyes with happy tears; and then she went on in her usual voice:

“Besides, you must remember that life is very busy for most of our patients, and old suffering and old memories get pushed on one side by the pressing needs of every day, and it is just as well. A fresh generation of sick people is always entering our wards—imagine what a crowd we should have if, added to these, we had all our old patients coming to see us!”

“Does that mean that I must not come?” she asked, half smiling—but only half, for his heart was profoundly sad.

“Nothing of the kind; you are more than a patient. I can never forget,” for the moment her voice thrilled him with a wild sense of joy, as he imagined which of the many happy hours, sacred to him, she would recall; “I can never forget how much some of them owe to you.”

If his castle fell with a sudden crash, it did not bury his dearest hopes in the ruins; he had never fancied that she loved him, but had only rejoiced in loving her—for long unconsciously.

“Oh yes, you must come back soon; there are very many who will be glad to see you, for you are an object of interest even to those who did not know you. The history of your accident and stay with us has become a tradition.”

“I shall come back again,” he said, trying to speak lightly, “if only to show you that some of your patients can never forget you. Are you going into this post-office? May I wait and see you home afterwards? It is very nearly dark.”

She shook her head and laughed.

“If it were quite dark there would be no occasion for you to take the trouble. People about here are very good-natured. Why, last winter, the cabman driving me some late one foggy night lost his way; I was afraid he was not quite sober, so as I was a little nervous, I put my head out of window, and asked a man standing near if he knew the way to St. Nicholas. Do you now that the man led the cab-horse all

the way to the hospital-gates, and never waited even to be thanked? His little girl had been in the children’s ward, he told me, and that was the reason why he saw me safe home. You must not—indeed, you must not think that my patients are ungrateful. I suppose here, as in all parts of the world, one might find some few who remembered only the unkindnesses and forgot the acts of kindness shown them; but here, as elsewhere, it would be the few and not the many who did so.”

She paused a little, surprised at her own eloquence; the words had hurried to her lips almost in her own despite, and when she spoke again it was in a different tone and with an altered manner:

“There, I must leave you. Thank you for coming back to see us. I do not know anything pleasanter than to see those who have been ill and helpless, walking about easily, erect, and happy.”

Gilbert did not protest that a man may be nearer happiness when he is a crippled, bedridden invalid, than when he stands strong and upright, but alone.

He only bade her good-bye, for although he was learning to understand her language, he knew that she had no key by which to interpret his.

III.

As may be guessed, Gilbert did not stay long in London after his pilgrimage to the East, and he hurried away upon a round of visits, and found each house more wearisome than the last, each circle of acquaintances more disappointingly shallow.

“You look bored, Mr. Drayton,” said an old friend to him one evening, “and it is not polite of you to show your feelings so plainly.”

“I am trying to cultivate a rustic savagery. I feel as if a little honest display of some real feeling, no matter what, would do everyone here good.”

“Suppose you choose some other feeling for display then,” she answered quickly. “Love, hate, anger, and jealousy are each and all more interesting than ennui.”

“Each of these feelings is already appropriated by some actor who mimics the reality more or less closely. What I want to reach is not the imitation of feeling, but the reality.”

“And by what right,” she said, closing her fan, and looking at him with a pair of intent, dark eyes, “do you conclude that all feeling is absent from people, who, for a few hours every day, agree to avoid dis-

plays of emotion? I am afraid you are a shallow observer, after all, Mr. Drayton, if you do not understand the depths of suffering and joy concealed under a calm or even a frivolous exterior."

"I dare say you are right," he replied with unwonted meekness. "But I was thinking of a life—of lives where there are no concealments and no pretences."

He could not rest until he was back again in that purer air, and one day in November found him again at the hospital-gate demanding admission. This time no silent, veiled figure glided through the twilight to his side; on the contrary, he had to make his way alone through the gas-lit passages, and up stone steps to the ward. When he came to the door he paused, his heart beating fast as it had not done for years; and he smiled at his own excitement as those past youth are apt to do whilst they watch and analyse their own feelings. He did not wait long before opening the door, and then he stood watching the familiar beds, the long tables decorated with a large bunch of chrysanthemums—his gardener had orders to keep the ward supplied with flowers—and the staff of nurses moving quietly about their work. There was no need for him to look closely, he knew by instinct, or by observation so quick as to seem intuition, that the sister was not one of them, but before he could turn to the door of the sister's room, a sudden, sharp voice startled him.

"What are you doing here?" exclaimed a short, bustling little woman in a sister's dress, who had bounded out of her room and asked her question without giving Gilbert time to become aware of her entry. "You have no business here, and must go away again."

"I beg your pardon, but I came here to see Sister Mansell."

"I am Sister Mansell," said the lady severely, with her heart, however, softened by Gilbert's manner and courteous tones, "and I don't know you."

Gilbert's sense of the ridiculous prevented him from expressing the most conventional regret at the loss he had sustained from the fact, and he limited himself to explaining the reason of his coming, and the object of his search. Even whilst he spoke he realised with a sudden heart-sickness how much might happen in three months, and how even perfect health might not protect its possessor against the fatigues and dangers of hospital-nursing.

"Sister Mansell! Oh, she is moved. She is down in the children's ward. Go along the corridor, down two flights of stairs, and then ask your way."

The gas was lighted in the children's ward, and the sister was superintending the children's tea. Some of them were in blissful enjoyment, some of them in eager anticipation, of their bread-and-butter. Some few were lying still in that patient silence which goes deeper to the watcher's heart than any moan of pain.

"Mr. Drayton, I am glad to see you." She put down the little convalescent she had in her arms, and held out her hand; the child clung shyly to the skirts of her gown as if unwilling to let her go. "How good it is of you to come and see us all! Popsy must be a good girl," she went on to the little child as she sat her in a high chair at the table, "and nurse will give her her tea. Now, Mr. Drayton, will you come into my room for a little; I have a few minutes to spare."

They were alone together for some moments before either spoke. Free as the sister was from all trace of self-consciousness, the silence embarrassed her a little, and she began to speak quickly.

"You see, I have moved my quarters, and you are the first of my old patients to find me out. I like this ward best of all, and it was quite a surprise to me when I was allowed to come back to it."

Still he said nothing. A faint suspicion, which the woman would not admit, forced its way into her mind as she looked at him, and saw his eyes earnest and resolute as her own.

"Did you have any difficulty in finding the ward?" she asked, in order to say something, and to force him to answer her.

"Yes, I have come back," he replied, with all the longing of the past months lending tenderness to his tones, hoarse with emotion. "I have come back to you because I cannot stay away."

She put up her hand suddenly.

"I hear someone calling me; I must go." Then she paused, her hand upon the door, and recovered her usual composure, her training helping her to subdue all signs of emotion. "Perhaps you would like to come round the ward with me."

If she had hoped to check his feeling for her by showing him how completely she was a nurse, and nothing more—and some such idea was in her mind—she failed as utterly as she deserved to do. For a man who loved her could have found no

more exquisite pleasure than he enjoyed in seeing the smiling faces grow happier, and the little sad drawn ones lose their look of pain, as she stopped by each bedside to smooth the children's hair and tell him some little story about the occupant. By one bed a policeman was sitting.

"That is an accident," she whispered. "The father has been here some time."

She went up to the cot. The man rose respectfully, and saluted. It would have needed a heart of stone not to be touched by the pathos of his stiff, military movement, contrasted with the quivering lips which could not form the question he strove to utter. Gilbert turned away his head, but the sister spoke with tones even more gentle than usual :

"See how well he is sleeping! He does not suffer now."

The father tried to thank her, but still the words would not come; only he looked at her, and, meeting that look, with its depth of anguish and gratitude, the sister could hardly force herself to give the smile of encouragement which was sometimes the hardest part of her duty.

"Will he get well?" asked Gilbert, as soon as they were alone again, and he had overcome his own inability to speak.

The sister shook her head.

"We must always hope whilst there is life; children rally wonderfully, and if we gave way we could not do our work."

"It must be very hard for you sometimes to see them die."

"Oh no," she made answer simply. "The hard thing sometimes is to see them live. I don't mean in a case like this, but where the children's parents are little better than thieves, or are even worse, you cannot tell how gladly one sees the little innocent ones shut their eyes upon a world which seems for them hopelessly full of sin."

"But when you love them it must be very hard to part with them."

"We have not much time for loving people here," she made answer with a smile; "we have too much to do for them."

She spoke the word simply, and without apparent intention; but when he looked at her, he could see her cheeks had grown a little paler, and her eyes had drooped upon the ground.

"But sometimes," he answered very slowly, and in broken tones, "the best thing you can do for them is to love them."

She did not contradict him. She sat

very still, and gave no sign either of assent or disagreement.

"Agatha," he went on in feverish haste, while even in her own pain she wondered how he had found out her name, "you know why I have come back to you. Are you going to send me away again?"

He stretched out his arms appealingly across the little table that divided them, careless that as he did so he upset a little basket of bandages, which rolled hither and thither across the floor. At the noise she looked up, and her eyes were wet with tears.

"I am afraid I must," she answered.

At her words his head fell forward upon his arms, and they sat silent together for some time, his face hidden, whilst the tears were rolling down her cheeks. Suddenly, with an effort, she set herself to collect the rolls of bandages, and to put them back neatly in their place. The occupation and movement gave her back her self-control, and touching him lightly upon the arm, she said, much as she had spoken to him in former days, when he was unreasonable and fretful from pain :

"I am deeply sorry to have grieved you. I never meant to do it. I am afraid I was selfish and self-absorbed, one is apt to grow so here; but you must try and forgive me for the harm I have done you." Then, as he did not answer, she went on: "I hope you will soon forget it. To people of our age," and she smiled a little, "life has so many other interests than are involved in—love."

The last word came out unwillingly. At the sound of it he looked up, his face pale and his brows drawn together.

"I should have said that myself a few months ago," he answered in a voice destitute of tone and emotion. "And if it were only love, I should get over it this time, I suppose, as men have done before; but I want you, Agatha, not only because I love you, but because your life might make mine better."

Something in his speech hurt her. She did not stop to think what it was that pained her, for she would have been unwilling to acknowledge the truth, and yet, woman like, she was wounded at the idea that he could "get over" his love for her, or, perhaps, rather that he should speak as one who had already laid aside other and earlier loves.

"Oh, don't say that!" she answered hurriedly. "So many people speak as if our life here was an ideal one, free from

all petty meannesses, and all small interests. Here, as everywhere, we give way to our worst feelings sometimes; here, as everywhere, there are temptations which it is difficult to resist. The life is no nobler with us than it is outside."

"I was not thinking of the life," he answered, "but of what you make of it, and how much you might do with mine. Still," in a firmer tone, "if it is not to be, do not let your last memory of me be a painful one. Agatha," taking both her hands, "I owe you more than I can ever tell you, or ever hope to pay. Look at me once, dear, and tell me that you will never think I regret what has happened. I shall try and be worthy of having loved you."

It was her tears only which fell when he stooped and kissed the hands that lay in his, and they fell still when he had left her alone.

IV.

No one observed any change in the sister for two or three days after Gilbert's visit, but about the end of the week the matron noticed how pale and worn-out she looked.

"I think I should like to go away for a little change," Agatha said, on being questioned. "I feel overworked."

It was the first time she had ever uttered such a confession, and it startled those who heard it, for it was spoken with a tremulous lip and moistened eye.

"You must go down to the country; rest and quiet will soon put you right again."

All Agatha had wished for was time to think, but when she found herself back in the country village where she had been born, the November days, short as they were, were all too long for her. She paced up and down the little garden of the house where she was lodging, going over the past again and again, and always with the same feeling of doubt, which grew into despair. Had she wronged the man who loved her? Could she have done anything but send him back without the gift he craved, when he demanded it so suddenly and so unexpectedly? She asked herself these questions so often, that it was inevitable that she should answer them in different ways, according to her mood. At last her strong common-sense came to her aid; she paused in her restless pacing to and fro.

"It is all over now; I can do nothing in

the matter, and I will not think of it again," so she summed up her conclusion. Four hours later she was back at her post, and no one had occasion to remark upon any change in her appearance. The work quieted her, but it cost her an effort she had never known before. She blamed herself for neglecting her duties, and spurred herself on to further exertions; only to find the strain heavier, and herself less able to endure it. At last, greatly to her own surprise, she sat down in her room, laid her head upon the table where Gilbert had hidden his face, and fainted quietly away. She was very apologetic for her conduct when she recovered consciousness, but she was unable to combat the decision that she must take a long rest, even though she foresaw the mental conflict which lay before her in the long idle hours of convalescence.

"I should not like to die before I have seen him again," she thought to herself in the first dreamy days of enforced quiet; but another and nobler motive woke into life with her returning strength: "I must try and live so as to be worthy of his high thought of me."

Gilbert, meantime, was fighting his own battle far away from her, and was by no means as victorious as he fancied himself. Often he imagined that he had trampled out memories, which mocked him by rising again with renewed life; but the memories he longed to destroy were the memories of certain hopes he had cherished, and were not any reminiscences of the woman he had loved. Every word she had spoken, every smile he had caught, every look of approval, were sacred; to her he owed every higher aspiration of his life, and he looked back upon the time they had passed together as the holiest season he had ever spent—as the period of self-dedication which should later on bear fruit. But he would never again trouble her calm by any word or look of his; there was no work he undertook, no help he gave, without some reference in his mind to her who had touched his spirit to finer issues. Yet he was resolved that he would not turn his footsteps to St. Nicholas until he could say to her: "See, the pain is over; but the joy of having once loved you will remain with me always."

It was summer again, grey, cloudy June, with little brightness or gladness in its leaden skies and cold winds; inside the children's ward, however, there was warmth and comfort—it was three o'clock, and the

little ones were taking their afternoon sleep, whilst one of the nurses was busy with her needlework. There was a murmur of voices from the sister's room, although the closed door shut in the sound of distinct words. The sister had visitors—a man and his wife, the man being no other than the John Ford who had lain so long motionless in the bed next Gilbert's.

The visit was not a great success, for after the sister had enquired after her old patient's health, and heard a little about his work and his children, conversation continued in a disconnected way, broken by frequent pauses. At last the couple rose to go, and when they had both shaken hands with their hostess, the wife said in an abrupt way, as if a sudden thought had struck her, and without betraying that these, her parting words, had been the main object of her visit:

"Oh, by-the-bye, sister, I wonder if you'd like this?" and as she spoke she pulled out of her pocket a photograph upon glass. "I waited to have it took until he should get back his looks again."

The picture was a cheap one in a tawdry frame, but it was easy to see that shillings were very scarce with those who had spared one for this little gift.

"I should like you to keep it," said the man gruffly, feeling it his duty to support his wife, and yet distrusting useless words, "just to show you didn't think I could ever forget."

"Thank you very much," said the sister with a smile as bright as of old. "I think it is an excellent likeness."

"His hair's grown again," said the wife eagerly; "I arranged it so as to hide the scar." As she spoke her voice trembled, and she put her hand lovingly on her husband's head—he had not risen from his seat. "It hardly shows at all." Then with a burst of genuine though noisy emotion: "If it had not been for you, the scar, and the hair, and the head, would have been deep down under the earth by now."

Her husband quieted her, and led her out of the room, but she ran back again to kiss the sister's hands, and to tell her that there never, never was so good a man as the one whose life she owed to St. Nicholas and to the woman whom she blessed from the bottom of her heart.

It was natural that the thought of Gilbert should recur to Agatha as soon as she was again alone, for he and Ford had been neighbours, and, besides, there had never been an expression of grateful feeling from her patients that the sister had not desired his presence to hear the words and to recognise the truth of what she had once told him of the deep and unmerited gratitude she had found on all sides.

But though he was in her thoughts, it was rather as a memory of the past than as one belonging to her present life, and when she looked up and saw him in the doorway, she started as if some sick man had risen from his bed of death, and stood before her.

For an instant they gazed at one another in solemn silence; when Agatha spoke, her tone was very low, but hurried and discomposed:

"I thought you never would come back again."

Gilbert Drayton's nature had not been a remarkable one, but this woman had brought out all that was highest and most generous in him. With a self-conquest which cost him more than any other effort of his life, he asked very quietly:

"Do you mean all that your words seem to say, or shall I go away again?"

She put out her hand to retain him, and he knew the truth, but there was none of the flush and joy of triumphant love about either of them. Both were very pale, as those who look for the first time on a terrible mystery.

Then Gilbert took her hand and knelt down before her, not in a lover's ecstasy, but in silent thankfulness for the best and most beautiful gift of his life.

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Howells

IN LUCK AT LAST.

By WALTER BESANT,

AUTHOR OF

"ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN," "THE REVOLT OF MAN," "LET NOTHING YOU DISMAY;"

AND JOINT AUTHOR OF

"READY-MONEY MORTIBOY," "THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY," "THE CHAPLAIN OF THE FLEET," "OVRE THE SEA WITH THE SAILOR," "WHEN THE SHIP COMES HOME," "THE CAPTAINS' ROOM," ETC., ETC.

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IN LUCK AT LAST.

CHAPTER I. WITHIN THREE WEEKS.

If everyone were allowed beforehand to choose and select for himself the most pleasant method of performing this earthly pilgrimage, there would be, I have always thought, an immediate run upon that way of getting to the Delectable Mountains which is known as the Craft and Mystery of Second-hand Bookselling. If, further, one were allowed to select and arrange the minor details—such, for instance, as the "pitch" and the character of the shop, it would seem desirable that, as regards the latter, the kind of bookselling should be neither too lofty nor too mean—that is to say, that one's ambition would not aspire to a great collector's establishment, such as one or two we might name in Piccadilly, the Haymarket, or New Bond Street: these should be left to those who greatly dare and are prepared to play the games of Speculation and of Patience; nor, on the other hand, would one choose an open cart at the beginning of the Whitechapel Road, or one of the shops in Seven Dials, whose stock-in-trade consists wholly of three or four boxes outside the door filled with odd volumes at twopence apiece. As for "pitch" or situation, one would wish it to be somewhat retired, but not too much; one would not, for instance, willingly be thrown away in Hoxton, nor would one languish in the obscurity of Kentish Town; a second-hand bookseller must not be so far removed

from the haunts of men as to place him practically beyond the reach of the collector; nor, on the other hand, should he be planted in a busy thoroughfare—the noise of many vehicles, the hurry of quick footsteps, the swift current of anxious humanity are out of harmony with the atmosphere of a second-hand bookshop. Some suggestion of external repose is absolutely necessary; there must be some stillness in the air; yet the thing itself belongs essentially to the city—no one can imagine a second-hand bookshop beside green fields—so that there should be some murmur and perceptible hum of mankind always present in the ear. Thus there are half-a-dozen bookshops in King William Street, Strand, which seem to enjoy every possible advantage of position, for they are in the very heart of London, but yet are not exposed to the full noise and tumult of that overflowing tide which surges round Charing Cross. Again, there are streets north of Holborn and Oxford Street most pleasantly situated for the second-hand bookseller, and there are streets where he ought not to be, where he has no business, and where his presence jars. Could we, for instance, endure to see the shop of a second-hand bookseller established in Cheapside?

Perhaps, however, the most delightful spot in all London for a second-hand bookshop is that occupied by Emblem's in the King's Road, Chelsea.

It stands at the lower end of the road.

where one begins to realise and thoroughly feel the influences of that ancient and lordly suburb. At this end of the road there are rows of houses with old-fashioned balconies; right and left of it there are streets which in the summer and early autumn are green, yellow, red, and golden with their masses of creepers; squares which look as if, with the people living in them, they must belong to the year eighteen hundred; neither a day before nor a day after; they lie open to the road, with their gardens full of trees. Cheyne Walk and the old church, with its red-brick tower, and the new Embankment, are all so close that they seem part and parcel of the King's Road. The great Hospital is within five minutes' walk, and sometimes the honest veterans themselves may be seen wandering in the road. The air is heavy with associations and memories. You can actually smell the fragrance of the new-made Chelsea buns, fresh from the oven, just as you would a hundred years ago. You may sit with dainty damsels, all hoops and furbelows, eating custards at the Bun-house; you may wander among the rare plants of the Botanic Gardens. The old great houses rise, shadowy and magnificent, above the modern terraces; Don Saltero's Coffee-house yet opens its hospitable doors; Sir Thomas More meditates again on Cheyne Walk; at dead of night the ghosts of ancient minuet tunes may be heard from the Rotunda of Ranelagh Gardens, though the new barracks stand upon its site; and along the modern streets you may fancy that if you saw the ladies with their hoop petticoats, and the gentlemen with their wigs and their three-cornered hats and swords, you would not be in the least astonished.

Emblem's is one of two or three shops which stand together, but it differs from its neighbours in many important particulars. For it has no plate-glass, as the others have; nor does it stand like them with open doors; nor does it flare away gas at night; nor is it bright with gilding and fresh paint; nor does it seek to attract notice by posters and bills. On the contrary, it retains the old, small, and unpretending panes of glass which it has always had; in the evening it is dimly lighted, and it closes early; its door is always shut, and although the name over the shop is dingy, one feels that a coat of paint, while it would certainly freshen up the place, would take something from its character. For a second-hand bookseller who respects him-

self must present an exterior which has something of faded splendour, of worn paint and shabbiness. Within the shop, books line the walls and cumber the floor. There are an outer and an inner shop; in the former a small table stands among the books, at which Mr. James, the Assistant, is always at work cataloguing, when he is not tying up parcels; sometimes even with gum and paste repairing the slighter ravages of time—foxed bindings and close-cut margins no man can repair. In the latter, which is Mr. Emblem's sanctum, there are chairs and a table, also covered with books, a writing-desk, a small safe, and a glass case, wherein are secured the more costly books in stock. Emblem's, as must be confessed, is no longer quite what it was in former days; twenty, thirty, or forty years ago that glass case was filled with precious treasures. In those days, if a man wanted a book of county history, or of genealogy, or of heraldry, he knew where was his best chance of finding it, for Emblem's, in its prime and heyday, had its speciality. Other books treating on more frivolous subjects, such as science, belles lettres, Art, or politics, he would consider, buy, and sell again; but he took little pride in them. Collectors of county histories, however, and genealogy-hunters and their kind, knew that at Emblem's, where they would be most likely to get what they wanted, they would have to pay the market price for it.

There is no patience like the patience of a book-collector; there is no such industry given to any work comparable with the thoughtful and anxious industry with which he peruses the latest catalogues; there is no care like unto that which rends his mind before the day of auction or while he is still trying to pick up a bargain; there are no eyes so sharp as those which pry into the contents of a box full of old books, tumbled together, at sixpence apiece. The bookseller himself partakes of the noble enthusiasm of the collector; he is himself a collector, though he sells his collection; like the amateur, the professional moves heaven and earth to get a bargain; like him, he rejoices as much over a book which has been picked up below its price, as over a lost sheep which has returned into the fold. But Emblem's is now old, and Emblem's shop is no longer what it was to the collector of the last generation.

It was an afternoon in late September, and in this very year of grace, eighteen

hundred and eighty-four. The day was as sunny and warm as any of the days of its predecessor Augustus the Gorgeous, but yet there was an autumnal feeling in the air which made itself felt even in streets where there were no red and yellow Virginia creepers, no square gardens with long trails of mignonette and banks of flowering nasturtiums. In fact, you cannot anywhere escape the autumnal feeling, which begins about the middle of September. It makes old people think with sadness that the grasshopper is a burden in the land, and that the almond-tree is about to flourish; but the young it fills with a vinous and intoxicated rejoicing, as if the time of feasting, fruits, harvests, and young wine, strong and fruity, was upon the world. It made Mr. James—his surname has never been ascertained, but man and boy, Mr. James has been at Emblem's for twenty-five years and more—leave his table where he was preparing the forthcoming catalogue, and go to the open door, where he wasted a good minute and a half in gazing up at the clear sky and down the sunny street. Then he stretched his arms and returned to his work, impelled by the sense of duty rather than by the scourge of necessity, because there was no hurry about the catalogue and most of the books in it were rubbish, and at that season of the year few customers could be expected, and there were no parcels to tie up and send out. He went back to his work, therefore, but he left the door partly open in order to enjoy the sight of the warm sunshine. Now for Emblem's to have its door open, was much as if Mr. Emblem himself should so far forget his self-respect as to sit in his shirt-sleeves. The shop had been rather dark, the window being full of books, but now through the open door there poured a little stream of sunshine, reflected from some far-off window. It fell upon a row of old eighteenth century volumes, bound in dark and rusty leather, and did so light up and glorify the dingy bindings and faded gold, that they seemed fresh from the binder's hands, and just ready for the noble purchaser, long since dead and gone, whose book plate they bore. Some of this golden stream fell also upon the head of the Assistant—it was a red head, with fiery red eyes, red eyebrows, bristly and thick, and sharp thin features to match—and it gave him the look of one who is dragged unwillingly into the sunlight. However, Mr. James took no notice of the sunshine, and went

on with his cataloguing almost as if he liked that kind of work. There are many people who seem to like dull work, and they would not be a bit more unhappy if they were made to take the place of Sisyphus, or transformed into the damsels who are condemned to toil continually at the weary work of pouring water into a sieve. Perhaps Sisyphus does not so much mind the continual going up and down hill. "After all," he might say, "this is better than the lot of poor Ixion. At all events, I have got my limbs free." Ixion, on the other hand, no doubt, is full of pity for his poor friend Sisyphus. "I, at least," he says, "have no work to do. And the rapid motion of the wheel is in sultry weather sometimes pleasant."

Behind the shop, where had been originally the "back parlour," in the days when every genteel house in Chelsea had both its front and back parlour—the latter for sitting and living in, the former for the reception of company—sat this afternoon the proprietor, the man whose name had stood above the shop for fifty years, the original and only Emblem. He was—nay, he is—for you may still find him in his place, and may make his acquaintance over a county history any day in the King's Road—he is an old man now, advanced in the seventies, who was born before the battle of Waterloo was fought, and can remember Chelsea when it was full of veterans wounded in battles fought long before the Corsican Attila was let loose upon the world. His face wears the peaceful and wise expression which belongs peculiarly to his profession. Other callings make a man look peaceful, but not all other callings make him look wise. Mr. Emblem was born by nature of a calm temperament—otherwise he would not have been happy in his business; a smile lies generally upon his lips, and his eyes are soft and benign; his hair is white, and his face, once ruddy, is pale, yet not shrunk and seamed with furrows as happens to so many old men, but round and firm; like his chin and lips it is clean shaven; he wears a black coat extraordinarily shiny in the sleeve, and a black silk stock just as he used to wear in the thirties when he was young, and something of a dandy, and would show himself on a Saturday evening in the pit of Drury Lane; and the stock is fastened behind with a silver buckle. He is, in fact, a delightful old gentleman to look at and pleasant to converse with, and on his brow everyone who

can read may see, visibly stamped, the seal of a harmless and honest life. At the contemplation of such a man, one's opinion of humanity is sensibly raised, and even house-agents, plumbers, and suburban builders, feel that, after all, virtue may bring with it some reward.

The quiet and warmth of the afternoon, unbroken to his accustomed ear, as it would be to a stranger, by the murmurous roll of London, made him sleepy. In his hand he held a letter which he had been reading for the hundredth time and of which he knew by heart every word; and as his eyes closed he went back in imagination to a passage in the past which it recalled.

He stood, in imagination, upon the deck of a sailing-ship—an emigrant ship. The year was eighteen hundred and sixty-four, a year when very few were tempted to try their fortunes in a country torn by civil war. With him were his daughter and his son-in-law, and they were come to bid the latter farewell.

"My dear—my dear," cried the wife, in her husband's arms, "come what may, I will join you in a year."

Her husband shook his head sadly.

"They do not want me here," he said; "the work goes into stronger and rougher hands. Perhaps over there we may get on better, and besides, it seems an opening."

If the kind of work which he wanted was given to stronger and rougher hands than his in England, far more would it be the case in young and rough America. It was journalistic work—writing work—that he wanted; and he was a gentleman, a scholar, and a creature of retired and refined tastes and manners. There are, perhaps, some still living who have survived the tempestuous life of the ordinary Fleet Street "newspaper man" of twenty or thirty years ago; perhaps one or two among these remember Claude Aglen—but he was so short a time with them that it is not likely; those who do remember him will understand that the way to success, rough and thorny for all, for such as Aglen was impossible.

"But you will think every day of little Iris?" said his wife. "Oh, my dear, if I were only going with you! And but for me you would be at home with your father, well and happy."

Then in his dream, which was also a memory, the old man saw how the young husband kissed and comforted his wife.

"My dear," said Claude, "if it were not

for you, what happiness could I have in the world? Courage, my wife, courage and hope. I shall think of you and of Iris all day and all night until we meet again."

And so they parted and the ship sailed away.

The old man opened his eyes and looked about him. It was a dream.

"It was twenty years ago," he said, "and Iris was a baby in arms. Twenty years ago, and he never saw his wife again. Never again! Because she died," he added after a pause; "my Alice died."

He shed no tears, being so old that the time of tears was well-nigh past—at seventy-five the eyes are drier than at forty, and one is no longer surprised or disappointed, and seldom even angry, whatever happens.

But he opened the letter in his hand and read it again mechanically. It was written on thin foreign paper, and the creases of the folds had become gaping rents. It was dated September, 1866, just eighteen years back.

"When you read these lines," the letter said, "I shall be in the silent land, whither Alice, my wife, has gone before me. It would be a strange thing only to think upon this journey which lies before me, and which I must take alone, had I time left for thinking. But I have not. I may last a week, or I may die in a few hours. Therefore, to the point.

"In one small thing we deceived you, Alice and I—my name is not Aglen at all; we took that name for certain reasons. Perhaps we were wrong, but we thought that as we were quite poor, and likely to remain poor, it would be well to keep our secret to ourselves. Forgive us both this suppression of the truth. We were made poor by our own voluntary act and deed, and because I married the only woman I loved.

"I was engaged to a girl whom I did not love. We had been brought up like brother and sister together, but I did not love her, though I was engaged to her. In breaking this engagement I angered my father. In marrying Alice I angered him still more.

"I now know that he has forgiven me; he forgave me on his death-bed; he revoked his former will and made me his sole heir—just as if nothing had happened to destroy his old affection—subject to one condition—viz., that the girl to whom I was first engaged should receive the whole income until I, or my heirs, should return to England in order to claim the inheritance.

"It is strange. I die in a wooden shanty, in a little Western town, the editor of a miserable little country paper. I have not money enough even to bury me, and yet, if I were at home, I might be called a rich man, as men go. My little Iris will be an heiress. At the very moment when I learn that I am my father's heir, I am struck down by fever; and now I know that I shall never get up again.

"It is strange. Yet my father sent me his forgiveness, and my wife is dead, and the wealth that has come is useless to me. Wherefore, nothing now matters much to me, and I know that you will hold my last wishes sacred.

"I desire that Iris shall be educated as well and thoroughly as you can afford; keep her free from rough and rude comparisons; make her understand that her father was a gentleman of ancient family; this knowledge will, perhaps, help to give her self-respect. If any misfortune should fall upon you, such as the loss of health or wealth, give the papers enclosed to a trustworthy solicitor, and bid him act as is best in the interests of Iris. If, as I hope, all will go well with you, do not open the papers until my child's twenty-first birthday; do not let her know until then that she is going to be rich; on her twenty-first birthday, open the papers and bid her claim her own.

"To the woman I wronged—I know not whether she has married or not—bid Iris carry my last message of sorrow at what has happened. I do not regret, and I have never regretted, that I married Alice. But, I gave her pain, for which I have never ceased to grieve. I have been punished for this breach of faith. You will find among the papers an account of all the circumstances connected with this engagement. There is also in the packet my portrait, taken when I was a lad of sixteen; give her that as well; there is the certificate of my marriage, my register of baptism, that of Iris's baptism, my signet ring—" "His arms"—the old man interrupted his reading—"his arms were: quarterly: first and fourth, two roses and a boar's head, erect; second and third, gules and fesse between—between—but I cannot remember what it was between—" He went on reading: "My father's last letter to me; Alice's letters, and one or two from yourself. If Iris should unhappily die before her twenty-first birthday, open these papers, find out from them the owner's name and address, seek her

out, and tell her that she will never now be disturbed by any claimants to the estate."

The letter ended here abruptly, as if the writer had designed to add more, but was prevented by death.

For there was a postscript, in another hand, which stated: "Mr. Aglen died November 25th, 1866, and is buried in the cemetery of Johnson City, Ill."

The old man folded the letter carefully, and laid it on the table. Then he rose and walked across the room to the safe, which stood with open door in the corner farthest from the fireplace. Among its contents was a packet sealed and tied up in red tape, endorsed: "For Iris. To be given to her on her twenty-first birthday. From her father."

"It will be her twenty-first birthday," he said, "in three weeks. Then I must give her the packet. So—so—with the portrait of her father, and his marriage-certificate." He fell into a fit of musing, with the papers in his hand. "She will be safe, whatever happens to me; and as for me, if I lose her—of course I shall lose her. Why, what will it matter? Have I not lost all, except Iris? One must not be selfish. Oh, Iris, what a surprise—what a surprise I have in store for you!"

He placed the letter he had been reading within the tape which fastened the bundle, so that it should form a part of the communication to be made on Iris's birthday.

"There," he said, "now I shall read this letter no more. I wonder how many times I have read it in the last eighteen years, and how often I have wondered what the child's fortune would be? In three weeks—in three short weeks. Oh, Iris, if you only knew!"

He put back the letters and the packet, locked the safe, and resumed his seat.

The red-eyed Assistant, still gumming and pasting his slips with punctilious regard to duty, had been following his master's movements with curiosity.

"Counting his investments again as usual," Mr. James murmured. "Ah, and adding 'em up! Always at it. Oh, what a trade it must have been once!"

Just then there appeared in the door a gentleman. He was quite shabby, and even ragged in his dress, but he was clearly a gentleman. He was no longer young; his shoulders were bent, and he had the unmistakable stamp and carriage of a student.

"Guv'nor's at home," said the Assistant briefly.

The visitor walked into the sanctum. He had under his arm half-a-dozen volumes, which, without a word, he laid before Mr. Emblem, and untied the string.

"You ought to know this book," he said without further introduction.

Mr. Emblem looked doubtfully at the visitor.

"You sold it to me twenty-five years ago," he went on, "for five pounds."

"I did. And I remember now. You are Mr. Frank Farrar. Why, it is twenty-five years ago!"

"I have bought no more books for twenty years and more," he replied.

"Sad—sad! Dear me—tut, tut!—bought no books? And you, Mr. Farrar, once my best customer. And now—you do not mean to say that you are going to sell—that you actually want to sell—this precious book?"

"I am selling, one by one, all my books," replied the other with a sigh. "I am going downhill, Emblem, fast."

"Oh, dear, dear, dear!" replied the bookseller. "This is very sad. One cannot bear to think of the libraries being dispersed and sold off. And now yours, Mr. Farrar? Really, yours? Must it be?"

"Needs must," Mr. Farrar said with a sickly smile, "needs must when the devil drives. I have parted with half my books already. But I thought you might like to have this set, because they were once your own."

"So I should"—Mr. Emblem laid a loving hand upon the volumes—"so I should, Mr. Farrar, but not from you; not from you, sir. Why, you were almost my best customer—I think almost my very best—thirty years ago, when my trade was better than it is now. Yes, you gave me five pounds—or was it five pounds ten!—for this very work. And it is worth twelve pounds now—I assure you it is worth twelve pounds, if it is worth a penny."

"Will you give me ten pounds for it, then?" cried the other eagerly; "I want the money badly."

"No, I can't; but I will send you to a man who can and will. I do not speculate now; I never go to auctions. I am old, you see. Besides, I am poor. I will not buy your book, but I will send you to a man who will give you ten pounds for it, I am sure, and then he will sell it for fifteen." He wrote the address on a slip

of paper. "Why, Mr. Farrar, if an old friend, so to speak, can put the question, why in the world—"

"The most natural thing," replied Mr. Farrar with a cold laugh; "I am old, as I told you, and the younger men get all the work. That is all. Nobody wants a genealogist and antiquary."

"Dear me, dear me! Why, Mr. Farrar, I remember now; you used to know my poor son-in-law, who is dead eighteen years since. I was just reading the last letter he ever wrote me, just before he died. You used to come here and sit with him in the evening. I remember now. So you did."

"Thank you for your good will," said Mr. Farrar. "Yes, I remember your son-in-law. I knew him before his marriage."

"Did you? Before his marriage? Then—" He was going to add, "Then you can tell me his real name," but he paused, because it is a pity ever to acknowledge ignorance, and especially ignorance in such elementary matters as your son-in-law's name.

So Mr. Emblem checked himself.

"He ought to have been a rich man," Mr. Farrar continued; "but he quarrelled with his father, who cut him off with a shilling, I suppose."

Then the poor scholar, who could find no market for his learned papers, tied up his books again and went away with hanging head.

"Ugh!" Mr. James, who had been listening, groaned as Mr. Farrar passed through the door. "Ugh! Call that a way of doing business? Why, if it had been me, I'd have bought the book off of that old chap for a couple o' pounds, I would. Aye, or a sov, so seedy he is, and wants money so bad. And I know who'd have given twelve pound for it, in the trade too. Call that carrying on business? He may well add up his investments every day, if he can afford to chuck such chances. Ah, but he'll retire soon." His fiery eyes brightened, and his face glowed with the joy of anticipation. "He must retire before long."

There came another visitor. This time it was a lanky boy, with a blue bag over his shoulder and a notebook and pencil-stump in his hand. He nodded to the Assistant as to an old friend with whom one may be at ease, set down his bag, opened his notebook, and nibbled his stump. Then he read aloud, with a comma or semi-colon between each, a dozen or twenty titles. They were the names of the books

which his employer wished to pick up. The red-eyed Assistant listened, and shook his head. Then the boy, without another word, shouldered his bag and departed, on his way to the next second-hand book-shop.

He was followed, at a decent interval, by another caller. This time it was an old gentleman who opened the door, put in his head, and looked about him with quick and suspicious glance. At sight of the Assistant he nodded and smiled in the most friendly way possible, and came in.

"Good-morning, Mr. James; good-morning, my friend. Splendid weather. Pray don't disturb yourself. I am just having a look round—only a look round, you know. Don't move, Mr. James."

He addressed Mr. James, but he was looking at the shelves as he spoke, and, with the habit of a book-hunter, taking down the volumes, looking at the title-pages and replacing them; under his arm he carried a single volume in old leather binding.

Mr. James nodded his head, but did disturb himself; in fact, he rose with a scowl upon his face, and followed this polite old gentleman all round the shop, placing himself close to his elbow. One might almost suppose that he suspected him, so close and assiduous was his assistance. But the visitor, accepting these attentions as if they were customary, and the result of high breeding, went slowly round the shelves, taking down book after book, but buying none. Presently he smiled again, and said that he must be moving on, and very politely thanked Mr. James for his kindness.

"Nowhere," he was so good as to say, "does one get so much personal kindness and attention as at Emblem's. Good-morning, Mr. James; good-morning, my friend."

Mr. James grunted; and closed the door after him.

"Ugh!" he said with disgust, "I know you; I know your likes. Want to make your set complete—eh? Want to sneak one of our books to do it with, don't you? Ah!" He looked into the back shop before he returned to his paste and his slips. "That was Mr. Potts, the great Queen Anne collector, sir. Most notorious book-snatcher in all London, and the most barefaced. Wanted our fourth volume of the Athenian Oracle. I saw his eyes reached out this way, and that way, and always resting on that volume. I saw him

edging along to the shelf. Got another odd volume just like it in his wicked old hand, ready to change it when I wasn't looking."

"Ah," said Mr. Emblem, waking up from his dream of Iris and her father's letter; "ah, they will try it on. Keep your eyes open, James."

"No thanks, as usual," grumbled Mr. James as he returned to his gum and his scissors. "Might as well have left him to snatch the book."

Here, however, James was wrong, because it is the first duty of an Assistant to hinder and obstruct the book-snatcher, who carries on his work by methods of crafty and fraudulent exchange rather than by plain theft, which is a mere brutal way. For, first, the book-snatcher marks his prey; he finds the shop which has a set containing the volume which is missing in his own set; next, he arms himself with a volume which closely resembles the one he covets, and then, on pretence of turning over the leaves, he watches his opportunity to effect an exchange, and goes away rejoicing, his set complete. No collector, as is very well known, whether of books, coins, pictures, medals, fans, scarabs, book-plates, autographs, stamps, or anything else, has any conscience at all. Anybody can cut out slips and make a catalogue, but it requires a sharp Assistant, with eyes all over his head like a spider, to be always on guard against this felonious and unscrupulous collector.

Next, there came two schoolboys together, who asked for and bought a crib to Virgil; and then a girl who wanted some cheap French reading-book. Just as the clock began to strike five, Mr. Emblem lifted his head and looked up. The shop-door opened, and there stepped in, rubbing his shoes on the mat as if he belonged to the house, an elderly gentleman of somewhat singular appearance. He wore a Fex cap, but was otherwise dressed as an Englishman—in black frock coat, that is, buttoned up—except that his feet were encased in black cloth shoes, so that he went noiselessly. His hair was short and white, and he wore a small white beard; his skin was a rather dark brown; he was, in fact, a Hindoo, and his name was Lala Roy.

He nodded gravely to Mr. James and walked into the back shop.

"It goes well," he asked, "with the buying and the selling?"

"Surely, Lala, surely."

"A quiet way of buying and selling;

a way fit for one who meditates," said the Hindoo, looking round. "Tell me, my friend, what ails the child? Is she sick?"

"The child is well, Lala."

"Her mind wandered this morning. She failed to perceive a simple method which I tried to teach her. I feared she might be ill."

"She is not ill, my friend, but I think her mind is troubled."

"She is a woman. We are men. There is nothing in the world that is able to trouble the mind of the Philosopher."

"Nothing," said Mr. Emblem manfully, as if he, too, was a Disciple. "Nothing; is there now?"

The stoutness of the assertion was sensibly impaired by the question.

"Not poverty, which is a shadow; nor pain, which passes; nor the loss of woman's love, which is a gain; nor fall from greatness—nothing. Nevertheless," his eyes did look anxious in spite of his philosophy, "this trouble of the child—will it soon be over?"

"I hope this evening," said Mr. Emblem. "Indeed I am sure that it will be finished this evening."

"If the child had a mother, or a brother, or any protectors but ourselves, my friend, we might leave her to them. But she has nobody except you and me. I am glad that she is not ill."

He left Mr. Emblem, and passing through the door of communication between house and shop, went noiselessly up the stairs.

One more visitor—unusual for so many to call on a September afternoon. This time it was a youngish man of thirty or so, who stepped into the shop with an air of business, and, taking no notice at all of the Assistant, walked swiftly into the back shop and shut the door behind him.

"I thought so," murmured Mr. James. "After he's been counting up his investments, his lawyer calls. More investments."

Mr. David Chalker was a solicitor and, according to his friends, who were proud of him, a sharp practitioner. He was, in fact, one of those members of the profession who, starting with no connection, have to make business for themselves. This, in London, they do by encouraging the county court, setting neighbours by the ears, lending money in small sums, fomenting quarrels, charging commissions, and generally making themselves a blessing and a boon to the district where they reside. But chiefly Mr. Chalker occupied himself with lending money.

"Now, Mr. Emblem," he said, not in a menacing tone, but as one who warns; "now, Mr. Emblem."

"Now, Mr. Chalker," the bookseller repeated mildly.

"What are you going to do for me?"

"I got your usual notice," the old bookseller began, hesitating, "six months ago."

"Of course you did. Three fifty is the amount. Three fifty, exactly."

"Just so. But I am afraid I am not prepared to pay off the Bill of Sale. The interest, as usual, will be ready."

"Of course it will. But this time the principal must be ready too."

"Can't you get another client to find the money?"

"No, I can't. Money is tight, and your security, Mr. Emblem, isn't so good as it was."

"The furniture is there, and so is the stock."

"Furniture wears out; as for the stock—who knows what that is worth? All your books together may not be worth fifty pounds, for what I know."

"Then what am I to do?"

"Find the money yourself. Come, Mr. Emblem, everybody knows—your grandson himself told me—all the world knows—you've been for years saving up for your granddaughter. You told Joe only six months ago—you can't deny it—that whatever happened to you she would be well off."

Mr. Emblem did not deny the charge. But he ought not to have told this to his grandson, of all people in the world.

"As for Joe," Mr. Chalker went on, "you are going to do nothing for him. I know that. But is it business-like, Mr. Emblem, to waste good money which you might have invested for your granddaughter?"

"You do not understand, Mr. Chalker. You really do not, and I cannot explain. But about this Bill of Sale—never mind my granddaughter."

"You the aforesaid Richard Emblem"—Mr. Chalker began to recite, without commas—"have assigned to me David Chalker aforesaid his executors administrators and assigns all and singular the several chattels and things specifically described in the schedule hereto annexed by way of security for the payment of the sum of three hundred and fifty pounds and interest thereon at the rate of eight per cent. per annum."

"Thank you, Mr. Chalker. I know all that."

"You can't complain, I'm sure. It is five years since you borrowed the money."

"It was fifty pounds and a box of old law books out of your office, and I signed a bill for a hundred."

"You forget the circumstances."

"No, I do not. My grandson was a rogue. One does not readily forget that circumstance. He was also your friend, I remember."

"And I held my tongue."

"I have had no more money from you, and the sum has become three hundred and fifty."

"Of course you don't understand law, Mr. Emblem. How should you? But we lawyers don't work for nothing. However, it isn't what you got, but what I am to get. Come, my good sir, it's cutting off your nose to spite your face. Settle and have done with it, even if it does take a little slice off your granddaughter's fortune? Now look here"—his voice became persuasive—"why not take me into your confidence? Make a friend of me. You want advice; let me advise you. I can get you good investments—far better than you know anything of—good and safe investments—at six certain, and sometimes seven and even eight per cent. Make me your man of business—come now. As for this trumpery Bill of Sale—this trifle of three fifty, what is it to you? Nothing—nothing. And as for your intention to enrich your granddaughter, and cut off your grandson with a shilling, why I honour you for it—there, though he was my friend. For Joe deserves it thoroughly. I've told him so, mind. You ask him. I've told him so a dozen times. I've said: 'The old man's right, Joe.' Ask him if I haven't."

This was very expansive, but somehow Mr. Emblem did not respond.

Presently, however, he lifted his head.

"I have three weeks still."

"Three weeks still."

"And if I do not find the money within three weeks?"

"Why—but of course you will—but if you do not—I suppose there will be only one thing left to do—realise the security, sell up—sticks and books and all."

"Thank you, Mr. Chalker. I will look round me, and—and—do my best. Good-day, Mr. Chalker."

"The best you can do, Mr. Emblem," returned the solicitor, "is to take me as your adviser. You trust David Chalker."

"Thank you, Good-day, Mr. Chalker."

On his way out, Mr. Chalker stopped for a moment and looked round the shop.

"How's business?" he asked the Assistant.

"Dull, sir," replied Mr. James. "He throws it all away, and neglects his chances. Naturally, being so rich——"

"So rich, indeed," the solicitor echoed.

"It will be bad for his successor," Mr. James went on, thinking how much he should himself like to be that successor. "The goodwill won't be worth half what it ought to be, and the stock is just falling to pieces."

Mr. Chalker looked about him again thoughtfully, and opened his mouth as if about to ask a question, but said nothing. He remembered, in time, that the shopman was not likely to know the amount of his master's capital or investments.

"There isn't a book even in the glass-case that's worth a five-pound note," continued Mr. James, whispering, "and he don't look about for purchases any more. Seems to have lost his pluck."

Mr. Chalker returned to the back-shop.

"Within three weeks, Mr. Emblem," he repeated, and then departed.

Mr. Emblem sat in his chair. He had to find three hundred and fifty pounds in three weeks. No one knew better than himself that this was impossible. Within three weeks! But, in three weeks, he would open the packet of letters, and give Iris her inheritance. At least, she would not suffer. As for himself—— He looked round the little back shop, and tried to recall the fifty years he had spent there, the books he had bought and sold, the money which had slipped through his fingers, the friends who had come and gone. Why, as for the books, he seemed to remember them every one—his joy in the purchase, his pride in possession, and his grief at letting them go. All the friends gone before him, his trade sunk to nothing. "Yet," he murmured, "I thought it would last my time."

But the clock struck six. It was his tea-time. He rose mechanically, and went upstairs to Iris.

CHAPTER II. FOX AND WOLF.

MR. JAMES, left to himself, attempted, in accordance with his daily custom, to commit a dishonourable action.

That is to say, he first listened carefully to the retreating footsteps of his master, as he went up the stairs; then he left his table, crept stealthily into the back

shop, and began to pull the drawers, turn the handle of the safe, and try the desk. Everything was carefully locked. Then he turned over all the papers on the table, but found nothing that contained the information he looked for. It was his daily practice thus to try the locks, in hope that some day the safe, or the drawers, or the desk would be left open by accident, when he might be able to solve a certain problem, the doubt and difficulty of which sore let and hindered him—namely, of what extent, and where placed, were those great treasures, savings, and investments which enabled his master to be careless over his business. It was, further, customary with him to be thus frustrated and disappointed. Having briefly, therefore, also in accordance with his usual custom, expressed his disgust at this want of confidence between master and man, Mr. James returned to his paste and scissors.

About a quarter-past six the shop door was cautiously opened, and a head appeared, which looked round stealthily. Seeing nobody about except Mr. James, the head nodded, and presently, followed by its body, stepped into the shop.

"Where's the Admiral, Foxy?" asked the caller.

"Guv'nor's upstairs, Mr. Joseph, taking of his tea with Miss Iris," replied Mr. James, not at all offended by the allusion to his craftiness. Who should resemble the Fox if not the second-hand bookseller? In no trade, perhaps, can the truly admirable qualities of that animal—his patience, his subtlety and craft, his pertinacity, his sagacity—be illustrated more to advantage. Mr. James felt a glow of virtue—would that he could grow daily and hourly, and more and more towards the Perfect Fox. Then, indeed, and not till then would he be able to live truly up to his second-hand books.

"Having tea with Iris; well——"

The speaker looked as if it required some effort to receive this statement with resignation.

"He always does at six o'clock. Why shouldn't he?" asked Mr. James.

"Because, James, he spends the time in cockering up that gal whom he's ruined and spoiled—him and the old Nigger between them—so that her mind is poisoned against her lawful relations, and nothing will content her but coming into all the old man's money, instead of going share and share alike, as a cousin should, and especially a she cousin, while there's a

biscuit left in the locker and a drop of rum in the cask."

"Ah!" said Mr. James with a touch of sympathy, called forth, perhaps, by mention of the rum, which is a favourite drink with second-hand booksellers' Assistants.

"Nothing too good for her," the other went on; "the best of education, pianos to play upon, and nobody good enough for her to know. Not on visiting terms, if you please, with her neighbours; waiting for Duchesses to call upon her. And what is she, after all? A miserable teacher!"

Mr. Joseph Gallop was a young man somewhere between twenty and thirty, tall, large-limbed, well set-up, and broad-shouldered. A young man who, at first sight, would seem eminently fitted to push his own fortunes. Also, at first sight, a remarkably handsome fellow, with straight, clear-cut features and light, curly hair. When he swung along the street, his round hat carelessly thrown back, and his handsome face lit up by the sun, the old women murmured a blessing upon his comely head—as they used to do, a long time ago, upon the comely and curly head of Absalom—and the young women looked meaningly at one another—as was also done in the case of Absalom—and the object of their admiration knew that they were saying to each other, in the feminine way, where a look is as good as a whisper, "There goes a handsome fellow." Those who knew him better, and had looked more closely into his face, said that his mouth was bad and his eyes shifty. The same opinion was held by the wiser sort as regards his character. For, on the one hand, some averred that to their certain knowledge Joe Gallop had shown himself a monster of ingratitude towards his grandfather, who had paid his debts and done all kinds of things for him; on the other hand there were some who thought he had been badly treated; and some said that no good would ever come of a young fellow who was never able to remain in the same situation more than a month or so; and others said that he had certainly been unfortunate, but that he was a quick and clever young man, who would some day find the kind of work that suited him, and then he would show everybody of what stuff he was composed. As for us, we have only to judge of him by his actions.

"Perhaps, Mr. Joseph," said Mr. James, "perhaps Miss Iris won't have all bequeathed to her."

"Do you know anything?" Joe asked

quickly. "Has he made a new will lately?"

"Not that I know of. But Mr. Chalker has been here off and on a good bit now."

"Ah! Chalker's a slose one, too. Else he'd tell me, his old friend. Look here, Foxy," he turned a beaming and smiling face upon the Assistant. "If you should see anything or find anything out, tell me, mind. And, remember, I'll make it worth your while."

Mr. James looked as if he was asking himself how Joseph could make it worth his while, seeing that he got nothing more from his grandfather, and by his own showing never would have anything more.

"It's only his will I'm anxious to know about; that, and where he's put away all his money. Think what a dreadful thing it would be for his heirs if he were to go and die suddenly, and none of us to know where his investments are. As for the shop, that is already disposed of, as I dare say you know."

"Disposed of? The shop disposed of! Oh, Lord!" The Assistant turned pale. "Oh, Mr. Joseph," he asked earnestly, "what will become of the shop? And who is to have it?"

"I am to have it," Mr. Joseph replied calmly. This was the Lie Absolute, and he invented it very cleverly and at the right moment—a thing which gives strength and life to a Lie, because he already suspected the truth and guessed the secret hope and ambition which possesses every ambitious Assistant in this trade—namely, to get the succession. Mr. James looked upon himself as the lawful and rightful heir to the business. But sometimes he entertained grievous doubts, and now indeed his heart sank into his boots. "I am to have it," Joe repeated.

"Oh, I didn't know. You are to have it, then? Oh!"

If Mr. James had been ten years younger, I think he would have burst into tears. But at the age of forty weeping no longer presents itself as a form of relief. It is more usual to seek consolation in a swear. He stammered, however, while he turned pale, and then red, and then pale again.

"Yes, quite proper, Mr. Joseph, I'm sure, and a most beautiful business may be made again here by one who understands the way. Oh, you are a lucky man, Mr. Joseph. You are indeed, sir, to get such a noble chance."

"The shop," Joe went on, "was settled

—settled upon me, long ago." The verb "to settle" is capable of conveying large and vague impressions. "But after all, what's the good of this place to a sailor?"

"The good—the good of this place?" Mr. James's cheek flushed. "Why, to make money, to be sure—to coin money in. If I had this place to myself—why—why, in two years I would be making as much as two hundred a year. I would indeed."

"You want to make money. Bah! That's all you fellows think of. To sit in the back shop all day long and to sell mouldy books! We jolly sailor boys know better than that, my lad."

There really was something nautical about the look of the man. He wore a black-silk tie, in a sailor's running knot, the ends loose; his waistcoat was unbuttoned, and his coat was a kind of jacket; not to speak of his swinging walk and careless pose. In fact, he had been a sailor; he had made two voyages to India and back as assistant-purser, or purser's clerk, on board a P. and O. boat, but some disagreement with his commanding officer concerning negligence, or impudence, or drink, or laziness—he had been charged in different situations and at different times with all these vices, either together or separately—caused him to lose his rating on the ship's books. However, he brought away from his short nautical experience, and preserved, a certain nautical swagger, which accorded well with his appearance, and gave him a swashbuckler air, which made those who knew him well lament that he had not graced the Elizabethan era, when he might have become a gallant buccaneer, and so got himself shot through the head, or that he had not flourished under the reign of good Queen Anne, when he would probably have turned pirate and been hanged; or that, being born in the Victorian age, he had not gone to the Far West, where he would, at least, have had the chance of getting shot in a gambling-saloon.

"As for me, when I get the business," he continued, "I shall look about for someone to carry it on until I am able to sell it for what it will fetch. Books at a penny apiece all round, I suppose"—James gasped—"shop furniture thrown in"—James panted—"and the goodwill for a small, lump sum." James wondered how far his own savings, and what he could borrow, might go towards that lump sum, and how much might "remain." "My grandfather, as you know, of course, is soon

going to retire from business altogether." This was another Lie Absolute, as Mr. Emblem had no intention whatever of retiring.

"Soon, Mr. Joseph? He has never said a word to me about it."

"Very soon, now—sooner than you expect. At seventy-five, and with all his money, why should he go on slaving any longer? Very soon, indeed. Any day."

"Mr. Joseph," the assistant positively trembled with eagerness and apprehension.

"What is it, James? Did you really think that a man like me was going to sit in a back shop among these mouldy volumes all day? Come, that's too good. You might have given me credit for being one cut above a counter, too. I am a gentleman, James, if you please; I am an officer and a gentleman."

He then proceeded to explain, in language that smacked something of the sea, that his ideas soared far above trade, which was, at best, a contemptible occupation, and quite unworthy of a gentleman, particularly of an officer and a gentleman; and that his personal friends would never condescend even to formal acquaintance, not to speak of friendship, with trade. This discourse may be omitted. When one reads about such a man as Joe Gallop, when we are told how he looked and what he said and how he said it, with what gestures and in what tone, we feel as if it would be impossible for the simplest person in the world to be mistaken as to his real character. My friends, especially my young friends, so far from the discernment of character being easy, it is, on the contrary, an art most difficult, and very rarely attained. Nature's indications are a kind of handwriting, the characters in which are known to few, so that, for instance, the quick, enquiring glance of an eye, in which one may easily read—who knows the character—treachery, lying, and deception, just as in the letter Beth was originally easily discerned the effigies of a house, may very easily pass unread by the multitude. The language, or rather the alphabet, is much less complicated than the cuneiform of the Medes and Persians, yet no one studies it, except women, most of whom are profoundly skilled in this lore, which makes them so fearfully and wonderfully wise. Thus it is easy for man to deceive his brother man, but not his sister woman. Again, most of us are glad to take everybody on his own statements; there are, or may be, we are all

ready to acknowledge, with sorrow for erring humanity, somewhere else in the world, such things as pretending, swindling, acting a part, and cheating, but they do not and cannot belong to our own world. Mr. James, the Assistant, very well knew that Mr. Emblem's grandson had already, though still young, as had a record as could be desired by any; that he had been turned out of one situation after another; that his grandfather had long since refused to help him any more; that he was always to be found in the Broad Path which leadeth to destruction. When he had money he ran down that path as fast as his legs could carry him; when he had none, he only walked and wished he could run. But he never left it, and never wished to leave it. Knowing all this, the man accepted and believed every word of Joe's story. James believed it, because he hoped it. He listened respectfully to Joe's declamation on the meanness of trade, and then he rubbed his hands, and said humbly that he ventured to hope, when the sale of the business came on, Mr. Joseph would let him have a chance.

"You?" asked Joe. "I never thought of you. But why not? Why not, I say? Why not you as well as anybody else?"

"Nobody but me, Mr. Joseph, knows what the business is, and how it might be improved; and I could make arrangements for paying by regular instalments."

"Well, we'll talk about it when the time comes. I won't forget. Sailors, you know, can't be expected to understand the value of shops. Say, James, what does the Commodore do all day?"

"Sits in there and adds up his investments."

"Always doing that—eh? Always adding 'em up? Ah! and you've never got a chance of looking over his shoulder, I suppose?"

"Never."

"You may find that chance, one of these days. I should like to know, if only for curiosity, what they are and where they are. He sits in there and adds 'em up. Yes—I've seen him at it. There must be thousands by this time."

"Thousands," said the Assistant, in the belief that the more you add up a sum the larger it grows.

Joe walked into the back shop and tried the safe.

"Where are the keys?" he asked.

"Always in his pocket or on the table before him. He don't leave them about."

"Or you'd ha' known pretty sharp all there is to know—eh, my lad? Well, you're a Foxy one, you are, if ever there was one. Let's be pals, you and me. When the old man goes, you want the shop—well, I don't see why you shouldn't have the shop. Somebody must have the shop; and it will be mine to do what I please with. As for his savings, he says they are all for Iris—well, wills have been set aside before this. Do you think now, seriously, do you think, James, that the old man is quite right—eh? Don't answer in a hurry. Do you think, now, that he is quite right in his chump?"

James laughed.

"He's right enough, though he throws away his chances."

"Throws away his chances. How the deuce can he be all right then? Did you ever hear of a bookseller in his right mind throwing away his chances?"

"Why—no—for that matter——"

"Very well, then; for that matter, don't forget that you've seen him throw away all his chances—all his chances, you said. You are ready to swear to that. Most important evidence, that, James." James had not said "all," but he grunted, and the other man went on: "It may come in useful, this recollection. Keep your eyes wide-open, my red-haired pirate. As for the mouldy old shop, you may consider it as good as your own. Why, I suppose you'll get somebody else to handle the paste-brush and the scissors, and tie up the parcels, and water the shop—eh? You'll be too proud to do that for yourself, you will."

Mr. James grinned and rubbed his hands.

"All your own—eh? Well, you'll wake 'em up a bit, won't you?"

Mr. James grinned again—he continued grinning.

"Go on, Mr. Joseph," he said; "go on—I like it."

"Consider the job as settled, then. As for terms, they shall be easy; I'm not a hard man. And—I say, Foxy, about that safe?"

Mr. James suddenly ceased grinning, because he observed a look in his patron's eyes which alarmed him.

"About that safe. You must find out for me where the old man has put his money, and what it is worth. Do you hear? Or else——"

"How can I find out? He won't tell me any more than you."

"Or else you must put me in the way of finding out." Mr. Joseph lowered his voice to a whisper. "He keeps the key on the table before him. When a customer takes him out here, he leaves the key behind him. Do you know the key of the safe?"

"Yes, I know it."

"What is to prevent a clever, quick-eyed fellow like you, mate, stepping in with a bit of wax—eh? While he is talking, you know. You could rush it in moment."

"It's—it's dangerous, Mr. Joseph."

"So it is—rather dangerous—not much. What of that?"

"I would do anything I could to be of service to you, Mr. Joseph; but that's no honest, and it's dangerous."

"Dangerous! There's danger in the briny deep and shipwreck on the blast, if you come to danger. Do we, therefore jolly mariners afloat, ever think of that Never. As to honesty, don't make a man sick."

"Look here, Mr. Joseph. If you'll give me a promise in writing, that I'm to have the shop, as soon as you get it, at a fair valuation and easy terms—say ten per cent down, and——"

"Stow it, mate; write what you like and I'll sign it. Now about that key?"

"Supposing you was to get a duplicate key, and supposing you was to get into trouble about it, Mr. Joseph, should you—should you—I only put it to you—should you up and round upon the man as got you that key?"

"Foxy, you are as suspicious as a Chinaman. Well, then, do it this way. Send it me in a letter, and then who is to know where the letter came from?"

The Assistant nodded.

"Then I think I can do the job, though not, perhaps, your way. But I think I can do it. I won't promise for a day or two."

"There you spoke like an honest pal and a friendly shipmate. Dangerous! Of course it is. When the roaring winds do blow—— Hands upon it, brother. Foxy, you've never done a better day's work. You are too crafty for any sailor—you are, indeed. Here, just for a little key——"

"Hush, Mr. Joseph! Oh, pray—pray don't talk so loud! You don't know who may be listening. There's Mr. Lala Roy. You never hear him coming."

"Just for a trifle of a key, you are going to get possession of the best book-shop in all Chelsea. Well, keep your eyes skinned

and the wax ready, will you? And now, James, I'll be off."

"Oh, I say, Mr. Joseph, wait a moment!" James was beginning to realise what he had promised. "If anything dreadful should come of this? I don't know what is in the safe. There may be money as well as papers."

"James, do you think I would steal? Do you mean to insinuate that I am a thief, sir? Do you dare to suspect that I would take money?"

James certainly looked as if he had thought even that possible.

"I shall open the safe, take out the papers, read them, and put them back just as I found them. Will that do for you?"

He shook hands again, and took himself off.

At seven o'clock Mr. Emblem came downstairs again.

"Has anyone been?" he asked as usual.

"Only Mr. Joseph."

"What might Mr. Joseph want?"

"Nothing at all."

"Then," said his grandfather, "Mr. Joseph might just as well have kept away."

Let us anticipate a little. James spent the next day hovering about in the hope that an opportunity would offer of getting the key in his possession for a few moments. There was no opportunity. The bunch of keys lay on the table under the old man's eyes all day, and when he left the table he carried them with him. But the day afterwards he got his chance. One of the old customers called to talk over past bargains and former prizes. Mr. Emblem came out of the back shop with his visitor, and continued talking with him as far as the door. As he passed the table—James's table—he rested the hand which carried the keys on it, and left them there. James pounced upon them and slipped them into his pocket noiselessly. Mr. Emblem returned to his own chair and thought nothing of the keys for an hour and a half by the clock, and during this period James was out on business. When Mr. Emblem remembered his keys, he felt for them in their usual place and missed them, and then began searching about and cried out to James that he had lost his bunch of keys.

"Why, sir," said James, bringing them to him, after a little search, and with a very red face, "here they are; you must have left them on my table."

And in this way the job was done.

CHAPTER III. IRIS THE HERALD.

By a somewhat remarkable coincidence it was on this very evening that Iris first made the acquaintance of her pupil, Mr. Arnold Arbuthnot. These coincidences, I believe, happen oftener in real life than they do even on the stage, where people are always turning up at the very nick of time and the critical moment.

I need little persuasion to make me believe that the first meeting of Arnold Arbuthnot and Iris, on the very evening when her cousin was opening matters with the Foxy one, was nothing short of Providential. You shall see, presently, what things might have happened if they had not met. The meeting was, in fact, the second of the three really important events in the life of a girl. The first, which is seldom remembered with the gratitude which it deserves, is her birth; the second, the first meeting with her future lover; the third, her wedding-day; the other events of a woman's life are interesting, perhaps, but not important.

Certain circumstances, which will be immediately explained, connected with this meeting, made it an event of very considerable interest to Iris, even though she did not suspect its immense importance. So much interest that she thought of nothing else for a week beforehand; that as the appointed hour drew near she trembled and grew pale; that when her grandfather came up for his tea, she, who was usually so quick to discern the least sign of care or anxiety in his face, actually did not observe the trouble, plainly written in his drooping head and anxious eyes, which was due to his interview with Mr. David Chalker.

She poured out the tea, therefore, without one word of sympathy. This would have seemed hard if her grandfather had expected any. He did not, however, because he did not know that the trouble showed in his face, and was trying to look as if nothing had happened. Yet in his brain were ringing and resounding the words, "Within three weeks—within three weeks," with the regularity of a horrid clock at midnight, when one wants to go to sleep.

"Oh," cried Iris, forced, as young people always are, to speak of her own trouble, "oh, grandfather, he is coming to-night."

"Who is coming to-night, my dear?" and then he listened again for the ticking of that clock: "Within three weeks—

within three weeks." "Who is coming to-night, my dear?"

He took the cup of tea from her, and sat down with an old man's deliberation, which springs less from wisdom and the fulness of thought than from respect to rheumatism.

The iteration of that refrain, "Within three weeks," made him forget everything, even the trouble of his granddaughter's mind.

"Oh, grandfather, you cannot have forgotten!"

She spoke with the least possible touch of irritation, because she had been thinking of this thing for a week past, day and night, and it was a thing of such stupendous interest to her, that it seemed impossible that anyone who knew of it could forget what was coming.

"No, no." The old man was stimulated into immediate recollection by the disappointment in her eyes. "No, no, my dear, I have not forgotten. Your pupil is coming. Mr. Arbuthnot is coming. But, Iris, child, don't let that worry you. I will see him for you, if you like."

"No; I must see him myself. You see, dear, there is the awful deception. Oh, how shall I tell him?"

"No deception at all," he said stoutly. "You advertised in your own initials. He never asked if the initials belonged to a man or to a woman. The other pupils do not know. Why should this one? What does it matter to him if you have done the work for which he engaged your services?"

"But, oh, he is so different! And the others, you know, keep to the subject."

"So should he, then. Why didn't he?"

"But he hasn't. And I have been answering him, and he must think that I was drawing him on to tell me more about himself; and now—oh, what will he think? I drew him on and on—yet I didn't mean to—till at last he writes to say that he regards me as the best friend and the wisest adviser he has ever had. What will he think and say? Grandfather, it is dreadful!"

"What did you tell him for, Iris, my dear? Why couldn't you let things go on? And by telling him you will lose your pupil."

"Yes, of course; and, worse still, I shall lose his letters. We live so quietly here that his letters have come to me like news of another world. How many

different worlds are there all round one in London? It has been pleasant to read of that one in which ladies go about beautifully dressed always, and where the people have nothing to do but to amuse themselves. He has told me about this world in which he lives, and about his own life, so that I know everything he does, and where he goes; and"—here she sighed heavily—"of course it could not go on for ever; and I should not mind so much if it had not been carried on under false pretences."

"No false pretences at all, my dear. Don't think it."

"I sent back his last cheque," she said, trying to find a little consolation for herself. "But yet——"

"Well, Iris," said her grandfather, "he wanted to learn heraldry, and you have taught him."

"For the last three months"—the girl blushed as if she was confessing her sins—"for the last three months there has not been a single word in his letters about heraldry. He tells me that he writes because he is idle, or because he wants to talk, or because he is alone in his studio, or because he wants his unknown friend's advice. I am his unknown friend, and I have been giving him advice."

"And very good advice, too," said her grandfather benevolently. "Who is so wise as my Iris?"

"I have answered all his letters, and never once told him that I am only a girl."

"I am glad you did not tell him, Iris," said her grandfather; but he did not say why he was glad. "And why can't he go on writing his letters without making any fuss?"

"Because he says he must make the acquaintance of the man—the man, he says—with whom he has been in correspondence so long. This is what he says."

She opened a letter which lay upon a table covered with papers, but her grandfather stopped her.

"Well, my dear, I do not want to know what he says. He wishes to make your acquaintance. Very good, then. You are going to see him, and to tell him who you are. That is enough. But as for deceiving"—he paused, trying to understand this extreme scrupulosity of conscience—"if you come to deceiving—well, in a kind of a sort of way you did allow him to think his correspondent a man. I admit that. What harm is done to him?"

None. He won't be so mean, I suppose, as to ask for his money back again."

"I think he ought to have it all back," said Iris; "yes, all from the very beginning. I am ashamed that I ever took any money from him. My face burns when I think of it."

To this her grandfather made no reply. The returning of money paid for services rendered was, to his commercial mind, too foolish a thing to be even talked about. At the same time, Iris was quite free to manage her own affairs. And then there was that roll of papers in the safe. Why, what matter if she sent away all her pupils? He changed the subject.

"Iris, my dear," he said, "about this other world, where the people amuse themselves; the world which lives in the squares and in the big houses on the Chelsea Embankment here, you know—how should you like, just for a change, to belong to that world and have no work to do?"

"I don't know," she replied carelessly, because the question did not interest her.

"You would have to leave me, of course. You would sever your connection, as they say, with the shop."

"Please, don't let us talk nonsense, grandfather."

"You would have to be ashamed, perhaps, of ever having taught for your living."

"Now that I never should be—never, not if they made me a duchess."

"You would go dressed in silk and velvet. My dear, I should like to see you dressed up just for once, as we have seen them at the theatre."

"Well, I should like one velvet dress in my life. Only one. And it should be crimson—a beautiful, deep, dark crimson."

"Very good. And you would drive in a carriage instead of an omnibus; you would sit in the stalls instead of the upper circle; you would give quantities of money to poor people; and you would buy as many second-hand books as you pleased. There are rich people, I believe, ostentatious people, who buy new books. But you, my dear, have been better brought up. No books are worth buying till they have stood the criticism of a whole generation at least. Never buy new books, my dear."

"I won't," said Iris. "But, you dear old man, what have you got in your head to-night? Why in the world should we talk about getting rich?"

"I was only thinking," he said, "that,

perhaps, you might be so much happier—"

"Happier? Nonsense! I am as happy as I can be. Six pupils already. To be sure I have lost one," she sighed; "and the best among them all."

When her grandfather left her, Iris placed candles on the writing-table, but did not light them, though it was already pretty dark. She had half an hour to wait; and she wanted to think, and candles are not necessary for meditation. She sat at the open window and suffered her thoughts to ramble where they pleased. This is a restful thing to do, especially if your windows look upon a tolerably busy but not noisy London road. For then, it is almost as good as sitting beside a swiftly-running stream; the movement of the people below is like the unceasing flow of the current; the sound of the footsteps is like the whisper of the water along the bank; the echo of the half heard talk strikes your ear like the mysterious voices wafted to the banks from the boats as they go by; and the lights of the shops and the street presently become spectral and unreal like lights seen upon the river in the evening.

Iris had a good many pupils—six, in fact, as she had boasted; why, then, was she so strangely disturbed on account of one?

An old tutor by correspondence may be, and very likely is, indifferent about his pupils, because he has had so many; but Iris was a young tutor, and had as yet known few. One of her pupils, for instance, was a gentleman in the fruit and potato line, in the Borough. By reason of his early education, which had not been neglected so much as entirely omitted, he was unable to personally conduct his accounts. Now a merchant without his accounts is as helpless as a Tourist without his Cook. So that he desired, in his mature age, to learn book-keeping, compound addition, subtraction, and multiplication. He had no partners, so that he did not want Division. But it is difficult—say, well-nigh impossible—for a middle-aged merchant, not trained in the graces of letter-writing, to inspire a young lady with personal regard, even though she is privileged to follow the current of his thoughts day by day, and to set him his sums.

Next there was a young fellow of nineteen or twenty, who was beginning life as an assistant-teacher in a commercial school

at Lower Clapton. This way is a stony and a thorny path to tread; no one walks upon it willingly; those who are compelled to enter upon it speedily either run away and enlist, or they go and find a secluded spot in which to hang themselves. The smoother ways of the profession are only to be entered by one who is the possessor of a degree, and it was the determination of this young man to pass the London University Examinations, and obtain the degree of Bachelor. In this way his value in the Educational market would be at once doubled, and he could command a better place and lighter work. He showed himself, in his letters, to be an eminently practical, shrewd, selfish, and thick-skinned young man, who would quite certainly get on in the world, and was resolved to lose no opportunities, and, with that view, he took as much work out of his tutor as he could get for the money. Had he known that the "I. A." who took such a wonderful amount of trouble with his papers was only a woman, he would certainly have extorted a great deal more work for his money. All this Iris read in his letters and understood. There is no way in which a man more surely and more naturally reveals his true character than in his correspondence, so that after a while, even though the subject of the letters be nothing more interesting than the studies in hand, those who write the letters may learn to know each other if they have but the mother wit to read between the lines. Certainly this young schoolmaster did not know Iris, nor did he desire to discover what she was like, being wholly occupied with the study of himself. Strange and kindly provision of Nature. The less desirable a man actually appears to others, the more fondly he loves and believes in himself. I have heard it whispered that Narcissus was a hunchback.

Then there was another pupil, a girl who was working her very hardest in order to become, as she hoped, a first-class governess, and who, poor thing! by reason of natural thickness would never reach even the third rank. Iris would have been sorry for her, because she worked so fiercely, and was so stupid, but there was something hard and unsympathetic in her nature which forbade pity. She was miserably poor, too, and had an unsuccessful father, no doubt as stupid as herself, and made pitiful excuses for not forwarding the slender fees with regularity.

Everybody who is poor should be, on that ground alone, worthy of pity and sympathy. But the hardness, and stupidity, and the ill-temper, all combined and clearly shown in her letters, repelled her tutor. Iris, who drew imaginary portraits of her pupils, pictured the girl as plain to look upon, with a dull eye, a leathery, pallid cheek, a forehead without sunshine upon it, and lips which seldom parted with a smile.

Then there was, besides, a Cambridge undergraduate. He was neither clever, nor industrious, nor very ambitious; he thought that a moderate place was quite good enough for him to aim at, and he found that this unknown and obscure tutor by correspondence was cheap and obliging, and willing to take trouble, and quite as efficacious for his purposes as the most expensive Cambridge coach. Iris presently discovered that he was lazy and luxurious, a deceiver of himself, a dweller in Fool's Paradise, and a consistent shirker of work. Therefore, she disliked him. Had she actually known him and talked with him, she might have liked him better in spite of these faults and shortcomings, for he was really a pleasant, easy-going youth, who wallowed in intellectual sloth, but loved physical activity; who will presently drop easily, and comfortably, and without an effort or a doubt, into the bosom of the Church, and will develop later on into an admirable country parson, unless they disestablish the Establishment; in which case, I do not know what he will do.

But this other man, this man who was coming for an explanation, this Mr. Arnold Arbuthnot, was, if you please, a very different kind of pupil. In the first place he was a gentleman, a fact which he displayed, but not ostentatiously, in every line of his letters; next, he had come to her for instruction—the only pupil she had in that science, in heraldry, which she loved. It is far more pleasant to be describing a shield and setting questions in the queer old language of this queer old science, than in solving and proposing problems in trigonometry and conic sections. And then—how if your pupil begins to talk round the subject and to wander into other things? You cannot very well talk round a branch of mathematics, but heraldry is a subject surrounded by fields, meadows, and lawns, so to speak, all covered with beautiful flowers. Into these the pupil wandered, and Iris not unwillingly followed.

Thus the teaching of heraldry by correspondence became the most delightful interchange of letters imaginable, set off and enriched with a curious and strange piquancy, derived from the fact that one of them, supposed to be an elderly man, was a young girl, ignorant of the world except from books, and the advice given her by two old men, who formed all her society. Then, as was natural, what was at first a kind of play, became before long a serious and earnest confidence on the one side, and a hesitating reception on the other.

Latterly he more than once amused himself by drawing an imaginary portrait of her; it was a pleasing portrait, but it made her feel uneasy.

"I know you," he said, "from your letters, but yet I want to know you in person. I think you are a man advanced in years." Poor Iris! and she not yet twenty-one. "You sit in your study and read; you wear glasses, and your hair is grey; you have a kind heart and a cheerful voice; you are not rich—you have never tried to make yourself rich; you are therefore little versed in the ways of mankind; you take your ideas chiefly from books; the few friends you have chosen are true and loyal; you are full of sympathy, and quick to read the thoughts of those in whom you take an interest." A very fine character, but it made Iris's cheek to burn and her eyes to drop. To be sure she was not rich, nor did she know the world; so far her pupil was right, but yet she was not grey nor old. And, again, she was not, as he thought, a man.

Letter-writing is not extinct, as it is a commonplace to affirm, and as people would have us believe. Letters are written still—the most delightful letters—letters as copious, as charming, as any of the last century; but men and women no longer write their letters as carefully as they used to do in the old days, because they were then shown about, and very likely read aloud. Our letters, therefore, though their sentences are not so balanced nor their periods so rounded, are more real, more truthful, more spontaneous, and more delightful than the laborious productions of our ancestors, who had to weigh every phrase, and to think out their *bons mots*, epigrams, and smart things for weeks beforehand, so that the letter might appear full of impromptu wit. I should like, for instance, just for once, to rob the Outward or the Homeward Mail, in order to read all

the delightful letters which go every week backwards and forwards between the folk in India and the folk at home.

"I shall lose my letters," Iris reflected, and her heart sank. Not only did her correspondent begin to draw these imaginary portraits of her, but he proceeded to urge upon her to come out of her concealment, and to grant him an interview. This she might have refused in her desire to continue a correspondence which brightened her monotonous life. But there came another thing, and this decided her. He began to give, and to ask, opinions concerning love, marriage, and such topics—and then she perceived it could not possibly be discussed with him, even in domino and male disguise. "As for love," her pupil wrote, "I suppose it is a real and not a fancied necessity of life. A man, I mean, may go on a long time without it, but there will come a time—do not you think so?—when he is bound to feel the incompleteness of life without a woman to love. We ought to train our boys and girls from the very beginning to regard love and marriage as the only things really worth having, because without them there is no happiness. Give me your own experience. I am sure you must have been in love at some time or other in your life."

Anybody will understand that Iris could not possibly give her own experience in love-matters, nor could she plunge into speculative philosophy of this kind with her pupil. Obviously the thing must come to an end. Therefore she wrote a letter to him, telling him that "I. A." would meet him, if he pleased, that very evening at the hour of eight.

It is by this time sufficiently understood that Iris Aglen professed to teach—it is an unusual combination—mathematics and heraldry; she might also have taught equally well, had she chosen. sweetness of disposition, goodness of heart, the benefits conferred by pure and lofty thoughts on the expression of a girl's face, and the way to acquire all the other gracious, maidenly virtues; but either there is too limited a market for these branches of culture, or—which is perhaps the truer reason—there are so many English girls, not to speak of Americans, who are ready and competent to teach them, and do teach them to their brothers, and their lovers, and to each other, and to their younger sisters all day long.

As for her heraldry, it was natural that she should acquire that science, because her

grandfather knew as much as any Pur-suivant or King-at-Arms, and thought that by teaching the child a science which is nowadays cultivated by so few, he was going to make her fortune. Besides, ever mindful of the secret packet, he thought that an heiress ought to understand heraldry. It was, indeed, as you shall see, in this way that her fortune was made; but yet not quite in the way he proposed to make it. Nobody ever makes a fortune quite in the way at first intended for him.

As for her mathematics, it is no wonder that she was good in this science, because she was a pupil of Lala Roy.

This learned Bengalee condescended to acknowledge the study of mathematics as worthy even of the Indian intellect, and amused himself with them when he was not more usefully engaged in chess. He it was who, being a lodger in the house, taught Iris almost as soon as she could read how letters placed side by side may be made to signify and to accomplish stupendous things, and how they may disguise the most graceful and beautiful curves, and how they may even open a way into boundless space, and there disclose marvels. This wondrous world did the philosopher open to the ready and quick-witted girl; nor did he ever lead her to believe that it was at all an unusual or an extraordinary thing for a girl to be so quick and apt for science as herself, nor did he tell her that if she went to Newnham or to Girton, extraordinary glories would await her, with the acclamations of the multitude in the Senate House and the praise of the Moderators. Iris, therefore, was not proud of her mathematics, which seemed part of her very nature. But of her heraldry she was, I fear, extremely proud—proud even to sinfulness. No doubt this was the reason why, through her heraldry, the humiliation of this evening fell upon her.

"If he is young," she thought, "if he is young—and he is sure to be young—he will be very angry at having opened his mind to a girl"—it will be perceived that, although she knew so much mathematics, she was really very ignorant of the opposite sex, not to know that a young man likes nothing so much as the opening of his mind to a young lady. "If he is old, he will be more humiliated still"—as if any man at any age was ever humiliated by confessing himself to a woman. "If he is a proud man, he will never forgive me. Indeed, I am sure that he can never forgive me, whatever kind of man he is.

But I can do no more than tell him I am sorry. He will not forgive me then, what more can I say? Oh, if he should be vindictive!"

When the clock began to strike the hour of eight, Iris lighted her candles, and before the pulsation of the last stroke had died away, she heard the ringing of the house-bell.

The door was opened by her grandfather himself, and she heard his voice.

"Yes," he said, "you will find your tutor, in the first floor front, alone. If you are inclined to be vindictive, when you hear all, please ring the bell for me."

The visitor mounted the stairs, and Iris, hearing his step, began to tremble and to shake for fear.

When the door opened she did not at first look up. But she knew that her pupil was there, and that he was looking for his tutor.

"Pardon me"—the voice was not unpleasant—"pardon me. I was directed to this room. I have an appointment with my tutor."

"If," said Iris, rising, for the time for confession had at length arrived, "if you are Mr. Arnold Arbuthnot, your appointment is, I believe, with me."

"It is with my tutor," he said.

"I am your tutor. My initials are I. A."

The room was only lighted by two candles, but they showed him the hanging head and the form of a woman, and he thought she looked young, judging by the outline. Her voice was sweet and clear.

"My tutor? You?"

"If you really are Mr. Arnold Arbuthnot, the gentleman who has corresponded with I. A. for the last two years on heraldry, and— and other things, I am your tutor."

She had made the dreaded confession. The rest would be easy. She even ventured to raise her eyes, and she perceived, with a sinking of the heart, that her estimate of her pupil's age was tolerably correct. He was a young man, apparently not more than five or six and twenty.

It now remained to be seen if he was vindictive.

As for the pupil, when he recovered a little from the blow of this announcement, he saw before him a girl, quite young, dressed in a simple grey or drab coloured stuff, which I have reason to believe is called Carmelite. The dress had a crimson kerchief arranged in folds over the front,

and a lace collar, and at first sight it made the beholder feel that, considered merely as a setting of face and figure, it was remarkably effective. Surely this is the true end and aim of all feminine adornment, apart from the elementary object of keeping one warm.

"I—I did not know," the young man said, after a pause, "I did not know at all that I was corresponding with a lady."

Here she raised her eyes again, and he observed that the eyes were very large and full of light—"eyes like the fishpools of Heshbon"—dove's eyes.

"I am very sorry," she said meekly. "It was my fault."

He observed other things now, having regained the use of his senses. Thus he saw that she wore her hair, which was of a wonderful chestnut brown colour, parted at the side like a boy's, and that she had not committed the horrible enormity of cutting it short. He observed, too, that while her lips were quivering and her cheek was blushing, her look was steadfast. Are dove's eyes, he asked himself, always steadfast?

"I ought to have told you long ago, when you began to write about—about yourself and other things, when I understood that you thought I was a man—oh, long ago I ought to have told you the truth!"

"It is wonderful!" said the young man, "it is truly wonderful!" He was thinking of the letters—long letters, full of sympathy, and a curious unworldly wisdom, which she had sent him in reply to his own, and he was comparing them with her youthful face, as one involuntarily compares a poet's appearance with his poetry—generally a disappointing thing to do, and always a foolish thing.

"I am very sorry," she repeated.

"Have you many pupils, like myself?"

"I have several pupils in mathematics. It does not matter to them whether they are taught by a man or a woman. In heraldry I had only one—you."

He looked round the room. One end was occupied by shelves, filled with books; in one of the windows was a table, covered with papers and adorned with a type-writer, by means of which Iris carried on her correspondence. For a moment the unworthy thought crossed his mind that he had been, perhaps, artfully lured on by a Siren for his destruction. Only for a moment, however, because she raised her face and met his gaze again, with eyes so

frank and innocent, that he could not doubt them. Besides, there was the clear outline of her face, so truthful and so honest. The young man was an artist, and therefore believed in outline. Could any sane and intelligent creature doubt those curves of cheek and chin?

"I have put together," she said, "all your letters for you. Here they are. Will you, please, take them back? I must not keep them any longer." He took them, and bowed. "I made this appointment, as you desired, to tell you the truth, because I have deceived you too long; and to beg you to forgive me; and to say that, of course, there is an end to our correspondence."

"Thank you. It shall be as you desire. Exactly," he repeated, "as you desire."

He ought to have gone at once. There was nothing more to say. Yet he lingered, holding the letters in his hand.

"To write these letters," he said, "has been for a long time one of my greatest pleasures, partly because I felt that I was writing to a friend, and so wrote in full trust and confidence, partly because they procured me a reply—in the shape of your letters. Must I take back these letters of mine?"

She made no answer.

"It is hard, is it not, to lose a friend so slowly acquired, thus suddenly and unexpectedly?"

"Yes," she said, "it is hard. I am very sorry. It was my fault."

"Perhaps I have said something, in my ignorance—something which ought not to have been said or written—something careless—something which has lowered me in your esteem—"

"Oh no—no!" said Iris quickly. "You have never said anything that a gentleman should not have said."

"And if you yourself found any pleasure in answering my letters—"

"Yes," said Iris with frankness, "it gave me great pleasure to read and to answer your letters, as well as I could."

"I have not brought back your letters. I hope you will allow me to keep them. And, if you will, why should we not continue our correspondence as before?"

But he did not ask the question confidently.

"No," said Iris decidedly; "it can never be continued as before. How could it, when once we have met, and you have learned the truth?"

"Then," he continued, "if we cannot write to each other any more, can we not talk?"

She ought to have informed him on the spot that the thing was quite impossible, and not to be thought of for one moment. She should have said, coldly, but firmly—every right-minded and well-behaved girl would have said, "Sir, it is not right that you should come alone to a young lady's study. Such things are not to be permitted. If we meet in society, we may, perhaps, renew our acquaintance."

But girls do go on sometimes as if there was no such thing as propriety at all, and such cases are said to be growing more frequent. Besides, Iris was not a girl who was conversant with social convenances. She looked at her pupil thoughtfully and frankly.

"Can we?" she asked. She who hesitates is lost, a maxim which cannot be too often read, said, and studied. It is one of the very few golden rules omitted from Solomon's Proverbs. "Can we? It would be pleasant."

"If you will permit me," he blushed and stammered, wondering at her ready acquiescence, "if you will permit me to call upon you sometimes—here, if you will allow me, or anywhere else. You know my name. I am by profession an artist, and I have a studio close at hand in Tite Street."

"To call upon me here?" she repeated.

Now, when one is a tutor, and has been reading with a pupil for two years, one regards that pupil with a feeling which may not be exactly parental, but which is unconventional. If Arnold had said, "Behold me! May I, being a young man, call upon you, a young woman?" she would have replied: "No, young man, that can never be." But when he said, "May I, your pupil, call sometimes upon you, my tutor?" a distinction was at once established by which the impossible became possible.

"Yes," she said, "I think you may call. My grandfather has his tea with me every evening at six. You may call then if it will give you any pleasure."

"You really will let me come here?"

The young man looked as if the permission was likely to give him the greatest pleasure.

"Yes; if you wish it."

She spoke just exactly like an Oxford Don giving an undergraduate permission to take an occasional walk with him, or to call for conversation and advice at certain

times in his rooms. Arnold noticed the manner, and smiled.

"Still," he said, "as your pupil?"

He meant to set her at her ease concerning the propriety of these visits. She thought he meant a continuation of a certain little arrangement as to fees, and blushed.

"No," she said; "I must not consider you as a pupil any longer. You have put an end to that yourself."

"I do not mind, if only I continue your friend."

"Oh," she said, "but we must not pledge ourselves rashly to friendship. Perhaps you will not like me when you once come to know me."

"Then I remain your disciple."

"Oh no," she flushed again, "you must already think me presumptuous enough in venturing to give you advice. I have written so many foolish things——"

"Indeed, no," he interrupted; "a thousand times no. Let me tell you once for all, if I may, that you have taught me a great deal—far more than you can ever understand, or than I can explain. Where did you get your wisdom? Not from the Book of Human Life. Of that you cannot know much as yet."

"The wisdom is in your imagination, I think. You shall not be my pupil, nor my disciple, but—well—because you have told me so much, and I seem to have known you so long, and, besides, because you must never feel ashamed of having told me so much, you shall come, if you please, as my brother."

It was not till afterwards that she reflected on the vast responsibilities she incurred in making this proposal, and on the eagerness with which her pupil accepted it.

"As your brother?" he cried, offering her his hand. "Why, it is far—far more than I could have ventured to hope. Yes, I will come as your brother. And now, although you know so much about me, you have told me nothing about yourself—not even your name."

"My name is Iris Aglen."

"Iris! It is a pretty name."

"It was, I believe, my grandmother's. But I never saw her, and I do not know who or what my father's relations are."

"Iris Aglen!" he repeated. "Iris was the Herald of the Gods, and the rainbow was constructed on purpose to serve her for a way from Heaven to the Earth."

"Mathematicians do not allow that," said the girl, smiling.

"I don't know any mathematics. But now I understand in what school you learned your heraldry. You are Queen-at-Arms at least, and Herald to the Gods of Olympus."

He wished to add something about the loveliness of Aphrodite, and the wisdom of Athene, but he refrained, which was in good taste.

"Thank you, Mr. Arbuthnot," Iris replied. "I learned my heraldry of my grandfather, who taught himself from the books he sells. And my mathematics I learned of Lala Roy, who is our lodger, and a learned Hindoo gentleman. My father is dead—and my mother as well—and I have no friends in the world except these two old men, who love me, and have done their best to spoil me."

Her eyes grew humid and her voice trembled.

No other friends in the world! Strange to say, this young man felt a little sense of relief. No other friends. He ought to have sympathised with the girl's loneliness; he might have asked her how she could possibly endure life without companionship, but he did not; he only felt that other friends might have been rough and ill-bred; this girl derived her refinement, not only from nature, but also from separation from the other girls who might in the ordinary course have been her friends and associates. And if no other friends, then no lover. Arnold was only going to visit the young lady as her brother; but lovers do not generally approve the introduction of such novel effects as that caused by the appearance of a brand-new and previously unsuspected brother. He was glad, on the whole, that there was no lover.

Then he left her, and went home to his studio, where he sat till midnight, sketching a thousand heads one after the other with rapid pencil. They were all girls' heads, and they all had hair parted on the left side, with a broad, square forehead, full eyes, and straight, clear-cut features.

"No," he said, "it is no good. I cannot catch the curve of her mouth—nobody could. What a pretty girl! And I am to be her brother! What will Clara say? And how—oh, how in the world can she be, all at the same time, so young, so pretty, so learned, so quick, so sympathetic, and so wise?"

CHAPTER IV. THE WOLF AT HOME.

THERE is a certain music-hall, in a certain street, leading out of a certain road,

and this is quite clear and definite enough. Its distinctive characteristics, above any of its fellows, is a vulgarity so profound, that the connoisseur or student in that branch of mental culture thinks that here at last he has reached the lowest depths. For this reason one shrinks from actually naming it, because it might become fashionable, and then, if it fondly tried to change its character to suit its changed audience, it might entirely lose its present charm, and become simply commonplace.

Joe Gallop stood in the doorway of this hall, a few days after the Tempting of Mr. James. It was about ten o'clock, when the entertainments were in full blast. He had a cigarette between his lips, as becomes a young man of fashion, but it had gone out, and he was thinking of something. To judge from the cunning look in his eyes, it was something not immediately connected with the good of his fellow-creatures. Presently the music of the orchestra ceased, and certain female acrobats, who had been "contorting" themselves fearfully and horribly for a quarter of an hour upon the stage, kissed their hands, which were as hard as ropes, from the nature of their profession, and smiled a fond farewell. There was some applause, but not much, because neither man nor woman cares greatly for female acrobats, and the performers themselves are with difficulty persuaded to learn their art, and generally make haste to "go in" again as soon as they can, and try henceforward to forget that they have ever done things with ropes and bars.

Joe, when they left the stage, ceased his meditations, whatever may have been their subject, lit a fresh cigarette, and assumed an air of great expectation, as if something really worth seeing and hearing were now about to appear. And when the Chairman brought down the hammer with the announcement that Miss Carlotta Claradine, the People's Favourite, would now oblige, it was Joe who loudly led the way for a tumultuous burst of applause. Then the band, which at this establishment, and others like unto it, only plays two tunes, one for acrobats, and one for singers, struck up the second air, and the People's Favourite appeared. She may have had by nature a sweet and tuneful voice; perhaps it was in order to please her friends, the People, that she converted it into a harsh and rasping voice, that she delivered her words with even too much gesture, and that she uttered a kind of

shriek at the beginning of every verse, which was not in the composer's original music, but was thrown in to compel attention. She was dressed with great simplicity, in plain frock, apron, and white cap, to represent a fair young Quakeress, and she sang a song about her lover with much "archness"—a delightful quality in woman.

"Splendid, splendid! Bravo!" shouted Joseph at the end of the first verse. "That fetches 'em, don't it, sir? Positively drags 'em in, sir."

He addressed his words, without turning his head, to a man who had just come in, and was gazing at him with unbounded astonishment.

"You here, Joe?" he said.

Joe started.

"Why, Chalker, who'd have thought to meet you in this music-hall?"

"It's a good step, isn't it? And what are you doing, Joe? I heard you'd left the P. and O. Company."

"Had to," said Joe. "A gentleman has no choice but to resign. Ought never to have gone there. There's no position, Chalker—no position at all in the service. That is what I felt. Besides, the uniform, for a man of my style, is unbecoming. And the Captain was a Cad."

"Humph! and what are you doing then? Living on the old man again?"

"Never you mind, David Chalker," replied Joe with dignity; "I am not likely to trouble you any more after the last time I called upon you."

"Well, Joe," said the other, without taking offence, "it is not my business to lend money without security, and all you had to offer was your chance of what your grandfather might leave you—or might not."

"And a very good security too, if he does justice to his relations."

"Yes; but how did I know whether he was going to do justice? Come, Joe, don't be shirty with an old friend."

There was a cordiality in the solicitor's manner which boded well. Joe was pretty certain that Mr. Chalker was not a man to cultivate friendship unless something was to be got out of it. It is only the idle and careless who can waste time over unprofitable friendships. With most men friendship means assisting in each other's little games, so that every man must become, on occasion, bonnet, confederate, and pal, for his friend, and may expect the same kindly office for himself.

If Chalker wished to keep up his old

acquaintance with Joe Gallop, there must be some good reason. Now the only reason which suggested itself to Joe at that moment was that Chalker had lately drawn a new will for the old man, and that he himself might be in it. Here he was wrong. The only reason of Mr. Chalker's friendly attitude was curiosity to know what Joe was doing, and how he was living.

"Look here, Chalker," Joe whispered "you used to pretend to be a pal. What's the good of being a pal if you won't help a fellow? You see my grandfather once a week or so; you shut the door and have long talks with him. If you know what he's going to do with his money, why not tell a fellow? Let's make a business matter of it."

"How much do you know, Joe, and what is your business proposal worth?"

"Nothing at all; that's the honest truth—I know nothing. The old man's as tight as wax. But there's other business in the world besides his. Suppose I know of something a precious sight better than his investments, and suppose—just suppose—that I wanted a lawyer to manage it for me."

"Well, Joe?"

"Encore! Bravo! Encore! Bravo!" Joe banged his stick on the floor and shouted because the singer ended her first song. He looked so fierce and big, that all the bystanders made haste to follow his example.

"Splendid, isn't she?" he said.

"Hang the singer! What do you mean by other business?"

"Perhaps it's nothing. Perhaps there will be thousands in it. And perhaps I can get on without you, after all."

"Very well, Joe. Get on without me if you like."

"Look here, Chalker," Joe laid a persuasive hand on the other's arm, "can't we two be friendly? Why don't you give a fellow a lift? All I want to know is where the old man's put his money, and how he's left it."

"Suppose I do know," Mr. Chalker replied, wishing ardently that he did, "do you think I am going to betray trust—a solicitor betray trust—and for nothing? But if you want to talk real business, Joe, come to my office. You know where that is."

Joe knew very well; in fact, there had been more than one difficulty which had been adjusted through Mr. Chalker's not wholly disinterested aid.

Then the singer appeared again attired in a new and startling dress, and Joe began once more to applaud again with voice and stick. Mr. Chalker, surprised at this newly-developed enthusiasm for art, left him and walked up the hall, and sat down beside the Chairman, whom he seemed to know. In fact, the Chairman was also the Proprietor of the show, and Mr. Chalker was acting for him in his professional capacity, much as he had acted for Mr. Emblem.

"Who is your new singer?" he asked.

"She calls herself Miss Carlotta Claradine. She's a woman, let me tell you, Mr. Chalker, who will get along. Fine figure, plenty of cheek, loud voice, flings herself about, and don't mind a bit when the words are a leetle strong. That's the kind of singer the people like. That's her husband, at the far end of the room—the big, good-looking chap with the light moustache and the cigarette in his mouth."

"Whew!" Mr. Chalker whistled the low note which indicates surprise. "That's her husband, is it? The husband of Miss Carlotta Claradine, is it? Oho! oho! Her husband! Are you sure he is her husband?"

"Do you know him, then?"

"Yes, I know him. What was the real name of the girl?"

"Charlotte Smithers. This is her first appearance on any stage—and we made up the name for her when we first put her on the posters. I made it myself—out of Chlorodyne, you know, which is in the advertisements. Sounds well, don't it?—Carlotta Claradine."

"Very well, indeed. By Jove! Her husband, is he?"

"And, I suppose," said the Chairman, "lives on his wife's salary. Bless you, Mr. Chalker, there's a whole gang about every theatre and music-hall trying to get hold of the promising girls. It's a regular profession. Them as have nothing but their good looks may do for the mashers, but these chaps look out for the girls who'll bring in the money. What's a pretty face to them compared with the handling of a big salary every week? That's the sort Carlotta's husband belongs to."

"Well, the life will suit him down to the ground."

"And jealous with it, if you please. He comes here every night to applaud and takes her home himself. Keeps himself sober on purpose."

And then the lady appeared again in a

wonderful costume of blue silk and tights, personating the Lion Masher. It was her third and last song.

In the applause which followed, Mr. Chalker could discern plainly the stick as well as the voice of his old friend. And he thought how beautiful is the love of husband unto wife, and he smiled, thinking that when Joe came next to see him, he might perhaps hear truths which he had thought unknown, and, for certain reasons, wished to remain unknown.

Presently he saw the singer pass down the hall, and join her husband, who now, his labours ended, was seeking refreshment at the bar. She was a good-looking girl—still only a girl, and apparently under twenty—quietly dressed, yet looking anything but quiet. But that might have been due to her fringe, which was, so to speak, a prominent feature in her face. She was tall and well-made, with large features, an ample cheek, a full eye, and a wide mouth. A good-natured looking girl, and though her mouth was wide, it suggested smiles. The husband was exchanging a little graceful badinage with the barmaid when she joined him, and perhaps this made her look a little cross. "She's jealous, too," said Mr. Chalker, observant; "all the better." Yet a face which, on the whole, was prepossessing and good-natured, and betokened a disposition to make the best of the world.

"How long has she been married?" Mr. Chalker asked the Proprietor.

"Only about a month or so."

"Ah!"

Mr. Chalker proceeded to talk business, and gave no further hint of any interest in the newly-married pair.

"Now, Joe," said the singer, with a freezing glance at the barmaid, "are you going to stand here all night?"

Joe drank off his glass and followed his wife into the street. They walked side by side in silence, until they reached their lodgings. Then she threw off her hat and jacket, and sat down on the horsehair sofa and said abruptly:

"I can't do it, Joe; and I won't. So don't ask me."

"Wait a bit—wait a bit, Lotty, my love. Don't be in a hurry, now. Don't say rash things, there's a good girl." Joe spoke quite softly, as if he were not the least angry, but, perhaps, a little hurt. "There's not a bit of a hurry. You needn't decide to-day, nor yet to-morrow."

"I couldn't do it," she said. "Oh, it's a dreadful, wicked thing even to ask me. And only five weeks to-morrow since we married!"

"Lotty, my dear, let us be reasonable." He still spoke quite softly. "If we are not to go on like other people; if we are to be continually bothering our heads about honesty, and that rubbish, we shall be always down in the world. How do other people make money and get on? By humbug, my dear. By humbug. As for you, a little play-acting is nothing."

"But I am not the man's daughter, and my own father's alive and well."

"Look here, Lotty. You are always grumbling about the music-halls."

"Well, and good reason to grumble. If you heard those ballet-girls talk, and see how they go on at the back, you'd grumble. As for the music——" She laughed, as if against her will. "If anybody had told me six months ago—me, that used to go to the Cathedral Service every afternoon—that I should be a Lion Masher at a music-hall, and go on dressed in tights, I should have boxed his ears for impudence."

"Why, you don't mean to tell me, Lotty, that you wish you had stuck to the mouldy old place, and gone on selling music over the counter?"

"Well, then, perhaps I do."

"No, no, Lotty; your husband cannot let you say that."

"My husband can laugh and talk with barmaids. That makes him happy."

"Lotty," he said, "you are a little fool. And think of the Glory. Posters with your name in letters a foot and a half long—'The People's Favourite.' Why, don't they applaud you till their hands drop off?"

She melted a little.

"Applaud! As if that did any good! And me in tights!"

"As for the tights," Joe replied with dignity, "the only person whom you need consult on that subject is your husband; and since I do not object, I should like to see the man who does. Show me that man, Lotty, and I'll straighten him out for you. You have my perfect approval, my dear. I honour you for the tights."

"My husband's approval!"

She repeated his words again in a manner which had been on other occasions most irritating to him. But to-night he refused to be offended.

"Of course," he went on, "as soon as I

get a berth on another ship I shall take you off the boards. It is the husband's greatest delight, especially if he is a jolly sailor, to brave all dangers for his wife. Think, Lotty, how pleasant it would be not to do any more work."

"I should like to sing sometimes, to sing good music, at the great concerts. That's what I thought I was going to do."

"You shall; you shall sing as little or as often as you like. 'A sailor's wife a sailor's star should be.' You shall be a great lady, Lotty, and you shall just command your own line. Wait a bit, and you shall have your own carriage, and your own beautiful house, and go to as many balls as you like among the countesses and the swells."

"Oh, Joe!" she laughed. "Why, if we were as rich as anything, I should never get ladies to call upon me. And as for you, no one would ever take you to be a gentleman, you know."

"Why, what do you call me, now?"

He laughed, but without much enjoyment. No one likes to be told that he is not a gentleman, whatever his own suspicions on the subject may be.

"Never mind. I know a gentleman when I see one. Go on with your nonsense about being rich."

"I shall make you rich, Lotty, whether you like it or not," he said, still with unwonted sweetness.

She shook her head.

"Not by wickedness," she said stoutly.

"I've got here," he pulled a bundle of papers out of his pocket, "all the documents wanted to complete the case. All I want now is for the rightful heiress to step forward."

"I'm not the rightful heiress, and I'm not the woman to step forward, Joe; so don't you think it."

"I've been to-day," Joe continued, "to Doctors' Commons, and I've seen the will. There's no manner of doubt about it; and the money—oh, Lord, Lotty, if you only knew how much it is!"

"What does it matter, Joe, how much it is, if it is neither yours nor mine?"

"It matters this: that it ought all to be mine."

"How can that be, if it was not left to you?"

Joe was nothing, if not a man of resource. He therefore replied without hesitation or confusion:

"The money was left to a certain man and to his heirs. That man is dead. His

heiress should have succeeded, but she was kept out of her rights. She is dead, and I am her cousin, and entitled to all her property, because she made no will."

"Is that gospel truth, Joe? Is she dead? Are you sure?"

"Quite sure," he replied. "Dead as a door-nail."

"Is that the way you got the papers?"

"That's the way, Lotty."

"Then why not go to a lawyer and make him take up the case for you, and honestly get your own?"

"You don't know law, my dear, or you wouldn't talk nonsense about lawyers. There are two ways. One is to go myself to the present unlawful possessor and claim the whole. It's a woman; she would be certain to refuse, and then we should go to law, and very likely lose it all, although the right is on our side. The other way is for some one—say you—to go to her and say: 'I am that man's daughter. Here are my proofs. Here are all his papers. Give me back my own.' That you could do in the interests of justice, though I own it is not the exact truth."

"And if she refuses then?"

"She can't refuse, with the man's daughter actually standing before her. She might make a fuss for a bit. But she would have to give in at last."

"Joe, consider. You have got some papers, whatever they may contain. Suppose that it is all true that you have told me——"

"Lotty, my dear, when did I ever tell you an untruth?"

"When did you ever tell me the truth, my dear? Don't talk wild. Suppose it is all true, how are you going to make out where your heiress has been all this time, and what she has been doing?"

"Trust me for that."

"I trust you for making up something or other, but—oh, Joe, you little think, you clever people, how seldom you succeed in deceiving any one."

"I've got such a story for you, Lotty, as would deceive anybody. Listen now. It's part truth, and part—the other thing. Your father——"

"My father, poor dear man," Lotty interrupted, "is minding his music-shop in Gloucester, and little thinking what wickedness his daughter is being asked to do."

"Hang it! the girl's father, then. He died in America, where he went under another name, and you were picked up by

strangers and reared under that name, in complete ignorance of your own family. All which is true and can be proved."

"Who brought her up?"

"People in America. I'm one of 'em."

"Who is to prove that?"

"I am. I am come to England on purpose. I am her guardian."

"Who is to prove that you are the girl's guardian?"

"I shall find somebody to prove that."

His thoughts turned to Mr. Chalker, a gentleman whom he judged capable of proving anything he was paid for.

"And suppose they ask me questions?"

"Don't answer 'em. You know very little. The papers were only found the other day. You are not expected to know anything."

"Where was the real girl?"

"With her grandfather."

"Where was the grandfather?"

"What does that matter?" he replied; "I will tell you afterwards."

"When did the real girl die?"

"That, too, I will tell you afterwards."

Lotty leaned her cheek upon her hand, and looked at her husband thoughtfully.

"Let us be plain, Joe."

"You can never be plain, my dear," he replied with the smile of a lover, not a husband; "never in your husband's eyes; not even in tights."

But she was not to be won by flattery.

"Fine words," she said, "fine words. What do they amount to? Oh, Joe, little I thought when you came along with your beautiful promises, what sort of a man I was going to marry."

"A very good sort of a man," he said. "You've got a jolly sailor—an officer and a gentleman. Come now, what have you got to say to this? Can't you be satisfied with an officer and a gentleman?"

He drew himself up to his full height. Well, he was a handsome fellow; there was no denying it.

"Good looks and fine words," his wife went on. "Well, and now I've got to keep you, and if you could make me sing in a dozen halls every night, you would, and spend the money on yourself—joyfully you would."

"We would spend it together, my dear. Don't turn rusty, Lotty."

He was not a bad-tempered man, and this kind of talk did not anger him at all. So long as his wife worked hard and brought in the coin for him to spend, what mattered for a few words now and then? Besides he wanted her assistance

"What are you driving at?" he went on. "I show you a bit of my hand, and you begin talking round and round. Look here, Lotty. Here's a splendid chance for us. I must have a woman's help. I would rather have your help than any other woman's—yes, than any other woman's in the world. I would indeed. If you won't help me, why, then, of course, I must go to some other woman."

His wife gasped and choked. She knew already, after only five weeks' experience, how bad a man he was—how unscrupulous, false, and treacherous, how lazy and selfish. But, after a fashion, she loved him; after a woman's fashion, she was madly jealous of him. Another woman! And only the other night she had seen him giving brandy-and-soda to one of the music-hall ballet-girls. Another woman!

"If you do, Joe," she said; "oh, if you do—I will kill her and you too!"

He laughed.

"If I do, my dear, you don't think I shall be such a fool as to tell you who she is. Do you suppose that no woman has ever fallen in love with me before you? But then, my pretty, you see I don't talk about them; and do you suppose—oh, Lotty, are you such a fool as to suppose that you are the first girl I ever fell in love with?"

"What do you want me to do? Tell me again."

"I have told you already. I want you to become, for the time, the daughter of the man who died in America; you will claim your inheritance; I will provide you with all the papers; I will stand by you; I will back you up with such a story as will disarm all suspicion. That is all."

"Yes. I understand. Haven't people been sent to prison for less, Joe?"

"Foolish people have. Not people who are well advised and under good management. Mind you, this business is under my direction. I am boss."

She made no reply, but took her candle and went off to bed.

In the dead of night she awakened her husband.

"Joe," she said, "is it true that you know another girl who would do this for you?"

"More than one, Lotty," he replied, this man of resource, although he was only half awake. "More than one. A great many more. Half-a-dozen, I know, at least."

She was silent. Half an hour afterwards she woke him up again.

"Joe," she said, "I've made up my mind. You sha'n't say that I refused to do for you what any other girl in the world would have done."

As a tempter, it will be seen that Joe was unsurpassed.

It was now a week since he had received, carefully wrapped in wool, and deposited in a wooden-box dispatched by Post, a key, newly made. It was, also, very nearly a week since he had used that key. It was used during Mr. Emblem's hour for tea, while James waited and watched outside in an agony of terror. But Joe did not find what he wanted. There were in the safe one or two ledgers, a banker's book, a cheque-book, and a small quantity of money. But there were not any records at all of monies invested. There were no railway certificates, waterwork shares, transfers, or notes of stocks, mortgages, loans, or anything at all. The only thing that he saw was a roll of papers tied up with red tape. On the roll was written: "For Iris. To be given to her on her twenty-first birthday."

"What the deuce is this, I wonder?" Joe took this out and looked at it suspiciously. "Can he be going to give her all his money before he dies? Is he going to make her inherit at once?" The thought was so exasperating that he slipped the roll into his pocket. "At all events," he said, "she sha'n't have them until I have read them first. I dare say they won't be missed for a day or two."

He calculated that he could read and master the contents that night, and put back the papers in the safe in the morning while James was opening the shop.

"There's nothing, James," he whispered as he went out, the safe being locked again. "There is nothing at all. Look here, my lad, you must try another way of finding out where the money is."

"I wish I was sure that he hasn't carried off something in his pocket," James murmured.

Joe spent the whole evening alone, contrary to his usual practice, which was, as we have seen, to spend it at a certain music-hall. He read the papers over and over again.

"I wish," he said at length, "I wish I had known this only two months ago. I wish I had paid more attention to Iris. What a dreadful thing it is to have a grandfather who keeps secrets from his grandson! What a game we might have had over this job! What a game we might have still if——"

And here he stopped, for the first germ or conception of a magnificent coup dawned upon him, and fairly dazzled him so that his eyes saw a bright light and nothing else.

"If Lotty would," he said. "But I am afraid she won't hear of it." He sprang to his feet and caught sight of his own face in the looking-glass over the fireplace. He smiled. "I will try," he said, "I think I know, by this time, how to get round most of 'em. Once they get to feel there are other women in the world, beside themselves, they're pretty easy worked. I will try."

One has only to add to the revelations already made that Joe paid a second visit to the shop, this time early in the morning. The shutters were only just taken down. James was going about with that remarkable watering-pot only used in shops, which has a little stream running out of it, and Mr. Emblem was upstairs slowly shaving and dressing in his bedroom. He walked in, nodded to his friend the Assistant, opened the safe, and put back the roll.

"Now," he murmured, "if the old man has really been such a dunder-headed pump as not to open the packet all these years, what the devil can he know? The name is different; he hasn't got any clue to the will; he hasn't got the certificate of his daughter's marriage, or of the child's baptism—both in the real name. He hasn't got anything. As for the girl here, Iris, having the same christian-name, that's nothing. I suppose there is more than one woman with such a fool of a name as that about in the world."

"Foxy," he said cheerfully, "have you found anything yet about the investments? Odd, isn't it? Nothing in the safe at all. You can have your key back."

He tossed him the key carelessly and went away.

The question of his grandfather's savings was grown insignificant beside this great and splendid prize which lay waiting for him. What could the savings be? At best a few thousands; the slowly saved thrift of fifty years; nobody knew better than Joe himself how much his own profligacies had cost his grandfather; a few thousands, and those settled on his cousin Iris, so that, to get his share, he would have to try every kind of persuasion unless he could get up a case for law. But the other thing—why, it was nearly all personal estate, so far as he could learn by the will, and he had read it over and

over again in the room at Somerset House, with the long table in it, and the watchful man who won't let anybody copy anything. What a shame, he thought, not to let will be copied! Personalty sworn under a hundred and twenty thousand, all in Three Per Cents., and devised to a certain young lady, the testator's ward, in trust, for the testator's son, or his heirs, when he or they should present themselves. Meantime, the ward was to receive for her own use and benefit, year by year, the whole income.

"It is unfortunate," said Joe, "that we can't come down upon her for arrears. Still, there's an income, a steady income, of three thousand six hundred a year when the son's heirs present themselves. I should like to call myself a solicitor, but that kite won't fly, I'm afraid. Lotty must be the sole heiress. Dressed quiet, without any powder, and her fringe brushed flat, she'd pass for a lady anywhere. Perhaps it's lucky, after all, that I married her, though if I had had the good sense to make up to Iris, who's a deuced sight prettier, she'd have kept me going almost as well with her pupils, and set me right with the old man, and handed me over this magnificent haul for a finish. If only the old man hasn't broken the seals and read the papers!"

The old man had not, and Joe's fears were, therefore, groundless.

CHAPTER V. AS A BROTHER.

ARNOLD immediately began to use the privilege accorded to him with a large and liberal interpretation. If, he argued, a man is to be treated as a brother, there should be the immediate concession of the exchange of christian-names, and he should be allowed to call as often as he pleases. Naturally he began by trying to read the secret of a life self-contained, so dull, and yet so happy, so strange to his experience.

"Is this, Iris," he asked, "all your life? Is there nothing more?"

"No," she said; "I think you have seen all. In the morning I have my correspondence; in the afternoon I do my sewing, I play a little, I read, or I walk, sometimes by myself, and sometimes with Lala Roy; in the evening I play again, or I read again, or I work at the mathematics, while my grandfather and Lala Roy have their chess. We used to go to the theatre sometimes, but of late my grandfather has not gone. At ten we go to bed. That is all my life."

"But, Iris, have you no friends at all,

and no relations? Are there no girls of your own age who come to see you?"

"No, not one; I have a cousin, but he is not a good man at all. His father and mother are in Australia. When he comes here, which is very seldom, my grandfather falls ill only with thinking about him and looking at him. But I have no other relations, because, you see, I do not know who my father's people were."

"Then," said Arnold, "you may be countless in your own right; you may have any number of rich people and nice people for your cousins. Do you not sometimes think of that?"

"No," said Iris; "I never think about things impossible."

"If I were you, I should go about the streets, and walk round the picture-galleries looking for a face like your own. There cannot be many. Let me draw your face, Iris, and then we will send it to the Grosvenor, and label it, 'Wanted, this young lady's cousins.' You must have cousins, if you could only find them out."

"I suppose I must. But what if they should turn out to be rough and disagreeable people?"

"Your cousins could not be disagreeable, Iris," said Arnold.

She shook her head.

"One thing I should like," she replied. "It would be to find that my cousins, if I have any, are clever people—astronomers, mathematicians, great philosophers, and writers. But what nonsense it is even to talk of such things; I am quite alone, except for my grandfather and Lala Roy."

"And they are old," murmured Arnold.

"Do not look at me with such pity," said the girl. "I am very happy. I have my own occupation; I am independent; I have my work to fill my mind; and I have these two old gentlemen to care for and think of. They have taken so much care of me that I ought to think of nothing else but their comfort; and then there are the books downstairs—thousands of beautiful old books always within my reach."

"But you must have some companions, if only to talk and walk with."

"Why, the books are my companions; and then Lala Roy goes for walks with me; and as for talking, I think it is much more pleasant to think."

"Where do you walk?"

"There is Battersea Park; there are the squares; and if you take an omnibus, there are the Gardens and Hyde Park."

"But never alone, Iris?"

"Oh yes, I am often alone. Why not?"

"I suppose," said Arnold, shirking the question, because this is a civilised country, and, in fact, why not? "I suppose that it is your work which keeps you from feeling life dull and monotonous."

"No life," she said, looking as wise as Newton, if Newton was ever young and handsome—"no life can be dull when one is thinking about mathematics all day. Do you study mathematics?"

"No; I was at Oxford, you know."

"Then perhaps you prefer metaphysics? Though Lala Roy says that the true metaphysics, which he has tried to teach me, can only be reached by the Hindoo intellect."

"No, indeed; I have never read any metaphysics whatever. I have only got the English intellect." This he said with intent satirical, but Iris failed to understand it so, and thought it was meant for a commendable humility.

"Physical science, perhaps?"

"No, Iris. Philosophy, mathematics, physics, metaphysics, or science of any kind have I never learned, except only the science of Heraldry, which you have taught me, with a few other things."

"Oh!" She wondered how a man could exist at all without learning these things. "Not any science at all? How can any one live without some science?"

"I knew very well," he said, "that as soon as I was found out I should be despised."

"Oh no, not despised. But it seems such a pity——"

"There is another kind of life, Iris, which you do not know. You must let me teach you. It is the life of Art. If you would only condescend to show the least curiosity about me, Iris, I would try to show you something of the Art life."

"How can I show curiosity about you, Arnold? I feel none."

"No; that is just the thing which shames me. I have felt the most lively curiosity about you, and I have asked you thousands of impertinent questions."

"Not impertinent, Arnold. If you want to ask any more, pray do. I dare say you cannot understand my simple life."

"And you ask me nothing at all about myself. It isn't fair, Iris."

"Why should I? I know you already."

"You know nothing at all about me."

"Oh yes, I know you very well indeed"

I knew you before you came here. You showed me yourself in your letters. You are exactly like the portrait I drew of you. I never thought, for instance, that you were an old gentleman, as you thought me."

He laughed. It was a new thing to see Iris using, even gently, the dainty weapons of satire.

"But you do not know what I am, or what is my profession, or anything at all about me."

"No; I do not care to know. All that is not part of yourself. It is outside you."

"And because you thought you knew me from those letters, you suffer me to come here and be your disciple still? Yet you gave me back my letters?"

"That was because they were written to me under a wrong impression."

"Will you have them back again?"

She shook her head.

"I know them all by heart," she said simply.

There was not the slightest sign of coquetry or flattery in her voice, or in her eyes, which met his look with clear and steady gaze.

"I cannot ask you to read my portrait to me as you drew it from those pictures."

"Why not?" She began to read him his portrait as readily as if she were stating the conclusion of a problem. "I saw that you were young and full of generous thoughts; sometimes you were indignant with things as they are, but generally you laughed at them and accepted them. It is, it seems, the nature of your friends to laugh a great deal at things which they ought to remedy if they could, not laugh at them. I thought that you wanted some strong stimulus to work; anybody could see that you were a man of kindly nature and good-breeding. You were careful not to offend by anything that you wrote, and I was certain that you were a man of honour. I trusted you, Arnold, before I saw your face, because I knew your soul."

"Trust me still, Iris," he said in rather a husky voice.

"Of course I did not know, and never thought, what sort of a man you were to look at. Yet I ought to have known that you were handsome. I should have guessed that from the very tone of your letters. A hunchback or a cripple could not have written in so light-hearted a strain, and I should have discovered, if I had thought of such a thing, that you were very well

satisfied with your personal appearance. Young men should always be that, at least, if only to give them confidence."

"Oh, Iris—oh! Do you really think me conceited?"

"I did not say that. I only said that you were satisfied with yourself. That, I understand now, was clear, from many little natural touches in your letters."

"What else did you learn?"

"Oh, a great deal—much more than I can tell you. I knew that you go into society, and I learned from you what society means; and though you tried to be sarcastic, I understood easily that you liked social pleasure."

"Was I sarcastic?"

"Was it not sarcastic to tell me how the fine ladies, who affect so much enthusiasm for art, go to see the galleries on the private-view day, and are never seen in them again? Was it not sarcastic——"

"Spare me, Iris. I will never do it again. And knowing so much, do you not desire to know more?"

"No, Arnold. I am not interested in anything else."

"But my position, my profession, my people—are you not curious to know them?"

"No. They are not you. They are accidents of yourself."

"Philosopher! But you must know more about me. I told you I was an artist. But you have never enquired whether I was a great artist or a little one."

"You are still a little artist," she said. "I know that, without being told. But perhaps you may become great when you learn to work seriously."

"I have been lazy," he replied with something like a blush, "but that is all over now. I am going to work. I will give up society. I will take my profession seriously, if only you will encourage me."

Did he mean what he said? When he came away he used at this period to ask himself that question, and was astonished at the length he had gone. With any other girl in the world, he would have been taken at his word, and either encouraged to go on, or snubbed on the spot. But Iris received these advances as if they were a confession of weakness.

"Why do you want me to encourage you?" she asked. "I know nothing about Art. Can't you encourage yourself, Arnold?"

"Iris, I must tell you something more about myself. Will you listen for a moment?"

Well, I am the son of a clergyman who now holds a colonial appointment. I have got the usual number of brothers and sisters, who are doing the usual things. I will not bore you with details about them."

"No," said Iris, "please do not."

"I am the adopted son, or ward, or whatever you please, of a certain cousin. She is a single lady with a great income, which she promises to bequeath to me in the future. In the meantime, I am to have whatever I want. Do you understand the position, Iris?"

"Yes, I think so. It is interesting, because it shows why you will never be a great artist. But it is very sad."

"A man may rise above his conditions, Iris," said Arnold meekly.

"No," she went on; "it is only the poor men who do anything good. Lala Roy says so."

"I will pretend to be poor—indeed, I am poor. I have nothing. If it were not for my cousin, I could not even profess to follow Art."

"What a pity," she said, "that you are rich! Lala Roy was rich once."

Arnold repressed an inclination to desire that Lala Roy might be kept out of the conversation.

"But he gave up all his wealth and has been happy, and a Philosopher, ever since."

"I can't give up my wealth, Iris, because I haven't got any—I owe my cousin everything. But for her, I should never even have known you."

He watched her at her work in the morning when she sat patiently answering questions, working out problems, and making papers. She showed him the letters of her pupils, exacting, excusing, petulant—sometimes dissatisfied and even ill-tempered. He watched her in the afternoon while she sewed or read. In the evening he sat with her while the two old men played their game of chess. Regularly every evening at half-past nine the Bengalee checkmated Mr. Emblem. Up to that hour he amused himself with his opponent, formed ingenious combinations, watched openings, and gradually cleared the board until he found himself as the hour of half-past nine drew near, able to propose a simple problem to his own mind, such as, "White moves first, to mate in three, four, or five moves," and then he proceeded to solve that problem, and checkmated his adversary.

No one, not even Iris, knew how Lala

Roy lived, or what he did in the daytime. It was rumoured that he had been seen at Simpson's in the Strand, but this report wanted confirmation. He had lived in Mr. Emblem's second floor for twenty years; he always paid his bills with regularity, and his long spare figure and white moustache and fez were as well known in Chelsea as any red-coated lounge among the old veterans of the Hospital.

"It is quiet for you in the evenings," said Arnold.

"I play to them sometimes. They like to hear me play during the game. Look at them."

She sat down and played. She had a delicate touch, and played soft music, such as soothes, not excites the soul. Arnold watched her, not the old men. How was it that refinement, grace, self-possession, manners, and the culture of a lady, could be found in one who knew no ladies? But then Arnold did not know Lala Roy, nor did he understand the old book-seller.

"You are always wondering about me," she said, talking while she played; "I see it in your eyes. Can you not take me as I am, without thinking why I am different from other girls? Of course I am different, because I know none of them."

"I wish they were all like you," he said.

"No; that would be a great pity. You want girls who understand your own life, and can enter into your pursuits—you want companions who can talk to you; go back to them, Arnold, as soon as you are tired of coming here."

And yet his instinct was right which told him that the girl was not a coquette. She had no thought—not the least thought—as yet that anything was possible beyond the existing friendship. It was pleasant, but Arnold would get tired of her, and go back to his own people. Then he would remain in her memory as a Study of Character. This she did not exactly formulate, but she had that feeling. Every woman makes a study of character about every man in whom she becomes ever so little interested. But we must not get conceited, my brothers, over this fact. The converse, unhappily, does not hold true. Very few men ever study the character of a woman at all. Either they fall in love with her before they have had time to make more than a sketch, and do not afterwards pursue the subject, or they do not fall in love with her at all;

and in the latter case it hardly seems worth while to follow up a first rough draft.

"Checkmate," said Lala Roy.

The game was finished and the evening over.

"Would you, like," he said, another evening, "to see my studio, or do you consider my studio outside myself?"

"I should very much like to see an artist's studio," she replied with her usual frankness, leaving it an open question whether she would not be equally pleased to see any other studio.

She came, however, accompanied by Lala Roy, who had never been in a studio before, and indeed had never looked at a picture, except with the contemptuous glance which the Philosopher bestows upon the follies of mankind. Yet he came, because Iris asked him. Arnold's studio is one of the smallest of those in Tite Street. Of course it is built of red-brick, and of course it has a noble staircase and a beautiful painting-room or studio proper all set about with bits of tapestry, armour, pictures, and china, besides the tools and properties of the craft. He had portfolios full of sketches; against the wall stood pictures, finished and unfinished; on an easel was a half-painted picture representing a group taken from a modern novel. Most painters only draw scenes from two novels—the Vicar of Wakefield and Don Quixote; but Arnold knew more. The central figure was a girl, quite unfinished—in fact, barely sketched in.

Iris looked at everything with the interest which belongs to the new and unexpected.

Arnold began to show the pictures in the portfolios. There were sketches of peasant-life in Norway and on the Continent; there were landscapes, quaint old houses, and castles; there were ships and ports; and there were heads—hundreds of heads.

"I said you might be a great artist," said Iris. "I am sure now that you will be if you choose."

"Thank you, Iris. It is the greatest compliment you could pay me."

"And what is this?" she was before the easel on which stood the unfinished picture.

"It is a scene from a novel. But I cannot get the principal face. None of the models are half good enough. I want a sweet face, a serious face, a face with deep, beautiful eyes. Iris"—it was a sudden impulse, an inspiration—"let me put your face there. Give me my first commission."

She blushed deeply. All these drawings, the multitudinous faces and heads and figures in the portfolio were a revelation to her. And just at the very moment when she discovered that Arnold was one of those who worship beauty—a thing she had never before understood—he told her that her face was so beautiful that he must put it in his picture.

"Oh, Arnold," she said, "my face would be out of place in that picture."

"Would it? Please sit down, and let me make a sketch."

He seized his crayons and began rapidly.

"What do you say, Lala Roy?" he asked by way of diversion.

"The gifts of the understanding," said the Sage, "are the treasures of the Lord; and He appointeth to every one his portion."

"Thank you," replied Arnold. "Very true and very apt, I'm sure. Iris, please, your face turned just a little. So. Ah, if I can but do some measure of justice to your eyes!"

When Iris went away, there was for the first time the least touch of restraint or self-consciousness in her. Arnold felt it. She showed it in her eyes and in the touch of her fingers when he took her hand at parting. It was then for the first time also that Arnold discovered a truth of overwhelming importance. Every new fact—everything which cannot be disputed or denied, is, we all know, of the most enormous importance. He discovered no less a truth than that he was in love with Iris. So important is this truth to a young man that it reduces the countless myriads of the world to a single pair—himself and another; it converts the most arid waste of streets into an Eden; and it blinds the eyes to ambition, riches, and success. Arnold sat down and reasoned out this truth. He said coldly and "squarely":

"This is a girl whom I have known only a fortnight or so; she lives over a second-hand bookshop; she is a teacher by profession; she knows none of the ways of society; she would doubtless be guilty of all kinds of queer things, if she were suddenly introduced to good people; probably, she would never learn our manners," with more to the same effect, which may be reasonably omitted. Then his Conscience woke up, and said quite simply: "Arnold, you are a liar." Conscience does sometimes call hard names. She is feminine, and therefore privileged to call hard names. Else we should sometimes

kick and belabour Conscience. "Arnold, don't tell more lies. You have been gradually learning to know Iris, through the wisest and sweetest letters that were ever written, for a whole year. You gradually began to know her, in fact, when you first began to interlard your letters with conceited revelations about yourself. You knew her to be sympathetic, quick, and of a most kind and tender heart. You are quite sure, though you try to disguise the fact, that she is as honest as the day, and as true as steel. As for her not being a lady, you ought to be ashamed of yourself for even thinking such a thing. Has she not been tenderly brought up by two old men who are full of honour, and truth, and all the simple virtues? Does she not look, move, and speak like the most gracious lady in the land?"—"Like a goddess," Arnold confessed.—"As for the ways and talk of society, what are these worth? and cannot they be acquired? And what are her manners save those of the most perfect refinement and purity?" Thus far Conscience. Then Arnold, or Arnold's secret *advocatus diaboli*, began upon another and quite different line. "She must have schemed at the outset to get me into her net; she is a Siren; she assumes the disguise of innocence and ignorance the better to beguile and to deceive. She has gone home to-day elated because she thinks she has landed a gentleman."

Conscience said nothing; there are some things to which Conscience has no reply in words to offer; yet Conscience pointed to the portrait of the girl, and bade the most unworthy of all lovers look upon even his own poor and meagre representation of her eyes and face, and ask whether such blasphemies could ever be forgiven.

After a self-abasement, which for shame's sake we must pass over, the young man felt happier.

Henry the Second felt much the same satisfaction the morning after his scourging at the hands of the monks, who were as muscular as they were vindictive.

CHAPTER VI. COUSIN CLARA.

THAT man who spends his days in painting a girl's portrait, in talking to her, and in gazing upon the unfinished portrait when she is not with him, and occupies his thoughts during the watches of the night in thinking about her, is perilously near to taking the last and fatal step. Flight

for such a man is the only thing left, and he so seldom thinks of flight until it is too late.

Arnold was at this point.

"I am possessed by this girl," he might have said had he put his thoughts into words. "I am haunted by her eyes; her voice lingers on my ears; I dream of her face; the touch of her fingers is like the touch of an electric battery." What symptoms are these, so common that one is almost ashamed to write them down, but the infallible symptoms of love? And yet he hesitated, not because he doubted himself any longer, but because he was not independent, and such an engagement might deprive him at one stroke of all that he possessed. Might? It certainly would. Yes; the new and beautiful studio, all the things in it, all his prospects for the future, would have to be given up. "She is worth more than that," said Arnold, "and I should find work somehow. But yet, to plunge her into poverty—and to make Clara the most unhappy of women!"

The reason why Clara would be made the most unhappy of women, was that Clara was his cousin and his benefactor, to whom he owed everything. She was the kindest of patrons, and she liked nothing so much as the lavishing upon her ward everything that he could desire. But she also, unfortunately, illustrated the truth of Chaucer's teaching, in that she loved power more than anything else, and had already mapped out Arnold's life for him.

It was his custom to call upon her daily, to use her house as his own. When they were separated, they wrote to each other every day; the relations between them were of the most intimate and affectionate kind. He advised in all her affairs, while she directed his; it was understood that he was her heir, and though she was not more than five-and-forty or so, and had, apparently, a long life still before her, so that the succession was distant, the prospect gave him importance. She had been out of town, and perhaps the fact of a new acquaintance with so obscure a person as a simple tutor by correspondence, seemed to Arnold not worth mentioning. At all events, he had not mentioned it in his daily letters.

And now she was coming home; she was actually arrived; he would see her that evening. Her last letter was lying before him.

"I parted from dear Stella yesterday.

She goes to stay with the Essex Mainwaring for a month; after that, I hope that she will give me a long visit. I do not know where one could find a sweeter girl, or one more eminently calculated to make a man happy. Beautiful, strictly speaking, she is not, perhaps; but of excellent connections, not without a portion, young, clever, and ambitious. With such a wife, my dear Arnold, a man may aspire to anything."

"To anything," repeated Arnold; "what is her notion of anything? She has arrived by this time." He looked at his watch and found it was past five. "I ought to have been at the station to meet her. I must go round and see her, and I must dine with her to-night." He sighed heavily. "It would be much pleasanter to spend the evening with Iris."

Then a carriage stopped at his door. It was his cousin, and the next minute he was receiving and giving the kiss of welcome. For his own part, he felt guilty, because he could put so little heart into that kiss, compared with all previous embraces. She was a stout, hearty little woman, who could never have been in the least beautiful, even when she was young. Now on the middle line, between forty and fifty, she looked as if her face had been chopped out of the marble by a rude but determined artist, one who knew what he wanted and would tolerate no conventional work. So that her face, at all events, was, if not unique, at least unlike any other face one had ever seen. Most faces, we know, can be reduced to certain general types—even Iris's face might be classified—while of yours, my brother, there are, no doubt, multitudes. Miss Holland, however, had good eyes—bright, clear grey—the eyes of a woman who knows what she wants and means to get it if she can.

"Well, my dear," she said, taking the one comfortable chair in the studio, "I am back again, and I have enjoyed my journey very much; we will have all the travels this evening. You are looking splendid, Arnold!"

"I am very well indeed. And you, Clara? But I need not ask."

"No, I am always well. I told you about dear Stella, did I not? I never had a more delightful companion."

"So glad you liked her."

"If only, Arnold, you would like her too. But I know"—for Arnold changed colour—"I know one must not interfere in these matters. But surely one may go so far with a young man one loves as to say,

'Here is a girl of a million'? There is not, Arnold, I declare, her equal anywhere; a clearer head I never met, or a better educated girl, or one who knows what a man can do, and how he can be helped to do it."

"Thank you, Clara," Arnold said coldly; "I dare say I shall discover the young lady's perfections in time."

"Not, I think, without some help. She is not an ordinary girl. You must draw her out, my dear boy."

"I will," he said listlessly. "I will try to draw her out, if you like."

"We talked a great deal of you, Arnold," Clara went on. "I confided to her some of my hopes and ambitions for you; and I am free to confess to you that she has greatly modified all my plans and calculations."

"Oh!" Arnold was interested in this. "But, my dear Clara, I have my profession. I must follow my profession."

"Surely—surely! Listen, Arnold, patiently. Anybody can become an artist—anybody, of course, who has the genius. And all kinds of people, gutter people, have the genius."

"The sun," said Arnold, just as if he had been Lala Roy, "shines on all alike."

"Quite so; and there is an immense enthusiasm for Art everywhere; but there is no Art leader. There is no one man recognised as the man most competent to speak on Art of every kind. Think of that. It is Stella's idea entirely. This man, when he is found, will sway enormous authority; he will become, if he has a wife able to assist him, an immense social power."

"And you want me to become that man?"

"Yes, Arnold. I do not see why you should not become that man. Cease to think of becoming President of the Royal Academy, yet go on painting; prove your genius, so as to command respect; cultivate the art of public speaking; and look about for a wife who will be your right hand. Think of this seriously. This is only a rough sketch; we can fill in the details afterwards. But think of it. Oh, my dear boy! if I were only a man, and five-and-twenty, with such a chance before me! What a glorious career is yours, if you choose! But of course you will choose. Good gracious, Arnold! who is that?"

She pointed to the canvas on the easel, where Iris's face was like the tale of Cambuscan, half-told.

"It is no one you know, Clara."

"One of your models?" She rose and examined it more closely through her glasses. "The eyes are wonderful, Arnold. They are eyes I know. As if I could ever forget them! They are the same eyes; exactly the same eyes. I have never met with any like them before. They are the eyes of my poor, lost, betrayed Claude Deseret. Where did you pick up this girl, Arnold? Is she a common model?"

"Not at all. She is not a model. She is a young lady who teaches by correspondence. She is my tutor—of course I have so often talked to you about her—who taught me the science of Heraldry, and wrote me such charming letters."

"Your tutor! You said your tutor was an old gentleman."

"So I thought, Clara. But I was wrong. My tutor is a young lady; and this is her portrait, half-finished. It does not do her any kind of justice."

"A young lady!" She looked suspiciously at Arnold, whose tell-tale cheek flushed. "A young lady! Indeed! And you have made her acquaintance."

"As you see, Clara; and she does me the honour to let me paint her portrait."

"What is her name, Arnold?"

"She is a Miss Aglen."

"Strange. The Deserets once inter-married with the Aglens. I wonder if she is any connection. They were Warwickshire Aglens. But it is impossible—a teacher by correspondence, a mere private governess! Who are her people?"

"She lives with her grandfather. I think her father was a tutor or journalist of some kind, but he is dead; and her grandfather keeps a second-hand bookshop in the King's Road close by."

"A bookshop! But you said, Arnold, that she was a young lady."

"So she is, Clara," he replied simply.

"Arnold!" For the first time in his life Arnold saw his cousin angry with him. She was constantly being angry with other people, but never before had she been angry with him. "Arnold, spare me this nonsense. If you have been playing with this shop-girl I cannot help it, and I beg that you will tell me no more about it, and do not, to my face, speak of her as a lady."

"I have not been playing with her, I think," said Arnold gravely; "I have been very serious with her."

"Everybody nowadays is a young lady. The girl who gives you a cup of tea in a

shop; the girl who dances in the ballet; the girl who makes your dresses."

"In that case, Clara, you need not mind my calling Miss Aglen a young lady."

"There is one word left, at least: women of my class are gentlewomen."

"Miss Aglen is a gentlewoman."

"Arnold, look me in the face. My dear boy, tell me, are you mad? Oh, think of my poor unhappy Claude, what he did, and what he must have suffered!"

"I know what he did. I do not know what he suffered. My case, however, is different from his. I am not engaged to anyone."

"Arnold, think of the great scheme of life I have drawn out for you. My dear boy, would you throw that all away?"

She laid her hands upon his arm and looked in his eyes with a pitiful gaze. He took her hands in his.

"My dear, every man must shape his life for himself, or must live out the life shaped for him by his Fate, not by his friends. What if I see a life more delightful to me than that of which you dream?"

"You talk of a delightful life, Arnold; I spoke of an honourable career."

"Mine will be a life of quiet work and love. Yours, Clara, would be one of noisy and troublesome work without love."

"Without love, Arnold! You are infatuated."

She sank into the chair and buried her face in her hands. First, it was her lover who had deserted her for the sake of a governess, the daughter of some London tradesman; and now her adopted son, almost the only creature she loved, for whom she had schemed and thought for nearly twenty years, was ready to give up everything for the sake of another governess, also connected with the lower forms of commercial interests.

"It is very hard, Arnold," she said. "No, don't try to persuade me. I am getting an old woman, and it is too late for me to learn that a gentleman can be happy unless he marries a lady. You might as well ask me to look for happiness with a grocer."

"Not quite," said Arnold.

"It is exactly the same thing. Pray, have you proposed to this—young lady of the second-hand bookshop?"

"No, I have not."

"You are in love with her, however?"

"I am, Clara."

"And you intend to ask her—in the

shop, I dare say, among the second-hand books—to become your wife?”

“That is my serious intention, Clara.”

“Claude did the same thing. His father remonstrated with him in vain. He took his wife to London, where, for a time, he lived in misery and self-reproach.”

“Do you know that he reproached himself?”

“I know what must have happened when he found out his mistake. Then he went to America, where he died, no doubt in despair, although his father had forgiven him.”

“The cases are hardly parallel,” said Arnold. “Still, will you permit me to introduce Miss Aglen to you, if she should do me the honour of accepting me? Be generous, Clara. Do not condemn the poor girl without seeing her.”

“I condemn no one—I judge no one, not even you, Arnold. But I will not receive that young woman.”

“Very well, Clara.”

“How shall you live, Arnold?” she asked coldly.

It was the finishing stroke—the dismissal.

“I suppose we shall not marry; but, of course, I am talking as if——”

“As if she was ready to jump into your arms. Go on.”

“We shall not marry until I have made some kind of a beginning in my work. Clara, let us have no further explanation. I understand perfectly well. But, my dear Clara,” he laid his arm upon her neck and kissed her, “I shall not let you quarrel with me. I owe you too much, and I love you too well. I am always your most faithful of servants.”

“No; till you are married—then—Oh, Arnold! Arnold!”

A less strong-minded woman would have burst into tears. Clara did not. She got into her carriage and drove home. She spent a miserable evening and a sleepless night. But she did not cry.

CHAPTER VII. ON BATTERSEA TERRACE.

If a woman were to choose any period of her life which she pleased, for indefinite prolongation, she would certainly select that period which lies between the first perception of the first symptoms—when she begins to understand that a man has begun to love her—and the day when he tells her so.

Yet women who look back to this period with so much fondness and regret forget

their little tremors and misgivings—the self-distrust, the hopes and fears, the doubts and perplexities, which troubled this time. For although it is acknowledged, and has been taught by all philosophers from King Lemuel and Lao-Kiun downwards, that no greater prize can be gained by any man than the love of a good woman, which is better than a Peerage—better than a Bonanza mine—better than Name and Fame, Kudos and the newspaper paragraph, and is arrived at by much less exertion, being indeed the special gift of the gods to those they love; yet all women perfectly understand the other side to this great truth—namely, that no greater happiness can fall to any woman than the love of a good man. So that, in all the multitudinous and delightful courtships which go on around us, and in our midst, there is, on both sides, both with man and with maid, among those who truly reach to the right understanding of what this great thing may mean, a continual distrust of self, with humility and anxiety. And when, as sometimes happens, a girl has been brought up in entire ignorance of love, so that the thought of it has never entered her head, the thing itself, when it falls upon her, is overwhelming, and enfolds her as with a garment from head to foot, and, except to her lover, she becomes as a sealed fountain. I know not how long this season of expectation would have lasted for Iris, but for Arnold's conversation with his cousin, which persuaded him to speak and bring matters to a final issue. To this girl, living as secluded as if she was in an Oriental Harem, who had never thought of love as a thing possible for herself, the consciousness that Arnold loved her was bewildering and astonishing, and she waited, knowing that sooner or later something would be said, but trembling for fear that it should be said.

After all, it was Lala Roy, and not Clara, who finally determined Arnold to wait no longer.

He came every day to the studio with Iris when she sat for her portrait. This was in the afternoon. But he now got into the habit of coming in the morning, and would sit in silence looking on. He came partly because he liked the young man, and partly because the painter's art was new to him, and it amused him to watch a man giving his whole time and intellect to the copying of faces and things on canvas. Also he was well aware by this time that it was not to see Mr. Emblem or himself that

Arnold spent every evening at the house, and he was amused to watch the progress of an English courtship. In India, we know, they manage matters differently, and so as to give the bridegroom no more trouble than is necessary. This young man, however, took, he observed, the most wonderful pains and the most extraordinary trouble to please.

"Do you know, Lala Roy," Arnold said one morning after a silence of three hours or so, "do you know that this is going to be the portrait of the most beautiful woman in the world, and the best?"

"It is well," said the Philosopher, "when a young man desires virtue as well as beauty."

"You have known her all her life. Don't trouble yourself to speak, Lala. You can nod your head if there isn't a maxim ready. You began to lodge in the house twenty years ago, and you have seen her every day since. If she is not the best, as well as the most beautiful girl in the world, you ought to know and can contradict me. But you do know it."

"Happy is the man," said the Sage, "who shall call her wife; happy the children who shall call her mother."

"I suppose, Lala," Arnold went on with an ingenuous blush, "I suppose that you have perceived that—that—in fact—I love her."

The Philosopher inclined his head.

"Do you think—you who know her so well—that she suspects or knows it?"

"The thoughts of a maiden are secret thoughts. As well may one search for the beginnings of a river as enquire into the mind of a woman. Their ways are not our ways, nor are their thoughts ours, nor have we wit to understand, nor have they tongue to utter, the things they think. I know not whether she suspects."

"Yet you have had experience, Lala Roy?"

A smile stole over the Sage's features.

"In the old days when I was young, I had experience, as all men have. I have had many wives. Yet to me, as to all others, the thoughts of the Harem are unknown."

"Yet, Iris—surely you know the thoughts of Iris, your pupil."

"I know only that her heart is the abode of goodness, and that she knows not any evil thought. Young man, beware. Trouble not the clear fountain."

"Heaven knows," said Arnold, "I would not—" And here he stopped.

"Youth," said the Sage presently, "is the season for love. Enjoy the present happiness. Woman is made to be loved. Receive with gratitude what Heaven gives. The present moment is your own. Defer not until the evening what you may accomplish at noon."

With these words the Oracle became silent, and Arnold sat down and began to think it all over again.

An hour later he presented himself at the house in the King's Road. Iris was alone, and she was playing.

"You, Arnold? It is early for you."

"Forgive me, Iris, for breaking in on your afternoon; but I thought—it is a fine afternoon—I thought that, perhaps—you have never taken a walk with me."

She blushed, I think in sympathy with Arnold, who looked confused and stammered, and then she said she would go with him.

They left the King's Road by the Royal Avenue, where the leaves were already thin and yellow, and passed through the Hospital and its broad grounds down to the river-side; then they turned to the right, and walked along the Embankment, where are the great new red houses, to Cheyne Walk, and so across the Suspension Bridge. Arnold did not speak one word the whole way. His heart was so full that he could not trust himself to speak. Who would not be four-and-twenty again, even with all the risks and dangers of life before one, the set traps, the gaping holes, and the treacherous quicksands, if it were only to feel once more the overwhelming spirit of the mysterious goddess of the golden cestus? In silence they walked side by side over the bridge. Half-way across, they stopped and looked up the river. The tide was running in with a swift current, and the broad river was nearly at the full; the strong September sun fell upon the water, which was broken into little waves under a fresh breeze meeting the current from the north-west. There were lighters and barges majestically creeping up stream, some with brown three-cornered sails set in the bows and stern, some slowly moving with the tide, their bows kept steady by long oars, and some, lashed one to the other, forming a long train, and pulled along by a noisy little tug, all paddle-wheel and engine. There was a sculler vigorously practising for his next race, and dreaming, perhaps, of sending a challenge to Hanlan; there were some boys in a rowing-boat, laughing and

splashing each other; on the north bank there was the garden of the Embankment, with its young trees still green, for the summer lasted into late September this year, and, beyond, the red brick tower of the old Church, with its flagpost on the top. These details are never so carefully marked as when one is anxious, and fully absorbed in things of great importance. Perhaps Arnold had crossed the bridge a hundred times before, but to-day, for the first time, he noticed the common things of the river. One may be an artist, and yet may miss the treasures that lie at the very feet. This is a remark which occurs to one with each new Academy Show. With every tide the boats go up and down with their brown sails, and always the Tower of Chelsea Church rises above the trees, and the broad river never forgets to sparkle and to glow in the sunshine when it gets the chance. Such common things are for the most part unheeded, but, when the mind is anxious and full, they force themselves upon one. Arnold watched boats, and river, and sunshine on the sails, with a strange interest and wonder, as one sees visions in a dream. He had seen all these things before, yet now he noticed them for the first time, and all the while he was thinking what he should say to Iris, and how he should approach the subject. I know not whether Iris, like him, saw one thing and noticed another. The thoughts of a maiden, as Lala Roy said, are secret thoughts. She looked upon the river from the bridge with Arnold. When he turned, she turned with him, and neither spoke.

They left the bridge, and passed through the wooden gate at the Battersea end of it, and across the corner where the stone columns lie, like an imitation of Tadmor in the Desert, and so to the broad Terrace overlooking the river.

There is not, anywhere, a more beautiful Terrace than this of Battersea Park, especially when the tide is high. Before it lies the splendid river, with the barges which Arnold had seen from the bridge. They are broad, and flat, and sometimes squat, and sometimes black with coal, and sometimes they go up and down sideways, in lubberly Dutch fashion, but they are always picturesque; and beyond the river is the Embankment, with its young trees, which will before many years be tall and stately trees; and behind the trees are the new red palaces; and above the houses, at this time of the year and day, are the

flying clouds, already coloured with the light of the sinking sun. Behind the Terrace are the trees and lawns of the best-kept Park in London.

In the afternoon of a late September day, there are not many who walk in these gardens. Arnold and Iris had the Terrace almost to themselves, save for half-a-dozen girls with children, and two or three old men making the most of the last summer they were ever likely to see, though it would have been cruel to tell them so.

"This is your favourite walk, Iris," said Arnold at last, breaking the silence.

"Yes; I come here very often. It is my garden. Sometimes in the winter, and when the east wind blows up the river, I have it all to myself."

"A quiet life, Iris," he said, "and a happy life."

"Yes; a happy life."

"Iris, will you change it for a life which will not be so quiet?" He took her hand, but she made no reply. "I must tell you, Iris, because I cannot keep it from you any longer. I love you—oh, my dear, I cannot tell you how I love you."

"Oh, Arnold!" she whispered. "It had come, the thing she feared to hear!"

"May I go on? I have told you now the most important thing, and the rest matters little. Oh, Iris, may I go on and tell you all?"

"Go on," she said; "tell me all."

"As for telling you everything," he said with a little laugh, "that is no new thing. I have told you all that is in my mind for a year and more. It seems natural that I should tell you this too, even if it did not concern you at all, but some other girl; though that would be impossible. I love you, Iris; I love you—I should like to say nothing more. But I must tell you as well that I am quite a poor man; I am an absolute pauper; I have nothing at all—no money, no work, nothing. My studio and all must go back to her; and yet, Iris, in spite of this, I am so selfish as to tell you that I love you. I would give you, if I could, the most delightful palace in the world, and I offer you a share in the uncertain life of an artist, who does not know whether he has any genius, or whether he is fit even to be called an artist."

She gave him her hand with the frankness which was her chief charm, and with a look in her eyes so full of trust and truth that his heart sank within him for very fear lest he should prove unworthy of so much confidence.

"Oh, Arnold," she said, "I think that I have loved you all along, ever since you began to write to me. And yet I never thought that love would come to me."

He led her into that bosky grove set with seats convenient for lovers, which lies romantically close to the Italian Restaurant, where they sell the cocoa and the ginger-beer. There was no one in the place beside themselves, and here, among the falling leaves, and in a solitude as profound as on the top of a Dartmoor Tor, Arnold told the story of his love again, and with greater coherence, though even more passion.

"Oh," said Iris again, "how could you love me, Arnold—how could you love any girl so? It is a shame, Arnold; we are not worth so much. Could any woman," she thought, "be worth the wealth of passion and devotion which her lover poured out for her?"

"My tutor," he went on, "if you only knew what things you have taught me, a man of experience! If I admired you when I thought you must be a man, and pictured an old scholar full of books and wisdom, what could I do when I found that a young girl had written those letters? You gave mine back to me; did you think that I would ever part with yours? And you owned—oh, Iris, what would not the finished woman of the world give to have the secret of your power?—you owned that you knew all my letters, every one, by heart. And after all, you will love me, your disciple and pupil, and a man who has his way to make from the very beginning and first round of the ladder. Think, Iris, first. Is it right to throw away so much upon a man who is worth so little?"

"But I am glad that you are poor. If you were rich I should have been afraid—oh, not of you, Arnold—never of you, but of your people. And, besides, it is so good—oh, so very good for a young man—a young man of the best kind, not my cousin's kind—to be poor. Nobody ought ever to be allowed to become rich before he is fifty years of age at the very least. Because now you will have to work in earnest, and you will become a great artist—yes, a truly great artist, and we shall be proud of you."

"You shall make of me what you please, and what you can. For your sake, Iris, I wish I were another Raphael. You are my mistress and my queen. Bid me to die and I will dare—Iris, I swear

that the words of the extravagant old song are real to me."

"Nay," she said, "not your Queen, but your servant always. Surely love cannot command. But, I think," she added softly, with a tender blush; "I think—nay, I am sure and certain that it can obey."

He stooped and kissed her fingers.

"My love," he murmured; "my love—my love!"

The shadows lengthened and the evening fell; but those two foolish people sat side by side, and hand in hand, and what they said further we need not write down, because to tell too much of what young lovers whisper to each other is a kind of sacrilege.

At last Arnold became aware that the sun was actually set, and he sprang to his feet.

They walked home again across the Suspension Bridge. In the western sky was hanging a huge bank of cloud all bathed in purple, red, and gold; the river was ablaze; the barges floated in a golden haze; the light shone on their faces, and made them all glorious, like the face of Moses, for they, too, had stood—nay, they were still standing—at the very gates of Heaven.

"See, Iris," said the happy lover, "the day is done; your old life is finished; it has been a happy time, and it sets in glory and splendour. The red light in the west is a happy omen of the day to come."

So he took her by the hand and led her over the river, and then to his own studio in Tite Street. There, in the solemn twilight, he held her in his arms, and renewed the vows of love with kisses and fond caress.

"Iris, my dear—my dear—you are mine and I am yours. What have I done to deserve this happy fate?"

CHAPTER VIII. THE DISCOVERY.

AT nine o'clock that evening, Mr. Emblem looked up from the chess-board.

"Where is Mr. Arbutnot this evening, my dear?" he asked.

It would be significant in some houses when a young man is expected every evening. Iris blushed, and said that perhaps he was not coming. But he was, and his step was on the stair as she spoke.

"You are late, Mr. Arbutnot," said Mr. Emblem reproachfully; "you are late, sir, and somehow we get no music now until you come. Play us something, Iris. It is my move, Lala—"

Iris opened the piano and Arnold sat down beside her, and their eyes met. There was in each the consciousness of what had passed.

"I shall speak to him to-night, Iris," Arnold whispered. "I have already written to my cousin. Do not be hurt if she does not call upon you."

"Nothing of that sort will hurt me," Iris said, being ignorant of social ways, and without the least ambition to rise in the world. "If your cousin does not call upon me I shall not be disappointed. Why should she want to know me? But I am sorry, Arnold, that she is angry with you."

Lala Roy just then found himself in presence of a most beautiful problem—white to move and checkmate in three moves. Mr. Emblem found the meshes of fate closing round him earlier than usual, and both bent their heads closely over the table.

"Checkmate!" said Lala Roy. "My friend, you have played badly this evening."

"I have played badly," Mr. Emblem replied, "because to-morrow will be an important day for Iris, and for myself. A day, Iris, that I have been looking forward to for eighteen years, ever since I got your father's last letter, written upon his death-bed. It seems a long time, but like a lifetime," said the old man of seventy-five, "it is as nothing when it is gone. Eighteen years, and you were a little thing of three, child!"

"What is going to happen to me, grandfather, except that I shall be twenty-one?"

"We shall see to-morrow. Patience, my dear—patience."

He spread out his hands and laughed. What was going to happen to himself was a small thing compared with the restoration of Iris to her own.

"Mr. Emblem," said Arnold, "I also have something of importance to say."

"You, too, Mr. Arbuthnot? Cannot yours wait also until to-morrow?"

"No; it is too important. It cannot wait an hour."

"Well, sir"—Mr. Emblem pushed up his spectacles and leaned back in his chair—"well, Mr. Arbuthnot, let us have it."

"I think you may guess what I have to say, Mr. Emblem. I am sure that Lala Roy has already guessed it."

The Philosopher inclined his head in assent.

"It is that I have this afternoon asked

Iris to marry me, Mr. Emblem. And she has consented."

"Have you consented, Iris, my dear?" said her grandfather.

She placed her hand in Arnold's for reply.

"Do you think you know him well enough, my dear?" Mr. Emblem asked gravely, looking at her lover. "Marriage is a serious thing; it is a partnership for life. Children, think well before you venture on the happiness or ruin of your whole lives. And you are so young. What a pity—what a thousand pities that people were not ordained to marry at seventy or so!"

"We have thought well," said Arnold. "Iris has faith in me."

"Then, young man, I have nothing to say. Iris will marry to please herself, and I pray that she may be happy. As for you, I like your face and your manners, but I do not know who you are, nor what your means may be. Remember that I am poor—I am so poor—I can tell you all now, that to-morrow we shall—well, patience—to-morrow I shall most likely have my very stock seized and sold."

"Your stock sold? Oh, grandfather!" cried Iris; "and you did not tell me! And I have been so happy."

"Friend," said Lala, "was it well to hide this from me?"

"Foolish people," Mr. Emblem went on, "have spread reports that I am rich, and have saved money for Iris. It is not true, Mr. Arbuthnot. I am not rich. Iris will come to you empty-handed."

"And as for me, I have nothing," said Arnold, "except a pair of hands and all the time there is. So we have all to gain and nothing to lose."

"You have your profession," said Iris, "and I have mine. Grandfather, do not fear, even though we shall all four become poor together."

It seemed natural to include Lala Roy, who had been included with them for twenty years.

"As for Iris being empty-handed," said Arnold, "how can that ever be? Why, she carries in her hands an inexhaustible cornucopia, full of precious things."

"My dear," said the old man, holding out his arms to her, "I could not keep you always. Some day I knew you would leave me; it is well that you should leave me when I am no longer able to keep a roof over your head."

"But we shall find a roof for you, grandfather, somewhere. We shall never part."

“The best of girls always,” said Mr. Emblem; “the best of girls. Mr. Arbuthnot, you are a happy man.”

Then the Sage lifted up his voice and said solemnly :

“On her tongue dwelleth music; the sweetness of honey floweth from her lips; humility is like a crown of glory about her head; her eye speaketh softness and love; her husband putteth his heart in her bosom and findeth joy.”

“Oh, you are all too good to me,” murmured Iris.

“A friend of mine,” said Mr. Emblem, “now, like nearly all my friends, beneath the sod, used to say that a good marriage was a happy blending of the finest Wallsend with the most delicate Silkstone. But he was in the coal trade. For my own part I have always thought that it is like the binding of two scarce volumes into one.”

“Oh, not second-hand volumes, grandfather,” said Iris.

“I don’t know. Certainly not new ones. Not volumes under one-and-twenty, if you please. Mr. Arbuthnot, I am glad; you will know why very soon. I am very glad that Iris made her choice before her twenty-first birthday. Whatever may happen now, no one can say that either of you were influenced by any expectations. You both think yourselves paupers; well, I say nothing, because I know nothing. But, children, if a great thing happen to you, and that before four-and-twenty hours have passed, be prepared—be prepared, I say—to receive it with moderate rejoicing.”

“To-morrow?” Iris asked. “Why to-morrow? Why not to-night, if you have a secret to tell us?”

“Your father enjoined in his last letter to wait till you were twenty-one. The eve of your birthday, however, is the same thing as your birthday. We will open the papers to-night. What I have to tell you, Iris, shall be told in the presence of your lover, whatever it is—good or bad.”

He led the way downstairs into the back shop. Here he lit the gas, and began to open his case, slowly and cautiously.

“Eighteen years ago, Iris, my child, I received your father’s last letter, written on his death-bed. This I have already told you. He set down, in that letter, several things which surprised me very much. We shall come to these things presently. He also laid down certain instructions for your bringing up, my dear. I was, first of all, to give you as good an education as I could afford; I was to keep ~~it~~ as much as

possible separated from companions who might not be thought afterwards fit to be the friends of a young lady. You have had as good an education as Lala Roy and I could devise between us. From him you have learned mathematics, so as to steady your mind and make you exact; and you have learned the science of Heraldry from me, so that you may at once step into your own place in the polite world, where, no doubt, it is a familiar and a necessary study. You have also learned music, because that is an accomplishment which every one should possess. What more can any girl want for any station? My dear, I am happy to think that a gentleman is your lover. Let him tell us, now—Lala Roy and me—to our very faces, if he thinks we have, between us, made you a lady.”

Arnold stooped and kissed her hand.

“There is no more perfect lady,” he said, “in all the land.”

“Iris’s father, Mr. Arbuthnot, was a gentleman of honourable and ancient family, and I will tell you, presently, as soon as I find it out myself, his real name. As for his coat-of-arms, he bore Quarterly, first and fourth, two roses and a boar’s head erect; second and third, gules and fesse between—strange, now, that I have forgotten what it was between. Every body calls himself a gentleman nowadays, even Mr. Chalker, who is going to sell me up, I suppose; but everybody, if you please, is not armiger. Iris, your father was armiger. I suppose I am a gentleman on Sundays, when I go to church with Iris and wear a black coat. But your father my dear, though he married my daughter was a gentleman by birth. And one who knows Heraldry respects a gentleman by birth.” He laid his hand now on the handle of the safe, as if the time were nearly come for opening it, but not quite. “He sent me, with this last letter, a small parcel for you, my dear, not to be opened until you reached the age of twenty-one. As for the person who had succeeded to his inheritance, she was to be left in peaceable possession for a reason which he gave—quite a romantic story which I will tell you presently—until you came of age. He was very urgent on this point. If, however, any disaster of sickness or misfortune fell upon me, I was to act in your interests at once, without waiting for time. Children,” the old man added solemnly, “by the blessing of Heaven—I cannot take it as anything less—I have been spared in health and fortune

until this day. Now let me depart in peace, for my trust is expired, and my child is safe, her inheritance secured, with a younger and a better protector." He placed the key in the door of the safe. "I do not know, mind," he said, still hesitating to take the final step; "I do not know the nature of the inheritance; it may be little or may be great. The letter does not inform me on this point. I do not even know the name of the testator, my son-in-law's father. Nor do I know the name of my daughter's husband. I do not even know your true name, Iris, my child. But it is not Aglen."

"Then, have I been going under a false name all my life?"

"It was the name your father chose to bear for reasons which seemed good and sufficient to him, and these are part of the story which I shall have to tell you. Will you have this story first, or shall we first open the safe and read the contents of the parcel?"

"First," said Arnold, "let us sit down and look in each other's faces."

It was a practical suggestion. But, as it proved, it was an unlucky one, because it deprived them of the story.

"Iris," he said, while they waited, "this is truly wonderful!"

"Oh, Arnold! What am I to do with an inheritance?"

"That depends on what it is. Perhaps it is a landed estate; in which case we shall not be much better off, and can go on with our work; perhaps there will be houses; perhaps it will be thousands of pounds, and perhaps hundreds. Shall we build a castle in the air to suit our inheritance?"

"Yes; let us pretend. Oh, grandfather, stop one moment! Our castle, Arnold, shall be, first of all, the most beautiful studio in the world for you. You shall have tapestry, blue china, armour, lovely glass, soft carpets, carved doors and painted panels, a tall mantelshelf, old wooden cabinets, silver cups, and everything else what one ought to like, and you shall choose everything for yourself, and never get tired of it. But you must go on painting; you must never stop working, because we must be proud of you. Oh, but I have not done yet. My grandfather is to have two rooms for himself, which he can fill with the books he will spend his time in collecting; Lala Roy will have two more rooms, quite separate, where he can sit by him-

self whenever he does not choose to sit with me; I shall have my own study to myself, where I shall go on reading mathematics; and we shall all have, between us, the most beautiful dining-room and drawing-room that you ever saw; and a garden and a fountain; and—yes—money to give to people who are not so fortunate as ourselves. Will that do, Arnold?"

"Yes, but you have almost forgotten yourself, dear. There must be carriages for you, and jewels, and dainty things all your own, and a boudoir, and nobody shall think of doing or saying anything in the house at all, except for your pleasure; will that do, Iris?"

"I suppose we shall have to give parties of some kind, and to go to them. Perhaps one may get to like society. You will teach me lawn-tennis, Arnold; and I should like, I think, to learn dancing. I suppose I must leave off making my own dresses, though I know that I shall never be so well dressed if I do. And about the cakes and puddings—but, oh, there is enough pretending."

"It is difficult," said Lala Roy, "to bear adversity. But to be temperate in prosperity is the height of wisdom."

"And now suppose, Iris," said Arnold, "that the inheritance, instead of being thousands a year, is only a few hundreds."

"Ah, then, Arnold, it will be ever so much simpler. We shall have something to live upon until you begin to make money for us all."

"Yes; that is very simple. But suppose, again, that the inheritance is nothing but a small sum of money."

"Why, then," said Iris, "we will give it all to grandfather, who will pay off his creditor, and we will go on as if nothing had happened."

"Child!" said Mr. Emblem, "do you think that I would take your little all?"

"And suppose, again," Arnold went on, "that the inheritance turns out a delusion, and that there is nothing at all?"

"That cannot be supposed," said Mr. Emblem quickly; "that is absurd!"

"If it were," said Iris, "we shall only be, to-morrow, just exactly what we are to-day. I am a teacher by correspondence, with five pupils. Arnold is looking for art-work which will pay; and between us, my dear grandfather and Lala Roy, we are going to see that you want nothing."

Always Lala Roy with her grandfather, as

if their interests were identical, and, indeed, he had lived so long with them that Iris could not separate the two old men.

"We will all live together," Iris continued, "and when our fortune is made we will all live in a palace. And now, grandfather, that we have relieved our feelings, shall we have the story and the opening of the papers in the safe?"

"Which will you have first?" Mr. Emblem asked again.

"Oh, the safe," said Arnold. "The story can wait. Let us examine the contents of the safe."

"The story," said Mr. Emblem, "is nearly all told in your father's letter, my dear. But there is a little that I would tell you first, before I read that letter. You know, Iris, that I have never been rich; my shop has kept me up till now, but I have never been able to put by money. Well—my daughter Alice, your poor mother, my dear, who was as good and clever as you are, was determined to earn her own living, and so she went out as a governess. And one day she came home with her husband; she had been married the day before, and she told me they had very little money, and her husband was a scholar and a gentleman, and wanted to get work by writing. He got some, but not enough, and they were always in a poor way, until one day he got a letter from America—it was while the Civil War was raging—from an old Oxford friend, inviting him to emigrate and try fortune as a journalist out there. He went, and his wife was to join him. But she died, my dear; your mother died, and a year later I had your father's last letter, which I am now going to read to you."

"One moment, sir," said Arnold. "Before you open the safe and take out the papers, remember that Iris and I can take nothing—nothing at all for ourselves until all your troubles are tided over."

"Children—children," cried Mr. Emblem. "Go, my son, to the Desert," observed the Sage, standing solemnly upright like a Prophet of Israel. "Observe the young stork of the wilderness, how he beareth on his wings his aged sire and supplieth him with food. The piety of a child is sweeter than the incense of Persia offered to the sun; yea, more delicious is it than the odours from a field of Arabian spice."

"Thank you, Lala," said Mr. Emblem. "And now, children, we will discover the mystery."

He unlocked the safe and threw it open with somewhat of a theatrical air. "The roll of papers." He took it out. "'For Iris, to be opened on her twenty-first birthday.' And this is the eve of it. But where is the letter? I tied the letter round it, with a piece of tape. Very strange. I am sure I tied the letter with a piece of tape. Perhaps it was—Where is the letter?"

He peered about in the safe; there was nothing else in it except a few old account-books; but he could not find the letter! Where could it be?

"I remember," he said—"most distinctly I remember tying up the letter with the parcel. Where can it be gone to?"

A feeling of trouble to come seized him. He was perfectly sure he had tied up the letter with the parcel, and here was the parcel without the letter, and no one had opened the safe except himself.

"Never mind about the letter, grandfather," said Iris; "we shall find that afterwards."

"Well, then, let us open the parcel."

It was a packet about the size of a crown-octavo volume, in brown paper, carefully fastened up with gum, and on the face of it was a white label inscribed: "For Iris, to be opened on her twenty-first birthday." Everybody in turn took it, weighed it, so to speak, looked at it curiously, and read the legend. Then they returned it to Mr. Emblem, who laid it before him and produced a penknife. With this, as carefully and solemnly as if he were offering up a sacrifice or performing a religious function, he cut the parcel straight through.

"After eighteen years," he said; "after eighteen years. The ink will be faded and the papers yellow. But we shall see the certificates of the marriage and of your baptism, Iris; there will also be letters to different people, and a true account of the rupture with his father, and the cause, of which his letter spoke. And of course we shall find out what was his real name and what is the kind of inheritance which has been waiting for you so long, my dear. Now then."

The covering in case of the packet was a kind of stiff cardboard or millboard, within brown paper. Mr. Emblem laid it open. It was full of folded papers. He took up the first and opened it. The paper was blank. The next, it was blank; the third, it was blank; the fourth, and fifth, and sixth, and so on throughout. The case, which had been waiting so long, waiting

for eighteen years, to be opened on Iris's twenty-first birthday, was full of blank papers. They were all half sheets of note-paper.

Mr. Emblem looked surprised at the first two or three papers; then he turned pale; then he rushed at the rest. When he had opened all, he stared about him with bewilderment.

"Where is the letter?" he asked again. Then he began with trembling hands to tear out the contents of the safe and spread them upon the table. The letter was nowhere.

"I am certain," he said, for the tenth time, "I am quite certain that I tied up the letter with red tape, outside the packet. And no one has been at the safe except me."

"Tell us," said Arnold, "the contents of the letter as well as you remember them. Your son-in-law was known to you under the name of Aglen, which was not his real name. Did he tell you his real name?"

"No."

"What did he tell you? Do you remember the letter?"

"I remember every word of the letter."

"If you dictate it, I will write it down. That may be a help."

Mr. Emblem began quickly, and as if he was afraid of forgetting:

"When you read these lines, I shall be in the Silent Land, whither Alice, my wife, has gone before me."

Then Mr. Emblem began to stammer.

"In one small thing we deceived you, Alice and I. My name is not Aglen—is not Aglen——"

And here a strange thing happened. His memory failed him at this point.

"Take time," said Arnold; "there is no hurry."

Mr. Emblem shook his head.

"I shall remember the rest to-morrow, perhaps," he said.

"Is there anything else you have to help us?" asked Arnold; "never mind the letter, Mr. Emblem. No doubt that will come back presently. You see we want to find out, first, who Iris's father really was, and what is her real name. There was his coat-of-arms. That will connect her with some family, though it may be a family with many branches."

"Yes—oh yes! his coat-of-arms. I have seen his signet-ring a dozen times. Yes, his coat; yes, first and fourth, two roses and a boar's head erect; second and third

I forget."

"Humph! Was there anyone who knew him before he was married?"

"Yes, yes," Mr. Emblem sat up eagerly. "Yes, there is—there is; he is my oldest customer. But I forget his name. I have forgotten everything. Perhaps I shall get back my memory to-morrow. But I am old. Perhaps it will never get back."

He leaned his head upon his hands, and stared about him with bewildered eyes.

"I do not know, young man," he said presently, addressing Arnold, "who you are. If you come from Mr. Chalker, let me tell you it is a day too soon. To-morrow we will speak of business." Then he sprang to his feet suddenly, struck with a thought which pierced him like a dagger. "To-morrow! It is the day when they will come to sell me up. Oh, Iris! what did that matter when you were safe? Now we are all paupers together—all paupers."

He fell back in his chair white and trembling. Iris soothed him; kissed his cheek and pressed his hand; but the terror and despair of bankruptcy were upon him. This is an awful spectre, which is ever ready to appear before the man who has embarked his all in one venture. A disastrous season, two or three unlucky ventures, a succession of bad debts, and the grisly spectre stands before them. He had no terror for the old man so long as he thought that Iris was safe. But now——

"Idle talk, Iris—idle talk, child," he said, when they tried to comfort him. "How can a girl make money by teaching? Idle talk, young man. How can money be made by painting? It's as bad a trade as writing. How can money be made anyhow but in an honest shop? And to-morrow I shall have no shop, and we shall all go into the street together!"

Presently, when lamentations had yielded to despair, they persuaded him to go to bed. It was past midnight. Iris went upstairs with him, while Lala Roy and Arnold waited down below. And then Arnold made a great discovery. He began to examine the folded papers which were in the packet. I think he had some kind of vague idea that they might contain secret and invisible writing. They were all sheets of note-paper, of the same size, folded in the same way—namely, doubled as if for a square envelope. On holding one to the light, he read the water-mark:

HIEROGLYPHICA

A Vegetable Vellum.

M. S. and Co.

They all had the same water-mark. He showed the thing to the Hindoo, who did not understand what it meant.

Then Iris came down again. Her grandfather was sleeping. Like a child, he fell asleep the moment his head fell upon the pillow.

"Iris," he said, "this is no delusion of your grandfather's. The parcel has been robbed."

"How do you know, Arnold?"

"The stupid fellow who stole and opened the packet no doubt thought he was wonderfully clever to fill it up again with paper. But he forgot that the packet has been lying for eighteen years in the safe, and that this note-paper was made the day before yesterday."

"How do you know that?"

"You can tell by the look and feel of the paper; they did not make paper like this twenty years ago; besides, look at the water-mark;" he held it to the light, and Iris read the mystic words. "That is the fashion of to-day. One House issues a new kind of paper, with a fancy name, and another imitates them. To-morrow, I will ascertain exactly when this paper was made."

"But who would steal it, Arnold? Who could steal it?"

"It would not probably be of the least use to anyone. But it might be stolen in order to sell it back. We may see an advertisement carefully worded, guarded, or perhaps— Iris, who had access to the place, when your grandfather was out?"

"No one but James, the shopman. He has been here five-and-twenty years. He would not, surely, rob his old master. No one else comes here except the customers and Cousin Joe."

"Joe is not, I believe, quite——"

"Joe is a very bad man. He has done dreadful things. But then, even if Joe were bad enough to rob the safe, how could he get at it? My grandfather never leaves it unlocked. Oh, Arnold, Arnold, that all this trouble should fall upon us on the very day——"

"My dear, is it not better that it should fall upon you when I am here, one more added to your advisers? If you have lost a fortune, I have found one. Think that you have given it to me."

"Oh, the fortune may go," she said.

"The future is ours, and we are young. But who shall console my grandfather in his old age for his bankruptcy?"

"As the stream," said Lala Roy, "which

passeth from the mountains to the ocean, kisseth every meadow on its way, yet tarries not in any place, so Fortune visits the sons of men; she is unstable as the wind; who shall hold her? Let not adversity tear off the wings of hope."

They could do nothing more. Arnold replaced the paper in the packet, and gave it to Iris; they put back the ledgers and account-books in the safe, and locked it up, and then they went upstairs.

"You shall go to bed, Iris," said Arnold, "and you, too, Lala Roy. I shall stay here, in case Mr. Emblem should—should want anything."

He was, in reality, afraid that "something would happen" to the old man. His sudden loss of memory, his loss of self-control when he spoke of his bankruptcy, the confusion of his words, told clearly of a mind unhinged. He could not go away and leave Iris with no better protection than one other weak old man.

He remained, but Iris sat with him, and in the silent watches of the night they talked about the future.

Under every roof are those who talk about the future, and those who think about the past; so the shadow of death is always with us and the sunshine of life. Not without reason is the Roman Catholic Altar incomplete without a bone of some dead man. As for the thing which had been stolen, that affected them but little. What does it matter—the loss of what was promised but five minutes since?

It was one o'clock in the morning when Lala Roy left them. They sat at the window, hand-in-hand, and talked. The street below them was very quiet; now and then a late cab broke the silence, or the tramp of a policeman; but there were no other sounds. They sat in darkness because they wanted no light. The hours sped too swiftly for them. At five the day began to dawn.

"Iris," said Arnold, "leave me now, and try to sleep a little. Shall we ever forget this night of sweet and tender talk?"

When she was gone, he began to be aware of footsteps overhead in the old man's room. What was he going to do? Arnold waited at the door. Presently the door opened, and he heard careful steps upon the stairs. They were the steps of Mr. Emblem himself. He was fully dressed, with his usual care and neatness, his black silk stock buckled behind, and his white hair brushed.

"Ah, Mr. Arbuthnot," he said cheerfully, "you are early this morning!" as if it was quite a usual thing for his friends to look in at six in the morning.

"You are going down to the shop, Mr. Emblem?"

"Yes, certainly—to the shop. Pray come with me."

Arnold followed him.

"I have just remembered," said the old man, "that last night we did not look on the floor. I will have one more search for the letter, and then, if I cannot find it, I will write it all out—every word. There is not much, to be sure, but the story is told without the names."

"Tell me the story, Mr. Emblem, while you remember it."

"All in good time, young man. Youth is impatient."

He drew up the blind and let in the morning light; then he began his search for the letter on the floor, going on his hands and knees, and peering under the table and chairs with a candle. At length he desisted.

"I tied it up," he said, "with the parcel, with red tape. Very well—we must do without it. Now, Mr. Arbuthnot, my plan is this. First, I will dictate the letter. This will give you the outlines of the story. Next, I will send you to—to my old customer, who can tell you my son-in-law's real name. And then I will describe his coat-of-arms. My memory was never so clear and good as I feel it to-day. Strange that last night I seemed, for the moment, to forget everything! Ha, ha! Ridiculous, wasn't it? I suppose— But there is no accounting for these queer things. Perhaps I was disappointed to find nothing in the packet. Do you think, Mr. Arbuthnot, that I—"

Here he began to tremble. "Do you think that I dreamed it all? Old men think strange things. Perhaps—"

"Let us try to remember the letter, Mr. Emblem."

"Yes, yes—certainly—the letter. Why it went—ahem!—as follows—"

Arnold laid down the pen in despair. The poor old man was mad. He had poured out the wildest farrago without sense, coherence, or story.

"So much for the letter, Mr. Arbuthnot." He was mad without doubt, yet he knew Arnold, and knew, too, why he was in the house. "Ah, I knew it would come back to me. Strange if it did not. Why I read

that letter once every quarter or so for eighteen years. It is a part of myself. I could not forget it."

"And the name of your son-in-law's old friend?"

"Oh yes, the name!"

He gave some name, which might have been the lost name, but as Mr. Emblem changed it the next moment, and forgot it again the moment after, it was doubtful; certainly not much to build upon.

"And the coat-of-arms?"

"We are getting on famously, are we not? The coat, sir, was as follows."

He proceeded to describe an impossible coat—a coat which might have been drawn by a man absolutely ignorant of science.

All this took a couple of hours. It was now eight o'clock.

"Thank you, Mr. Emblem," said Arnold.

"I have no doubt now that we shall somehow bring Iris to her own again, in spite of your loss. Shall we go upstairs and have some breakfast?"

"It is all right, Iris," cried the old man gleefully. "It is all right. I have remembered everything, and Mr. Arbuthnot will go out presently and secure your inheritance."

Iris looked at Arnold.

"Yes, dear," she said. "You shall have your breakfast. And then you shall tell me all about it when Arnold goes; and you will take a holiday, won't you—because I am twenty-one to-day?"

"Aha!" He was quite cheerful and mirthful, because he had recovered his memory. "Aha, my dear, all is well! You are twenty-one, and I am seventy-five; and Mr. Arbuthnot will go and bring home the—the inheritance. And I shall sit here all day long. It was a good dream that came to me this morning, was it not? Quite a voice from Heaven, which said: 'Get up and write down the letter while you remember it.' I got up; I found by the—by the merest accident, Mr. Arbuthnot on the stairs, and we have arranged everything for you—everything."

CHAPTER IX. DR. WASHINGTON.

ARNOLD returned to his studio, sat down, and fell fast asleep.

He was awakened about noon by his cousin Clara.

"Oh, Arnold," she cried, shaking him wrathfully by the arm, "this is a moment of the greatest excitement and importance to me, and you are my only adviser, and you are asleep!"

He sprang to his feet.

"I am awake now, Clara. Anxiety and trouble! On account of our talk yesterday!"

He saw that she had been crying. In her hands she had a packet of letters.

"Oh no, no; it is far more important than that. As for our talk——"

"I am engaged to her, Clara."

"So I expected," she replied coldly. "But I am not come here about your engagement. And you do not want my congratulations, I suppose?"

"I should like to have your good wishes, Clara."

"Oh, Arnold, that is what my poor Claude said when he deserted me and married the governess. You men want to have your own way, and then expect us to be delighted with it."

"I expect nothing, Clara. Pray understand that."

"I told Claude, when he wrote asking forgiveness, that he had my good wishes, whatever he chose to do, but that I would not on any account receive his wife. Very well, Arnold; that is exactly what I say to you."

"Very well, Clara. I quite understand. As for the studio, and all the things that you have given me, they are, of course, yours again. Let me restore what I can to you."

"No, Arnold, they are yours. Let me hear no more about things that are your own. Of course, your business, as you call it, is exciting. But as for this other thing, it is far more important. Something has happened; something I always expected; something that I looked forward to for years; although it has waited on the way so long, it has actually come at last, when I had almost forgotten to look for it. So true it is, Arnold, that good fortune and misfortune alike come when we least expect them."

Arnold sat down. He knew his cousin too well to interrupt her. She had her own way of telling a story, and it was a roundabout way.

"I cannot complain, after twenty years, can I? I have had plenty of rope, as you would say. But still it has come at last. And naturally, when it does come, it is a shock."

"Is it hereditary gout, Clara?"

"Gout! Nonsense, Arnold! When the will was read, I said to myself, 'Claude is certain to come back and claim his own. It is his right, and I hope he will come.

But for my own part, I have not the least intention of calling upon the governess.' Then three or four years passed away, and I heard—I do not remember how—that he was dead. And then I waited for his heirs, his children, or their guardians. But they did not come."

"And now they have really come? Oh, Clara, this is indeed a misfortune."

"No, Arnold; call it a restitution, not a misfortune. I have been living all these years on the money which belongs to Claude's heir."

"There was a son, then. And now he has dropped upon us from the clouds?"

"It is a daughter, not a son. But you shall hear. I received a letter this morning from a person called Dr. Joseph Washington, stating that he wrote to me on account of the only child and heiress of the late Claude Deseret."

"Who is Dr. Joseph Washington?"

"He is a physician, he says, and an American."

"Yes; will you go on?"

"I do not mind it, Arnold; I really do not. I must give up my house and put down my carriage, but it is for Claude's daughter. I rejoice to think that he has left someone behind him. Arnold, that face upon your canvas really has got eyes wonderfully like his, if it was not a mere fancy, when I saw it yesterday. I am glad, I say, to give up everything to the child of Claude."

"You think so kindly of him, Clara, who inflicted so much pain on you."

"I can never think bitterly of Claude. We were brought up together; we were like brother and sister; he never loved me in any other way. Oh, I understood it all years ago. To begin with, I was never beautiful; and it was his father's mistake. Well: this American followed up his letter by a visit. In the letter he merely said he had come to London with the heiress. But he called an hour ago, and brought me—oh, Arnold, he brought me one more letter from Claude. It has been waiting for me for eighteen years. After all that time, after eighteen years, my poor dead Claude speaks to me again. My dear, when I thought he was miserable on account of his marriage, I was wrong. His wife made him happy, and he died because she died." The tears came into her eyes again. "Poor boy! Poor Claude! The letter speaks of his child. It says——" She opened and read the letter. "He says: 'Some day my child will, I hope,

come to you, and say: "Cousin Clara, I am Iris Deseret.""

"Iris?" said Arnold.

"It is her name, Arnold. It was the child's grandmother's name."

"A strange coincidence," he said. "Pray go on."

"She will say: 'Cousin Clara, I am Iris Deseret.' Then you will be kind to her, as you would to me, if I were to come home again.' I cannot read any more, my dear, even to you."

"Did this American give you any other proof of what he asserts?"

"He gave me a portrait of Claude, taken years ago, when he was a boy of sixteen, and showed me the certificate of marriage, and the child's certificate of baptism, and letters from his wife. I suppose nothing more can be wanted."

"I dare say it is all right, Clara. But why was not the child brought over before?"

"Because—this is the really romantic part of the story—when her father died, leaving the child, she was adopted by these charitable Americans, and no one ever thought of examining the papers, which were lying in a desk, until the other day."

"You have not seen the young lady."

"No; he is to bring her to-morrow."

"And what sort of a man is this American? Is he a gentleman?"

"Well, I do not quite know. Perhaps Americans are different from Englishmen. If he was an Englishman, I should say without any hesitation that he is not a gentleman, as we count good breeding and good manners. He is a big man, handsome and burly, and he seems good-tempered. When I told him what was the full amount of Iris's inheritance——"

"Iris's inheritance!" Arnold repeated.

"I beg your pardon, Clara; pray go on; but it seems like a dream."

"He only laughed, and said he was glad she would have so much. The utmost they hoped, he said, was that it might be a farm, or a house or two, or a few hundreds in the stocks. He is to bring her to-morrow, and of course I shall make her stay with me. As for himself, he says that he is only anxious to get back home to his wife and his practice."

"He wants nothing for himself, then? That seems a good sign."

"I asked him that question, and he said that he could not possibly take money for what he and his family had done for Iris; that is to say, her education and mainte-

nance. This was very generous of him. Perhaps he is really a gentleman by birth, but has provincial manners. He said, however, that he had no objection to receiving the small amount of money spent on the voyage and on Iris's outfit, because they were not rich people, and it was a serious thing to fit out a young lady suitably. So of course I gave him what he suggested, a cheque for two hundred pounds. No one, he added with true feeling, would grudge a single dollar that had been spent upon the education of the dear girl; and this went to my heart."

"She is well educated, then?"

"She sings well," he says, "and has had a good plain education. He said I might rest assured that she was ladylike, because she had been brought up among his own friends."

"That is a very safe guarantee," said Arnold, laughing. "I wonder if she is pretty?"

"I asked him that question too, and he replied very oddly that she had a most splendid figure, which fetched everybody. Is not that rather a vulgar expression?"

"It is, in England. Perhaps in America it belongs to the first circles, and is a survival of the Pilgrim Fathers. So you gave him a cheque for two hundred pounds?"

"Yes; surely I was not wrong, Arnold. Consider the circumstances, the outfit and the voyage, and the man's reluctance and delicacy of feeling."

"I dare say you were quite right, but—well, I think I should have seen the young lady first. Remember, you have given the money to a stranger, on his bare word."

"Oh, Arnold, this man is perfectly honest. I would answer for his truth and honesty. He has frank, honest eyes. Besides, he brought me all those letters. Well, dear, you are not going to desert me because you are engaged, are you, Arnold? I want you to be present when she comes to-morrow morning."

"Certainly I will be present, with the greatest—no, not the greatest pleasure. But I will be present—I will come to luncheon, Clara."

When she was gone he thought again of the strange coincidence, both of the man and of the inheritance. Yet what had his Iris in common with a girl who had been brought up in America? Besides, she had lost her inheritance, and this other Iris had crossed the ocean to receive hers. Yet a very strange coincidence. It was so strange that he told it to Iris and to Lala

Roy. Iris laughed, and said she did not know she had a single namesake. Lala did not laugh; but he sat thinking in silence. There was no chess for him that night; instead of playing his usual game, Mr. Emblem, in his chair, laughed and chuckled in rather a ghastly way.

CHAPTER X. "IT IS MY COUSIN."

"WELL, Joe," said his wife, "and how is it going to finish? It looks to me as if there was a prison-van and a police-court at the end. Don't you think we had better back out of it while there is time?"

"You're a fool!" her husband replied—it was the morning after his visit to Clara; "you know nothing about it. Now listen."

"I do nothing but listen; you've told me the story till I know it by heart. Do you think anybody in the world will be so green as to believe such a clumsy plant as that?"

"Now look here, Lotty; if there's another word said—mind, now—you shall have nothing more to do with the business at all. I'll give it to a girl I know—a clever girl, who will carry it through with flying colours."

She set her lips hard, and drummed her fingers on the table. He knew how to rule his wife.

"Go on," she said, "since we can't be honest."

"Be reasonable, then; that's all I ask you. Honest! who is honest? Ain't we every one engaged in getting round our neighbours? Isn't the whole game, all the world over, lying and deceit? Honest! you might as well go on the boards without faking up your face, as try to live honest. Hold your tongue, then." He growled and swore, and after his fashion called on the Heavens to witness and express their astonishment.

The girl bent her head, and made no reply for a space. She was cowed and afraid. Presently she looked up and laughed, but with a forced laugh.

"Don't be cross, Joe; I'll do whatever you want me to do, and cheerfully, too, if it will do you any good. What is a woman good for but to help her husband? Only don't be cross, Joe."

She knew what her husband was by this time—a false and unscrupulous man. Yet she loved him. The case is not rare by any means, so that there is hope for all of us, from the meanest and most wriggling worm among us to the most hectoring ruffian.

"Why there, Lotty," he said, "that is what I like. Now listen. The old lady is a cake—do you understand? She is a sponge, she swallows everything, and is ready to fall on your neck and cry over you for joy. As for doubt or suspicion, not a word. I don't think there will be a single question asked. No, it's all 'My poor dear Claude'—that's your father, Lotty—and 'My poor dear Iris'—that's you, Lotty."

"All right, Joe, go on. I am Iris—I am anybody you like. Go on."

"The more I think about it, the more I'm certain we shall do the trick. Only keep cool over the job, and forget the Music Hall. You are Iris Deseret, and you are the daughter of Claude Deseret, deceased. I am Dr. Washington, one of the American family who brought you up. You're grateful, mind. Nothing can be more lively than your gratitude. We've been brother and sister, you and me, and I've got a wife and young family and a rising practice at home in the State of Maine, and I am only come over here to see you into your rights at great personal expense. Paid a substitute. Yes, actually paid a substitute. We only found the papers the other day, which is the reason why we did not come over before, and I am going home again directly."

"You are not really going away, Joe, are you?"

"No, I am going to stay here; but I shall pretend to go away. Now remember, we've got no suspicion ourselves, and we don't expect to meet any. If there is any, we are surprised and sorry. We don't come to the lady with a lawyer or a blunderbuss; we come as friends, and we shall arrange this little business between ourselves. Oh, never you fear, we shall arrange it quite comfortably, without lawyers."

"How much do you think we shall get out of it, Joe?"

"Listen, and open your eyes. There's nearly a hundred and twenty thousand pounds and a small estate in the country. Don't let us trouble about the estate more than we can help. Estates mean lawyers. Money doesn't."

He spoke as if small sums like a hundred thousand pounds are carried about in the pocket.

"Good gracious! And you've got two hundred of it already, haven't you?"

"Yes, but what is two hundred out of a hundred and twenty thousand? A hundred

and twenty thousand! There's spending in it, isn't there, Lotty? Gad, we'll make the money spin, I calculate! It may be a few weeks before the old lady transfers the money—I don't quite know where it is, but in stocks or something—to your name. As soon as it is in your name I've got a plan. We'll remember that you've got a sweetheart or something in America, and you'll break your heart for wanting to see him. And then nothing will do but you must run across for a trip. Oh, I'll manage, and we'll make the money fly."

He was always adding new details to his story, finding something to embellish it and heighten the effect, and now having succeeded in getting the false Iris into the house, he began already to devise schemes to get her out again.

"A hundred thousand pounds! Why, Joe, it is a terrible great sum of money. Good gracious! What shall we do with it, when we get it?"

"I'll show you what to do with it, my girl."

"And you said, Joe—you declared that it is your own by rights."

"Certainly, it is my own. It would have been bequeathed to me by my own cousin. But she didn't know it. And she died without knowing it, and I am her heir."

Lotty wondered vaguely and rather sadly how much of this statement was true. But she did not dare to ask. She had promised her assistance. Every night she woke with a dreadful dream of a policeman knocking at the door; whenever she saw a man in blue she trembled; and she knew perfectly well that, if the plot failed, it was she herself, in all probability, and not her husband at all, who would be put in the dock. She did not believe a word about the cousin; she knew she was going to do a vile and dreadful wickedness, but she was ready to go through with it, or with anything else, to please a husband who already, the honeymoon hardly finished, showed the propensities of a rover.

"Very well, Lotty; we are going there at once. You need take nothing with you, but you won't come back here for a good spell. In fact, I think I shall have to give up these lodgings, for fear of accidents. I shall leave you with your cousin."

"Yes; and I'm to be quiet, and behave pretty, I suppose?"

"You'll be just as quiet and demure as you used to be when you were serving in the music-shop. No loud laughing, no capers, no comic songs, and no dancing."

"And am I to begin at once by asking for the money to be—what do you call it, transferred?"

"No; you are not on any account to say a word about the money; you are to go on living there without hinting at the money—without showing any desire to discuss the subject—perhaps for months, until there can't be the shadow of a doubt that you are the old woman's cousin. You are to make much of her, flatter her, cocker her up, find out all the family secrets, and get the length of her foot; but you are not to say one single word about the money. As for your manners, I'm not afraid of them, because when you like, you can look and talk like a countess."

"I know now." She got up and changed her face so that it became at once subdued and quiet, like a quiet serving-girl behind a counter. "So, is that modest enough, Joe? And as for singing, I shall sing for her, but not music-hall trash. This kind of thing. Listen."

There was a piano in the room, and she sat down and sang to her own accompaniment, with a sweet, low voice, one of the soft, sad German songs.

"That'll do," cried Joe. "Hang me! what a clever girl you are, Lotty! That's the kind of thing the swells like. As for me, give me ten minutes of Jolly Nash. But you know how to pull 'em in, Lotty."

It was approaching twelve, the hour when they were due. Lotty retired and arrayed herself in her quietest and most sober dress, a costume in some brown stuff, with a bonnet to match. She put on her best gloves and boots, having herself felt the inferiority of the shop-girl to the lady in those minor points; and she modified and mitigated her fringe, which, she knew, was rather more exaggerated than young ladies in Society generally wear.

"You're not afraid, Lotty?" said Joe, when at last she was ready to start.

"Afraid? Not I, Joe. Come along. I couldn't look quieter, not if I was to make up as I do in the evening as a Quakeress. Come along. Oh, Joe, it will be awful dull! Don't forget to send word to the Hall that I am ill. Afraid? Not I!" She laughed, but rather hysterically.

There would be, however, she secretly considered, some excitement when it came to the finding out, which would happen, she was convinced, in a very few hours. In fact, she had no faith at all in the story being accepted and believed by anybody; to be

sure, she herself had been trained, as ladies in shops generally are, to mistrust all mankind, and she could not understand at all the kind of confidence which comes of having the very thing presented to you which you ardently desire. When they arrived in Chester Square, she found waiting for her a lady, who was certainly not beautiful, but she had kind eyes, which looked eagerly at the strange face, and with an expression of disappointment.

"It can't be the fringe," thought Lotty.

"Cousin Clara," she said softly and sweetly, as her husband had taught her, "I am Iris Deseret, the daughter of your old playfellow, Claude."

"Oh, my dear, my dear," cried Clara with enthusiasm, "come to my arms! Welcome home again!"

She kissed and embraced her. Then she held her by both hands, and looked at her face again.

"My dear," she said, "you have been a long time coming. I had almost given up hoping that Claude had any children. But you are welcome, after all—very welcome. You are in your own house, remember, my dear. This house is yours, and the plate, and furniture, and everything, and I am only your tenant."

"Oh!" said Lotty, overwhelmed. Why, she had actually been taken on her word, or rather the word of Joe.

"Let me kiss you again. Your face does not remind me as yet, in any single feature, of your father's. But I dare say I shall find resemblance presently. And, indeed, your voice does remind me of him already. He had a singularly sweet and delicate voice."

"Iris has a remarkably sweet and delicate voice," said Joe softly. "No doubt she got it from her father. You will hear her sing presently."

Lotty hardly knew her husband. His face was preternaturally solemn, and he looked as if he was engaged in the most serious business of his life.

"All her father's ways were gentle and delicate," said Clara.

"Just like hers," said Joe. When all of us—American boys and girls, pretty rough at times—were playing and larking about, Iris would be just sittin' out like a cat on a carpet, quiet and demure. I suppose she got that way, too, from her father."

"No doubt; and as for your face, my dear, I dare say I shall find a likeness presently. But just now I see none. Will you take off your bonnet?"

When the girl's bonnet was off, Clara looked at her again, curiously, but kindly.

"I suppose I can't help looking for a likeness, my dear. But you must take after your mother, whom I never saw. Your father's eyes were full and limpid; yours are large, and clear, and bright; very good eyes, my dear, but they are not limpid. His mouth was flexible and mobile, but yours is firm. Your hair, however, reminds me somewhat of his, which was much your light shade of brown when he was young. And now, sir"—she addressed Joe—"now that you have brought this dear girl all the way across the Atlantic, what are you going to do?"

"Well, I don't exactly know that there's anything to keep me," said Joe. "You see, I've got my practice to look after at home—I am a physician, as I told you—and my wife and children; and the sooner I get back the better, now that I can leave Iris with her friends, safe and comfortable. Stay," he added, "there are all those papers which I promised you—the certificates, and the rest of them. You had better take them all, miss, and keep them for Iris."

"Thank you," said Clara, touched by this confidence; "Iris will be safe with me. It is very natural that you should want to go home again. And you will be content to stay with me, my dear, won't you? You need not be afraid, sir; I assure you that her interests will not in any way suffer. Tell her to write and let you know exactly what is done. Let her, however, since she is an English girl, remain with English friends, and get to know her cousins and relations. You can safely trust her with me, Dr. Washington."

"Thank you," said Joe. "You know that when one has known a girl all her life, one is naturally anxious about her happiness. We are almost brother and sister."

"I know; and I am sure, Mr. Washington, we ought to be most grateful to you. As for the money you have expended upon her, let me once more beg of you—"

Joe waved his hand majestically.

"As for that," he said, "the money is spent. Iris is welcome to it, if it were ten times as much. Now, madam, you trusted me, the very first day that you saw me, with two hundred pounds sterling. Only an English lady would have done that. You trusted me without asking me who or what I was, or doubting my word. I assure you, madam, I felt that kindness, and that trust, very much indeed; and in return, I have brought you Iris herself.

After all expenses paid of coming over and getting back, buying a few things for Iris, if I find that there's anything over, I shall ask you to take back the balance. Madam, thank you for the money, but I am sure have repaid you—with Iris."

This was a very clever speech. If there had been a shadow of doubt before it in Clara's heart (which there was not), it would vanish now. She cordially and joyfully accepted her newly-found cousin.

"And now, Iris," he said with a manly remor in his voice, "I do not know if I shall see you again before I go away. If not, I shall take your fond love to all of them at home—Tom, and Dick, and Harry, and Harriet, and Prissy, and all of them"—"Joe really was carrying the thing through splendidly—and perhaps, my dear, when you are a grand lady in England, you will give a thought—a thought now and again—to your old friends across the water."

"Oh, Joe!" cried Lotty, really carried away with admiration, and ashamed of her sceptical spirit. "Oh," she whispered, "ain't you splendid!"

"But you must not go, Dr. Washington," said Clara, "without coming again to say farewell. Will you not dine with us to-night? Will you stay and have lunch?"

"No, madam, I thank you. It will be best for me to leave Iris alone with you. She sooner she learns your English ways and forgets American ways, the better."

"But you are not going to start away for Liverpool at once? You will stay a day or two in London——"

The American Physician said that perhaps he might stay a week longer for scientific purposes.

"Have you got enough money, Joe?" asked the new Iris thoughtfully.

Joe gave her a glance of infinite admiration.

"Well," he said, "the fact is that I should like to buy a few books and things. Perhaps——"

"Cousin," said Lotty eagerly, "please give me a cheque for a hundred pounds. Make it a hundred. You said everything was mine. No, Joe, I won't hear a word about repayment, as if a little thing like fifty pounds, or a hundred pounds, should want to be repaid! As if you and I could ever talk about repayment!"

Clara did as she was asked readily and eagerly. Then Joe departed, promising to call and say farewell before he left England, and resolving that in his next visit—his last visit—there should be

another cheque. But he had made one mistake: he had parted with the papers. No one in any situation of life should ever give up the power until he has secured the substance. But it is human to err.

"And now, my dear," said Clara warmly, "sit down and let us talk. Arnold is coming to lunch with us, and to make your acquaintance."

When Arnold came a few minutes later, he was astonished to find his cousin already on the most affectionate terms with the newly-arrived Iris Deseret. She was walking about the room showing her the pictures of her grandfather and other ancestors, and they were hand-in-hand.

"Arnold," said Clara, "this is Iris, and I hope you will both be great friends; Iris, this is my cousin, but he is not yours."

"I don't pretend to know how that may be," said the young lady. "But then I am glad to know all your cousins, whether they are mine or not; only don't bother me with questions, because I don't remember anything, and I don't know anything. Why, until the other day I did not even know that I was an English lady, not until they found those papers."

A strange accent for an American! and she certainly said "laidy" for "lady," and "paiper" for "paper," like a cockney. Alas! This comes of London Music Halls even to country-bred damsels!

Arnold made a mental observation that the new comer might be called anything in the world, but could not be called a lady. She was handsome, certainly, but how could Claude Deseret's daughter have grown into so common a type of beauty? Where was the delicacy of feature and manner which Clara had never ceased to commend in speaking of her lost cousin?

"Iris," said Clara, "is our little savage from the American Forest. She is Queen Pocahontas, who has come over to conquer England and to win all our hearts. My dear, my cousin Arnold will help me to make you an English girl."

She spoke as if the State of Maine was still the hunting-ground of Sioux and Iroquois.

Arnold thought that a less American-looking girl he had never seen; that she did not speak or look like a lady was to be expected perhaps, if she had, as was probable, been brought up by rough and unpolished people. But he had no doubt, any more than Clara herself, as to the identity of the girl. Nobody ever doubts a claimant. Every impostor, from

Demetrius downwards, has gained his supporters and partisans by simply living among them and keeping up the imposition. It is so easy, in fact, to be a claimant, that it is wonderful there are not more of them.

Then luncheon was served, and the young lady not only showed a noble appetite, but, to Arnold's astonishment, confessed to an ardent love for bottled stout.

"Most American ladies," he said imper- tinently, "only drink water, do they not?"

Lotty perceived that she had made a mistake.

"I only drink stout," she said, "when the doctor tells me. But I like it all the same."

She certainly had no American accent. But she would not talk much; she was perhaps shy. After luncheon, however, Clara asked her if she would sing, and she complied, showing considerable skill with her accompaniment, and singing a simple song in good taste and with a sweet voice. Arnold observed, however, that there was some weakness about the letter "h," less common among Americans than among the English. Presently he went away, and the girl, who had been aware that he was watching her, breathed more easily.

"Who is your cousin Arnold?" she asked.

"My dear, he is my cousin but not yours. You will not see him often, because he is going to be married, I am sorry to say, and to be married beneath him—oh, it is dreadful!—to some tradesman's girl, my dear."

"Dreadful!" said Iris with a queer look in her eyes. "Well, cousin, I don't want to see much of him. He's a good-looking chap, too, though rather too finicking for my taste. I like a man who looks as if he could knock another man down. Besides, he looks at me as if I was a riddle, and he wanted to find out the answer."

In the evening Arnold found that no change had come over the old man. He was, however, perfectly happy, so that, considering the ruin of his worldly prospects, it was, perhaps, as well that he had parted, for a time, at least, with his wits. Some worldly misfortunes there are which should always produce this effect.

"You told me," said Lala Roy, "that another Iris had just come from America to claim an inheritance of your cousin."

"Yes; it is a very strange coincidence."

"Very strange. Two Englishmen die in America at the same time, each having

a daughter named Iris, and each daughter entitled to some kind of inheritance."

Lala Roy spoke slowly, and with meaning.

"Oh!" cried Arnold. "It is more than strange. Do you think—is it possible——"

He could not for the moment clothe his thoughts in words.

"Do you know if anyone has brought this girl to England?"

"Yes; she was brought over by a young American Physician, one of the family who adopted and brought her up."

"What is he like—the young American Physician?"

"I have not seen him."

"Go, my young friend, to-morrow morning, and ask your cousin if this photograph resembles the American Physician."

It was the photograph of a handsome young fellow, with strongly-marked features, apparently tall and well-set-up.

"Lala, you don't really suspect anything—you don't think——"

"Hush! I know who has stolen the papers. Perhaps the same man has produced the heiress."

"And you think—you suspect that the man who stole the papers is connected with—— But then those papers must be—oh, it cannot be! For then Iris would be Clara's cousin—Clara's cousin—and the other an impostor."

"Even so; everything is possible. But silence. Do not speak a word, even to Iris. If the papers are lost, they are lost. Say nothing to her yet; but go—go, and find out if that photograph resembles the American Physician. The river wanders here and there, but the sea swallows it at last."

CHAPTER XI. MR. JAMES MAKES ATONEMENT.

JAMES arrived as usual in the morning at nine o'clock, in order to take down the shutters. To his astonishment, he found Lala Roy and Iris waiting for him in the back shop. And they had grave faces.

"James," said Iris, "your master has suffered a great shock, and is not himself this morning. His safe has been broken open by someone, and most important papers have been taken out."

"Papers, miss—papers! Out of the safe?"

"Yes. They are papers of no value whatever to the thief, whoever he may be. But they are of the very greatest importance to us. Your master seems to have lost his memory for a while, and cannot

help us in finding out who has done this wicked thing. You have been a faithful servant for so long that I am sure you will do what you can for us. Think for us. Try to remember if anybody besides yourself has had access to this room when your master was out of it."

James sat down. He felt that he must sit down, though Lala Roy was looking at him with eyes full of doubt and suspicion. The whole enormity of his own guilt, though he had not stolen anything, fell upon him. He had got the key; he had given it to Mr. Joseph; and he had received it back again. In fact, at that very moment, it was lying in his pocket. The worst that he had feared had happened. The safe was robbed.

He was struck with so horrible a dread, and so fearful a looking forward to judgment and condemnation, that his teeth chattered and his eye gave way,

"You will think it over, James," said Iris; "think it over, and tell us presently if you can remember anything."

"Think it over, Mr. James," Lala Roy repeated in his deepest tone, and with an emphatic gesture of his right forefinger. "Think it over carefully. Like a lamp that is never extinguished are the eyes of the faithful servant."

They left him, and James fell back into his chair with hollow cheek and beating heart.

"He told me," he murmured—"oh, the villain!—he swore to me that he had taken nothing from the safe. He said he only looked in it, and read the contents. The scoundrel! He has stolen the papers! He must have known they were there. And then, to save himself, he put me on to the job. For who would be suspected if not—oh, Lord!—if not me?"

He grasped his paste-brush, and attacked his work with a feverish anxiety to find relief in exertion; but his heart was not in it, and presently a thought pierced his brain, as an arrow pierceth the heart, and under the pang and agony of it, his face turned ashy pale, and the big drops stood upon his brow.

"For," he thought, "suppose that the thing gets abroad; suppose they were to advertise a reward; suppose the man who made the key were to see the advertisement or to hear about it! And he knows my name, too, and my business; and he'll let out for a reward—I know he will—who it was ordered that key of him."

Already he saw himself examined before

a magistrate; already he saw in imagination that locksmith's man who made the key kissing the Testament, and giving his testimony in clear and distinct words, which could not be shaken.

"Oh, Lord! oh, Lord!" he groaned. "No one will believe me, even if I do confess the truth; and as for him, I know him well; if I go to him, he'll only laugh at me. But I must go to him—I must!"

He was so goaded by his terror that he left the shop unprotected—a thing he had never thought to do—and ran as fast as he could to Joe's lodgings. But he had left them; he was no longer there; he had not been there for six weeks; the landlady did not know his address, or would not give it. Then James felt sick and dizzy, and would have sat down on the doorstep and cried but for the look of the thing. Besides, he remembered the unprotected shop. So he turned away sadly and walked back, well understanding now that he had fallen like a fool into a trap, artfully set to fasten suspicion and guilt upon himself.

When he returned he found the place full of people. Mr. Emblem was sitting in his customary place, and he was smiling. He did not look in the least like a man who had been robbed. He was smiling pleasantly and cheerfully. Mr. Chalker was also present, a man with whom no one ever smiled, and Lala Roy, solemn and dignified, and a man—an unknown man—who sat in the outer shop, and seemed to take no interest at all in the proceedings. Were they come, he asked himself, to arrest him on the spot?

Apparently they were not, for no one took the least notice of him, and they were occupied with something else. How could they think of anything else? Yet Mr. Chalker, standing at the table, was making a speech, which had nothing to do with the robbery.

"Here I am, you see, Mr. Emblem," he said; "I have told you already that I don't want to do anything to worry you. Let us be friends all round. This gentleman, your friend from India, will advise you, I am sure, for your own good, not to be obstinate. Lord! what is the amount, after all, to a substantial man like yourself? A substantial man, I say." He spoke confidently, but he glanced about the shop with doubtful eyes. "Granted that it was borrowed to get your grandson out of a scrape—supposing he promised to pay it back and hasn't done so; putting the case that it has grown and developed itself as

bills will do, and can't help doing, and can't be stopped; it isn't the fault of the lawyers, but the very nature of a bill to go on growing—it's like a baby for growing. Why, after all, you were your grandson's security—you can't escape that. And when I would no longer renew, you gave of your own accord—come now, you can't deny that—a Bill of Sale on goods and furniture. Now, Mr. Emblem, didn't you? Don't let us have any bitterness or quarrelling. Let's be friends, and tell me I may send away the man."

Mr. Emblem smiled pleasantly, but did not reply.

"A Bill of Sale it was, dated January the 25th, 1883, just before that cursed Act of Parliament granted the five days' notice. Here is the bailiff's man in possession. You can pay the amount, which is, with costs and Sheriff's Poundage, three hundred and fifty-one pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence, at once, or you may pay it five days hence. Otherwise the shop, and furniture, and all, will be sold off in seven days."

"Oh," James gasped, listening with bewilderment, "we can't be going to be sold up! Emblem's to be sold up!"

"Three hundred and fifty pounds!" said Mr. Emblem. "My friend, let us rather speak of thousands. This is a truly happy day for all of us. Sit down, Mr. Chalker—my dear friend, sit down. Rejoice with us. A happy morning."

"What the devil is the matter with him?" asked the money-lender.

"There was something, Mr. Chalker," Mr. Emblem went on cheerfully, "something said about my grandson. Joe was always a bad lot; lucky his father and mother are out of the way in Australia. You came to me about that business, perhaps? Oh, on such a joyful day as this I forgive everybody. Tell Joe I do not want to see him, but I have forgiven him."

"Oh, he's mad!" growled James; "he's gone stark staring mad!"

"You don't seem quite yourself this morning, Mr. Emblem," said Mr. Chalker. "Perhaps this gentleman, your friend from India, will advise you when I am gone. You don't understand, Mister," he addressed Lala Roy, "the nature of a bill. Once you start a bill, and begin to renew it, it's like planting a tree, for it grows and grows of its own accord, and by Act of Parliament, too, though they do try to hack and cut it down in the most cruel way. You see Mr. Emblem is obstinate.

He's got to pay off that bill, which is a Bill of Sale, and he won't do it. Make him write the cheque and have done with it."

"This is the best day's work I ever did," Mr. Emblem went on. "To remember the letter, word for word, and everything! Mr. Arbutnot has, very likely, finished the whole business by now. Thousands—thousands—and all for Iris!"

"Look here, Mr. Emblem," said the lawyer angrily. "You'll not only be a bankrupt if you go on like this, but you'll be a fraudulent bankrupt as well. Is it honest, I want to know, to refuse to pay your just debts when you've put by thousands, as you boast—you actually boast—for your granddaughter?"

"Yes," said the old man, "Iris will have thousands."

"I think, sir," said Lala Roy, "that you are under an illusion. Mr. Emblem does not possess any such savings or investments as you imagine."

"Then why does he go on talking about thousands?"

"He has had a shock; he cannot quite understand what has happened. You had better leave him for the present."

"Leave him! And nothing but these mouldy old books! Here, you sir—you—James—you shopman—come here! What is the stock worth?"

"It depends upon whether you are buying or selling," said James. "If you were to sell it under the hammer, in lots, it wouldn't fetch a hundred pounds."

"There, you hear—you hear, all of you! Not a hundred pounds, and my Bill of Sale is three-fifty."

"Pray, sir," said Lala Roy, "who told you that Mr. Emblem was so wealthy?"

"His grandson."

"Then, sir, perhaps it would be well to question the grandson further. He may know things of which we have heard nothing."

The Act of 1882, which came into operation in the following January, is cruel indeed, I am told, to those who advanced money on Bills of Sale before that date, for it allows—it actually allows the debtor five clear days during which he may, if he can, without being caught, make away with portions of his furniture and belongings—the smaller and the more precious portion; or he may find someone else to lend him the money, and so get off clear and save his sticks. It is, as the modern Shylock declares, a most wicked and iniquitous Act, by which the shark may be balked, and many an honest

tradesman, who would otherwise have been most justly ruined, is enabled to save his stock, and left to worry along until the times become more prosperous. To a man like Mr. David Chalker, such an Act of Parliament is most revolting.

He went away at length, leaving the man—the professional person—behind. Then Lala Roy persuaded Mr. Emblem to go upstairs again. He did so without any apparent consciousness that there was a Man in Possession.

"James," said Lala Roy, "you have heard that your master has been robbed. You are reflecting and meditating on this circumstance. Another thing is that a creditor has threatened to sell off everything for a debt. Most likely, everything will be sold, and the shop closed. You will, therefore, lose the place you have had for five-and-twenty years. That is a very bad business for you. You are unfortunate this morning. To lose your place—and then this robbery. That seems also a bad business."

"It is," said James with a hollow groan. "It is, Mr. Lala Roy. It is a dreadful bad business."

"Pray, Mr. James," continued this man with grave, searching eyes which made sinners shake in their shoes, "pray, why did you run away, and where did you go after you opened the shop this morning? You went to see Mr. Emblem's grandson, did you not?"

"Yes, I did," said James.

"Why did you go to see him?"

"I w—w—went—oh, Lord!—I went to tell him what had happened, because he is master's grandson, and I thought he ought to know," said James.

"Did you tell him?"

"No; he has left his lodgings. I don't know where he is—oh, and he always told me the shop was his—settled on him," he said.

"He is the Father of Lies; his end will be confusion. Shame and confusion shall wait upon all who have hearkened unto him or worked with him, until they repent and make atonement."

"Don't, Mister Lala Roy—don't; you frighten me," said James. "Oh, what a dreadful Liar he is!"

All that morning the Philosopher sat in the bookseller's chair, and James, in the outer shop, felt that those deep eyes were resting continually upon him, and knew that bit by bit his secret would be dragged from him. If he could get up and run

away—if a customer would come—if the dark gentleman would go upstairs—if he could think of something else! But none of these things happened, and James, at his table with the paste before him, passed a morning compared with which any seat anywhere in Purgatory would have been comfortable. Presently a strange feeling came over him, as if some invisible force was pushing and dragging him and forcing him to leave his chair, and throw himself at the Philosopher's feet and confess everything. This was the mesmeric effect of those reproachful eyes fixed steadily upon him. And in the doorway, like some figure in a nightmare—a figure incongruous and out of place—the Man in Possession sitting, passive and unconcerned, with one eye on the street and the other on the shop. Upstairs Mr. Emblem was sitting fast asleep; joy had made him sleepy; and Iris was at work among her pupils' letters, compiling sums for the Fruiterer, making a paper on Conic Sections for the Cambridge man, and working out Trigonometrical Equations for the young schoolmaster, and her mind full of a solemn exultation and glory, for she was a woman who was loved. The other things troubled her but little. Her grandfather would get back his equilibrium of mind; the shop might be shut up, but that mattered little. Arnold, and Lala Roy, and her grandfather, and herself, would all live together, and she and Arnold would work. The selfishness of youth is really astonishing. Nothing—except perhaps toothache—can make a girl unhappy who is loved and newly betrothed. She may say what she pleases, and her face may be a yard long when she speaks of the misfortunes of others, but all the time her heart is dancing.

To Lala Roy, the situation presented a problem with insufficient data, some of which would have to be guessed. A letter, now lost, said that a certain case contained papers necessary to obtain an unknown inheritance for Iris. How then to ascertain whether anybody was expecting or looking for a girl to claim an inheritance? Then there was half a coat-of-arms, and lastly there was a certain customer of unknown name, who had been acquainted with Iris's father before his marriage. So far for Iris. As for the thief, Lala Roy had no doubt at all. It was, he was quite certain, the grandson, whose career he had watched for some years with interest and curiosity. Who else was there who would

steal the papers? And who would help him, and give him access to the safe? He did not only suspect, he was certain that James was in some way cognisant of the deed. Why else did he turn so pale? Why did he rush off to Joe's lodgings? Why did he sit trembling?"

At half-past twelve Lala Roy rose.

"It is your dinner-hour," he said to James, and it seemed to the unhappy man as if he was saying, "I know all." "It is your dinner-hour; go, eat, refresh the body. Whom should suspicion affright except the guilty!"

James put on his hat and sneaked—he felt that he was sneaking—out of the shop.

During his dinner-hour, Joseph himself called. It was an unusual thing to see him at any time; in fact, as he was never wont to call upon his grandfather, unless he was in a scrape and wanted money, no one ever made the poor young man welcome, or begged him to come more often.

But this morning, he walked upstairs and appeared so cheerful, so entirely free from any self-reproach for past sins, and so easy in his mind, without the least touch of the old hangdog look, that Iris began to reproach herself for thinking badly of her cousin.

When he was told about the robbery, he expressed the greatest surprise that any one in the world could be so wicked as to rob an old man like his grandfather. Besides his abhorrence of crime in the abstract, he affirmed that the robbery of a safe was a species of villainy for which hanging was too mild—much too mild a punishment. He then asked his grandfather what were the contents of the packet stolen, and when he received no answer except a pleasant and a cheery laugh, he asked Iris, and learned to his sorrow that the contents were unknown, and could not, therefore, be identified, even if they were found. This, he said, was a thousand pities, because, if they had been known, a reward might have been offered. For his own part he would advise the greatest caution. Nothing at all should be done at first; no step should be taken which might awaken suspicion; they should go on as if the papers were without value. As for that, they had no real proof that there was any robbery. Iris thought of telling him about the watermark of the blank pages, but refrained. Perhaps there was no robbery after all—who was to prove what had been inside the

packet? But if there had been papers, and if they were valueless except to the rightful owners, they would, perhaps, be sent back voluntarily; or after a time, say a year or two, they might be advertised for; not as if the owners were very anxious to get them, and not revealing the nature of the papers, but cautiously; and presently, if they had not been destroyed, the holders of the papers would answer the advertisement, and then a moderate reward might, after a while, be offered; and so on, giving excellent advice. While he was speaking, Lala Roy entered the room in his noiseless manner, and took his accustomed chair.

"And what do you think, sir?" said Joseph, when he had finished. "You have heard my advice. You are not an Englishman, but I suppose you've got some intelligence."

Lala bowed and spread his hands, but replied not.

"Your opinion should be asked," Joseph went on, "because, you see, as the only other person, besides my grandfather and my cousin, in the house, you might yourself be suspected. Indeed," he added, "I have no doubt you will be suspected. When I take over the conduct of the case, which will be my task, I suppose, it will, perhaps, be my duty to suspect you."

Lala bowed again and again, spread his hands, but did not speak.

In fact, Joseph now perceived that he was having the conversation wholly to himself. His grandfather sat passive, listening as one who, in a dream, hears voices but does not heed what they are saying, yet smiling politely. Iris listened, but paid no heed. She thought that a great deal of fuss was being made about papers, which, perhaps, were worth nothing. And as for her inheritance, why, as she never expected to get any, she was not going to mourn the loss of what, perhaps, was worth nothing.

"Very well, then," said Joseph, "that's all I've got to say. I've given you the best advice I can, and I suppose I may go. Have you lost your voice, Iris?"

"No; but I think you had better go, Joseph. My grandfather is not able to talk this morning, and I dare say your advice is very good, but we have other advisers."

"As for you, Mr. Lala Roy, or whatever you call yourself," said Joe roughly, "I've warned you. Suspicion will certainly fall upon you, and what I say is—take care. For my own part I never did believe in niggers, and I wouldn't have one in my house."

Lala Roy again bowed and spread his fingers.

Then Joseph went away. The door between the shop and the hall was half-open, and he looked in. A strange man was sitting in the outer shop, a pipe in his mouth, and James was leaning his head upon his hands, with wild and haggard eyes gazing straight before him.

"Poor devil!" murmured Joseph. "I feel for him, I do indeed. He had the key made—for himself; he certainly let me use it once, but only once, and who's to prove it? And he's had the opportunity every day of using it himself. That's very awkward, Foxy, my boy. If I were Foxy, I should be in a funk, myself."

He strolled away, thinking that all promised well. Lotty most favourably and unsuspectingly received in her new character; no one knowing the contents of the packet; his grandfather gone silly; and for himself, he had had the opportunity of advising exactly what he wished to be done—namely, that silence and inaction should be observed for a space, in order to give the holders of the property a chance of offering terms. What better advice could he give? And what line of action would be better or safer for himself?

If James had known who was in the house—passage, the other side of the door, there would, I think, have been a collision of two solid bodies. But he did not know, and presently Lala Roy came back, and the torture began again. James took down books and put them up again; he moved about feverishly, doing nothing, with a duster in his hand; but all the time he felt those deep accusing eyes upon him with a silence worse than a thousand questions. He knew—he was perfectly certain—that he should be found out. And all the trouble for nothing! and the Bailiff's man in possession, and the safe robbed, and those eyes upon him, saying, as plain as eyes could speak, "Thou art the Man!"

"And Joe is the man," said James; "not me at all. What I did was wrong, but I was tempted. Oh, what a precious liar and villain he is! And what a fool I've been!"

The day passed more slowly than it seemed possible for any day to pass; always the man in the shop; always the deep eyes of the silent Hindoo upon him. It was a relief when, once, Mr. Chalker looked in and surveyed the shelves with a

suspicious air, and asked if the old man had by this time listened to reason.

It is the business of him who makes plunder out of other men's distresses—as the jackal feeds upon the offal and the putrid carcase—to know as exactly as he can how his fellow-creatures are situated. For this reason such an one doth diligently enquire, listen, pick up secrets, put two and two together, and pry curiously into everybody's affairs, being never so happy as when he gets an opportunity of going to the rescue of a sinking man. Thus among those who lived in good repute about the lower end of the King's Road, none had a better name than Mr. Emblem, and no one was considered to have made more of his chances. And it was with joy that Mr. Chalker received Joe one evening and heard from him the dismal story, that if he could not find fifty pounds within a few hours, he was ruined. The fifty pounds was raised on a bill bearing Mr. Emblem's name. When it was presented, however, and the circumstances explained, the old gentleman, who had at first refused to own the signature, accepted it meekly, and told no one that his grandson had written it himself, and without the polite formality of asking permission to sign for him. In other words, Joseph was a forger, and Mr. Chalker knew it, and this made him the more astonished when Mr. Emblem did not take up the bill, but got it renewed quarter after quarter, substituting at length a bill of sale, as if he was determined to pay as much as possible for his grandson's sins.

"Where is he?" asked the money-lender angrily. "Why doesn't he come down and face his creditors?"

"Master's upstairs," said James, "and you've seen yourself, Mr. Chalker, that he is off his chump. And oh, sir, who would have thought that Emblem's would have come to ruin?"

"But there's something, James—Come, think—there must be something."

"Mr. Joseph said there were thousands. But he's a terrible liar—oh, Mr. Chalker, he's a terrible liar and villain! Why, he's even deceived me!"

"What! Has he borrowed your money?"

"Worse—worse. Do you know where I could find him, sir?"

"Well, I don't know——" Mr. Chalker was not in the habit of giving addresses, but in this case, perhaps Joe might be squeezed as well as his grandfather. Un-

fortunately that bill with the signature had been destroyed. "I don't know. Perhaps if I find out I may tell you. And, James, if you can learn anything—this rubbish won't fetch half the money—I'll make it worth your while, James, I will indeed."

"I'll make him take his share," said James to himself. "If I have to go to prison, he shall go too. They sha'n't send me without sending him."

He looked round. The watchful eyes were gone. The Hindoo had gone away noiselessly. James breathed again.

"After all," he said, "how are they to find out? How are they to prove anything? Mr. Joseph took the things, and I helped him to a key; and he isn't likely to split, and—oh, Lord, if they were to find it!" For at that moment he felt the duplicate key in his waistcoat-pocket. "If they were to find it!"

He took the key out, and looked at the bright and innocent-looking thing, as a murderer might look at his blood-stained dagger.

Just then, as he gazed upon it, holding it just twelve inches in front of his nose, one hand was laid upon his shoulder, and another took the key from between his fingers.

He turned quickly, and his knees gave way, and he sank upon the floor, crying:

"Oh, Mr. Lala Roy, sir, Mr. Lala Roy, I am not the thief! I am innocent! I will tell you all about it! I will confess all to you! I will indeed! I will make atonement! Oh, what a miserable fool I've been!"

"Upon the heels of Folly," said the Sage, "treadeth Shame. You will now be able to understand the words of wisdom, which say of the wicked man, 'The curse of iniquity pursueth him; he liveth in continual fear; the anxiety of his mind taketh vengeance upon him.' Stand up and speak."

The Man in Possession looked on as if an incident of this kind was too common in families for him to take any notice of it. Nothing, in fact, is able to awaken astonishment in the heart of the Man in Possession, because nothing is sacred to him except the "sticks" he has to guard. To Iris, the event was, however, of importance, because it afforded Lala Roy a chance of giving Arnold that photograph, no other than an early portrait of Mr. Emblem's grandson.

CHAPTER XII. IS THIS HIS PHOTOGRAPH?

THE best way to get a talk with his cousin was to dine with her. Arnold there-

fore went to Chester Square next day with the photograph in his pocket. It was half an hour before dinner when he arrived, and Clara was alone.

"My dear," she cried with enthusiasm, "I am charmed—I am delighted—with Iris."

"I am glad," said Arnold mendaciously. "I am delighted with her—in every way. She is more and better than I could have expected—far more. A few Americanisms, of course——"

"No doubt," said Arnold. "When I saw her I thought they rather resembled Anglicisms. But you have had opportunities of judging. You have in your own possession," he continued, "have you not, all the papers which establish her identity?"

"Oh yes; they are all locked up in my strong-box. I shall be very careful of them. Though, of course, there is no one who has to be satisfied except myself. And I am perfectly satisfied. But then I never had any doubt from the beginning. How could there be any doubt?"

"How, indeed?"

"Truth, honour, loyalty, and candour, as well as gentle descent, are written on that girl's noble brow, Arnold, plain, so that all may read. It is truly wonderful," she went on, "how the old gentle blood shows itself, and will break out under the most unexpected conditions. In her face she is not much like her father; that is true; though sometimes I catch a momentary resemblance, which instantly disappears again. Her eyes are not in the least like his, nor has she his manner, or carriage, or any of his little tricks and peculiarities—though, perhaps, I shall observe traces of some of them in time. But especially she resembles him in her voice. The tone—the timbre—reminds me every moment of my poor Claude."

"I suppose," said Arnold, "that one must inherit something, if it is only a voice, from one's father. Have you said anything to her yet about money matters, and a settlement of her claims?"

"No, not yet. I did venture, last night, to approach the subject, but she would not hear of it. So I dropped it. I call that true delicacy, Arnold—native, instinctive, hereditary delicacy."

"Have you given any more money to the American gentleman who brought her home?"

"Iris made him take a hundred pounds, against his will, to buy books with, for he

is not rich. Poor fellow! It went much against the grain with him to take the money. But she made him take it. She said he wanted books and instruments, and insisted on his having at least a hundred pounds. It was generous of her. Yes; she is—I am convinced—a truly generous girl, and as open-handed as the day. Now, would a common girl, a girl of no descent, have shown so much delicacy and generosity?"

"By the way, Clara, here is a photograph. Does it belong to you? I—I picked it up."

He showed the photograph which Lala Roy had given him.

"Oh yes; it is a likeness of Dr. Washington, Iris's adopted brother and guardian. She must have dropped it. I should think it was taken a few years back, but it is still a very good likeness. A handsome man, is he not? He grows upon one rather. His parting words with Iris yesterday were very dignified and touching."

"I will give it to her presently," he replied, without further comment.

There was, then, no doubt. The woman was an impostor, and the man was the thief, and the papers were the papers which had been stolen from the safe, and Iris Deseret was no other than his own Iris. But he must not show the least sign of suspicion.

"What are you thinking about, Arnold?" asked Clara. "Your face is as black as thunder. You are not sorry that Iris has returned, are you?"

"I was thinking of my engagement, Clara."

"Why, you are not tired of it already? An engaged man, Arnold, ought not to look so gloomy as that."

"I am not tired of it yet. But I am unhappy as regards some circumstances connected with it. Your disapproval, Clara, for one. My dear cousin, I owe so much to you, that I want to owe you more. Now, I have a proposition—a promise—to make to you. I am now so sure, so very sure and certain, that you will want me to marry Miss Aglen—and no one else—when you once know her, that I will engage solemnly not to marry her unless you entirely approve. Let me owe my wife to you, as well as everything else."

"Arnold, you are not in earnest?"

"Quite in earnest."

"But I shall never approve. Never—never—never! I could not bring myself,

under any circumstances that I can conceive, to approve of such a connection."

"My dear cousin, I am, on the other hand, perfectly certain that you will approve. Why, if I were not quite certain do you think I should have made this promise? But to return to your newly-found cousin. Tell me more about her."

"Well, I have discovered that she is a really very clever and gifted girl. She can imitate people in the most wonderful way, especially actresses, though she has only been to a theatre once or twice in her life. At Liverpool she heard some one sing what she calls a Topical Song, and this she actually remembers—she carried it away in her head, every word—and she can sing it just as they sing it on the stage, with all the vulgarity and gestures imitated to the very life. Of course I should not like her to do this before anybody else, but it is really wonderful."

"Indeed!" said Arnold. "It must be very clever and amusing."

"Of course," said Clara, with colossal ignorance, "an American lady can hardly be expected to understand English vulgarities. No doubt there is an American variety."

Arnold thought that a vulgar song could be judged at its true value by any lady, either American or English; but he said nothing.

And then the young lady herself appeared. She had been driving about with Clara among various shops, and now bore upon her person the charming result of these journeys, in the shape of a garment, which was rich in texture, and splendid in the making. And she really was a handsome girl, only with a certain air of being dressed for the stage. But Arnold, now more than suspicious, was not dazzled by the gorgeous raiment, and only considered how his cousin could for a moment imagine this person to be a lady, and how it would be best to break the news.

"Clara's cousin," she said, "I have forgotten your name; but how do you do, again?"

And then they went in to dinner.

"You have learned, I suppose," said Arnold, "something about the Deseret family by this time?"

"Oh yes; I have heard all about the family-tree. I dare say I shall get to know it by heart in time. But you don't expect me, all at once, to care much for it."

"Little Republican!" said Clara. "She

actually does not feel a pride in belonging to a good old family."

The girl made a little gesture.

"Your family can't do much for you, that I can see, except to make you proud, and pretend not to see other women in the shop. That is what the county ladies do."

"Why, my dear, what on earth do you know of the county ladies?"

Lotty blushed a little. She had made a mistake. But she quickly recovered.

"I only know what I've read, cousin, about any kind of English ladies. But that's enough, I'm sure. Stuck-up things!"

And again she observed, from Clara's pained expression, that she had made another mistake.

If she showed a liking for stout at lunch, she manifested a positive passion for champagne at dinner.

"I do like the English custom," she said, "of having two dinners in the day."

"Ladies in America, I suppose," said Clara, "dine in the middle of the day?"

"Always."

"But I have visited many families in New York and Boston who dined late," said Arnold.

"Daresay," she replied carelessly. "I'm going to have some more of that curry stuff, please. And don't ask any more questions, anybody, till I've worried through with it. I'm a wolf at curry."

"She likes England, Arnold," said Clara, covering up this remark, so to speak. "She likes the country, she says, very much."

"At all events," said the girl, "I like this house, which is first-class—fine—proper. And the furniture, and pictures, and all—tip-top. But I'm afraid it is going to be awful dull, except at meals, and when the Boy is going." Her own head was just touched by the "Boy," and she was a little off her guard.

"My dear child," said Clara, "you have only just come, and you have not yet learned to know and love your own home and your father's friends. You must take a little time."

"Oh, I'll take time. As long as you like. But I shall soon be tired of sitting at home. I want to go about and see things—theatres and music-halls, and all kinds of places."

"Ladies, in England, do not go to music-halls," said Arnold.

"Gentlemen do. Why not ladies, then? Answer me that. Why can't ladies go, when gentlemen go? What is proper for

gentlemen is proper for ladies. Very well, then, I want to go somewhere every night. I want to see everything there is to see, and to hear all that there is to hear."

"We shall go, presently, a good deal into society," said Clara timidly. "Society will come back to town very soon now—at least, some of it."

"Oh yes, I dare say. Society! No, thank you, with company manners. I want to laugh, and talk, and enjoy myself."

The champagne, in fact, had made her forget the instructions of her tutor. At all events, she looked anything but "quiet," with her face flushed and her eyes bright. Suddenly she caught Arnold's expression of suspicion and watchfulness, and resolutely subdued a rising inclination to get up from the table and have a walk round with a snatch of a Topical Song.

"Forgive me, Clara," she murmured in her sweetest tone; "forgive me, cousin. I feel as if I must break out a bit, now and then. Yankee manners, you know. Let me stay quiet with you for a while. You know the thought of starched and stiff London society quite frightens me. I am not used to anything stiff. Let me stay at home quiet, with you."

"Dear girl!" cried Clara, her eyes filling with tears; "she has all Claude's affectionate softness of heart."

"I believe," said Arnold, later on in the evening, "that she must have been a circus-rider, or something of that sort. What on earth does Clara mean by the gentle blood breaking out? We nearly had a breaking out at dinner, but it certainly was not due to the gentle blood."

After dinner, Arnold found her sitting on a sofa with Clara, who was telling her something about the glories of the Deseret family. He was half inclined to pity the girl, or to laugh—he was not certain which—for the patience with which she listened, in order to make amends for any bad impression she might have produced at dinner. He asked her, presently, if she would play. She might be, and certainly was, vulgar; but she could play well and she knew good music. People generally think that good music softens manners, and does not permit those who play and practise it to be vulgar. But, concerning this young person, so much could not be said with any truth.

"You play very well. Where did you learn? Who was your master?" Arnold asked.

She began to reply, but stopped short. He had very nearly caught her.

"Don't ask questions," she said. "I told you not to ask questions before. Where should I learn, but in America? Do you suppose no one can play the piano, except in England? Look here," she glanced at her cousin. "Do you, Mr. Arbuthnot, always spend your evenings like this?"

"How like this?"

"Why, going around in a swallow-tail to drawing-rooms with the women, like a tame tom-cat? If you do, you must be a truly good young man. If you don't, what do you do?"

"Very often, I spend my evenings in a drawing-room."

"Oh, Lord! Do most young Englishmen carry on in the same proper way?"

"Why not?"

"Don't they go to music-halls, please, and dancing cribs, and such?"

"Perhaps. But what does it concern us to know what some men do?"

"Oh, not much. Only if I were a man like you, I wouldn't consent to be a tame tom-cat—that is all; but perhaps you like it."

She meant to insult and offend him so that he should not come any more.

But she did not succeed. He only laughed, feeling that he was getting below the surface, and sat down beside the piano.

"You amuse me," he said, "and you astonish me. You are, in fact, the most astonishing person I ever met. For instance, you come from America, and you talk pure London slang with a cockney twang. How did it get there?"

In fact, it was not exactly London slang, but a patois or dialect, learned partly from her husband, partly from her companions, and partly brought from Gloucester.

"I don't know—I never asked. It came wrapped up in brown paper, perhaps, with a string round it."

"You have lived in America all your life, and you look more like an Englishwoman than any other girl I have ever seen."

"Do I? So much the better for the English girls; they can't do better than take after me. But perhaps—most likely, in fact—you think that American girls all squint, perhaps, or have got hump-backs? Anything else?"

"You were brought up in a little American village, and yet you play in the style of a girl who has had the best masters."

She did not explain—it was not necessary to explain—that her master had been her father, who was a teacher of music.

"I can't help it, can I?" she asked; "I can't help it if I turned out different to what you expected. People sometimes do, you know. And when you don't approve of a girl, it's English manners, I suppose, to tell her so—kind of encourages her to persevere, and pray for better luck next time, doesn't it? It's simple, too, and prevents any foolish errors—no mistake afterwards, you see. I say, are you going to come here often? because, if you are, I shall go away back to the States or somewhere, or stay upstairs in my own room. You and me won't get on very well together, I am afraid."

"I don't think you will see me very often," he replied. "That is improbable; yet I dare say I shall come here as often as I usually do."

"What do you mean by that?" She looked sharply and suspiciously at him. He repeated his words, and she perceived that there was meaning in them, and she felt uneasy.

"I don't understand at all," she said; "Clara tells me that this house is mine. Now—don't you know—I don't intend to invite any but my own friends to visit me in my own house."

"That seems reasonable. No one can expect you to invite people who are not your friends."

"Well, then, I ain't likely to call you my friend"—Arnold inclined his head—"and I am not going to talk riddles any more. Is there anything else you want to say?"

"Nothing more, I think, at present, thank you."

"If there is, you know, don't mind me—have it out—I'm nobody, of course. I'm not expected to have any manners—I'm only a girl. You can say what you please to me, and be as rude as you please; Englishmen always are as rude as they can be to American girls—I've always heard that."

Arnold laughed.

"At all events," he said, "you have charmed Clara, which is the only really important thing. Good-night Miss—Miss Deseret."

"Good-night, old man," she said, laughing, because she bore no malice, and had given him a candid opinion; "I dare say when you get rid of your fine company manners, and put off your swallow-tail,

you're not a bad sort, after all. Perhaps, if you would confess, you are as fond of a kick-up on your way home as anybody. Trust you quiet chaps!"

Clara had not fortunately heard much of this conversation, which, indeed, was not meant for her, because the girl was playing all the time some waltz music, which enabled her to talk and play without being heard at the other end of the room.

Well, there was now no doubt. The American physician and the subject of the photograph were certainly the same man. And this man was also the thief of the safe, and Iris Aglen was Iris Deseret. Of that, Arnold had no longer any reasonable doubt. There was, however, one thing more. Before leaving Clara's house, he refreshed his memory as to the Deseret arms. The quarterings of the shield were, so far, exactly what Mr. Emblem recollected.

"It is," said Lala Roy, "what I thought. But, as yet, not a word to Iris."

He then proceeded to relate the repentance, the confession, and the atonement proposed by the remorseful James. But he did not tell quite all. For the wise man never tells all. What really happened was this. When James had made a clean breast and confessed his enormous share in the villainy, Lala Roy bound him over to secrecy under pain of Law—Law the Rigorous, pointing out that although they do not, in England, exhibit the Kourbash, or bastinado the soles of the feet, they make the prisoner sleep on a hard board, starve him on skilly, set him to work which tears his nails from his fingers, keep him from conversation, tobacco, and drink, and when he comes out, so hedge him around with prejudice and so clothe him with a robe of shame, that no one will ever employ him again, and he is therefore doomed to go back again to the English Hell. Lala Roy, though a man of few words, drew so vivid a description of the punishment which awaited his penitent that James, foxy as he was by nature, felt constrained to resolve that henceforth, happen what might, then and for all future, he would range himself on the side of virtue, and as a beginning he promised to do everything that he could for the confounding of Joseph and the bringing of the guilty to justice.

CHAPTER XIII. HIS LAST CHANCE.

THREE days elapsed, during which nothing was done. That cause is strongest

which can afford to wait. But in those three days several things happened.

First of all, Mr. David Chalker, seeing that the old man was obdurate, made up his mind to lose most of his money, and cursed Joe continually for having led him to build upon his grandfather's supposed wealth. Yet he ought to have known. Tradesmen do not lock up their savings in investments for their grandchildren, nor do they borrow small sums at ruinous interest of money-lending solicitors; nor do they give Bills of Sale. These general rules were probably known to Mr. Chalker. Yet he did not apply them to this particular case. The neglect of the General Rule, in fact, may lead the most astute of mankind into ways of foolishness.

James, for his part, stimulated perpetually by fear of prison and loss of character and of situation—for who would employ an Assistant who got keys made to open the safe?—showed himself the most repentant of mortals. Dr. Joseph Washington, lulled into the most perfect security, enjoyed all those pleasures which the sum of three hundred pounds could purchase. Nobody knew where he was, or what he was doing. As for Lotty, she had established herself firmly in Chester Square, and Cousin Clara daily found out new and additional proofs of the gentle blood breaking out!

On the fourth morning Lala Roy sallied forth. He was about to make a great Moral Experiment, the nature of which you will immediately understand. None but a philosopher who had studied Confucius and Lao Kiun, would have conceived so fine a scheme.

First he paid a visit to Mr. Chalker.

The office was the ground-floor front room, in one of the small streets north of the King's Road. It was not an imposing office, nor did it seem as if much business was done there; and one clerk of tender years sufficed for Mr. Chalker's wants.

"Oh!" he said, "it's our friend from India. You're a lodger of old Emblem's, ain't you?"

"I have lived with him for twenty years. I am his friend."

"Very well. I dare say we shall come to terms, if he's come to his senses. Just take a chair and sit down. How is the old man?"

"He has not yet recovered the use of his intellect."

"Oh! Then how can you act for him if he's off his head?"

"I came to ask an English creditor to show mercy."

"Mercy? What is the man talking about? Mercy! I want my money. What has that got to do with mercy?"

"Nothing, truly; but I will give you your money. I will give you justice, and you shall give me mercy. You lent Mr. Emblem fifty pounds. Will you take your fifty pounds, and leave us in peace?"

He drew a bag out of his pocket—a brown banker's bag—and Mr. Chalker distinctly heard the rustling of notes.

This is a sound which to some ears is more delightful than the finest music in the world. It awakens all the most pleasurable emotions; it provokes desire and hankering after possession; and it fills the soul with the imaginary enjoyment of wealth.

"Certainly not," said Mr. Chalker, confident that better terms than those would be offered. "If that is all you have to say, you may go away again."

"But the rest is usury. Think! To give fifty, and ask three hundred and fifty, is the part of a usurer."

"Call it what you please. The Bill of Sale is for three hundred and fifty pounds. Pay that three hundred and fifty, with costs and Sheriff's poundage, and I take away my man. If you don't pay it, then the books on the shelves and the furniture of the house go to the hammer."

"The books, I am informed," said Lala Roy, "will not bring as much as a hundred pounds if they are sold at auction. As for the furniture, some of it is mine, and some belongs to Mr. Emblem's granddaughter."

"His granddaughter! Oh, it's a swindle," said Mr. Chalker angrily. "It is nothing more or less than a rank swindle. The old man ought to be prosecuted, and, mind you, I'll prosecute him, and you too, for conspiring with him."

"A prosecution," said the Hindoo, "will not hurt him, but it might hurt you. For it would show how you lent him fifty pounds five years ago; how you made him give you a bill for a hundred; how you did not press him to pay that bill, but you continually offered to renew it for him, increasing the amount on each time of renewal; and at last you made him give you a Bill of Sale for three hundred and fifty. This is, I suppose, one of the many ways in which Englishmen grow rich. There are also usurers in India, but they do not, in my country, call themselves lawyers. A prosecution? My friend, it

is for us to prosecute. Shall we show that you have done the same thing with many others? You are, by this time, well known in the neighbourhood, Mr. Chalker, and you are so much beloved that there are many who would be delighted to relate their experiences and dealings with so clever a man. Have you ever studied, one asks with wonder, the precepts of the great Sage who founded your religion?"

"Oh, come, don't let us have any religious nonsense!"

"I assure you they are worth studying. I am, myself, an humble follower of Gautama, but I have read those Precepts with profit. In the kingdom imagined by that Preacher, there is no room for usurers, Mr. Chalker. Where, then, will be your kingdom? Every man must be somewhere. You must have a kingdom and a king."

"This is tomfoolery!" Mr. Chalker turned red, and looked very uncomfortable. "Stick to business. Payment in full. Those are my terms."

"You think, then, that the Precepts of your Sage are only intended for men while they sit in the church? Many Englishmen think so, I have observed."

"Payment in full, mister. That's what I want."

He banged his fist on the table.

"No abatement! No mercy shown to an old man on the edge of the grave! Think, Mr. Chalker. You will soon be as old as Mr. Emblem, your hair as white, your reason as unsteady——"

"Payment in full, and no more words."

"It is well. Then, Mr. Chalker, I have another proposal to make to you."

"I thought we should come to something more. Out with it!"

"I believe you are a friend of Mr. Emblem's grandson?"

"Joe? Oh yes, I know Joe."

"You know him intimately?"

"Yes, I may say so."

"You know that he forged his grandfather's name; that he is a profligate and a spendthrift, and that he has taken or borrowed from his grandfather whatever money he could get, and that—in short, he is a friend of your own?"

It was not until after his visitor had gone that Mr. Chalker understood, and began to resent this last observation.

"Go on," he said. "I know all about Joe."

"Good. Then if you can tell me anything about him which may be of use to me I will do this. I will pay you double

the valuation of Mr. Emblem's shop, in return for a receipt in full. If you can not, you may proceed to sell everything by auction."

Mr. Chalker hesitated. A valuation would certainly give a higher figure than a forced sale, and then that valuation doubled!

"Well," he said, "I don't know. It's a cruel hard case to be done out of my money. How am I to find out whether anything I tell you would be of use to you or not? What kind of thing do you want? How do I know that if you get what you want, you won't swear it is of no use to you?"

"You have the word of one who never broke his word."

Mr. Chalker laughed derisively.

"Why," he said, "I wouldn't take the word of an English Bishop—no, nor of an Archbishop—where money is concerned. What is it—what is the kind of thing you want to know?"

"It is concerned with a certain woman."

"Oh, well, if it is only a woman. I thought it might be something about money. Joe, you see, like a good many other people, has got his own ideas about money, and perhaps he isn't so strict in his dealings as he might be—few men are—and I should not like to let out one or two things that only him and me know." In fact, Mr. Chalker saw, in imagination, the burly form of Joe in his office, brandishing a stick, and accusing him of friendship's trust betrayed. "But as it is only a woman—which of 'em is it?"

"This is a young woman, said to be handsome, tall, and finely-made; she has, I am told, light brown hair and large eyes. That is the description of her given to me."

"I know the girl you mean. Splendid figure, and goes well in tights!"

"I have not been informed on that subject. Can you tell me any more about her?"

"I suspect, mister," said Joe's friend, with cunning eyes, "that you've made the acquaintance of a certain widow that was—married woman that is. I remember now, I've seen Hindoos about her lodgings, down Shadwell way."

"Perhaps," said Lala, "and perhaps not." His face showed not the least sign which could be read. "You can tell me afterwards what you know of the woman at Shadwell."

"Well, then, Joe thinks I know nothing about it. Else I wouldn't tell you. Because I don't want a fight with Joe. Is

this any use to you? He is married to the girl as well as to the widow."

"He is married to the girl as well as to the widow. He has, then, two wives. It is against the English custom, and breaks the English law. The young wife who is beautiful, and the old wife who has the lodging-house. Very good. What is the address of this woman?"

Mr. Chalker looked puzzled.

"Don't you know it, then? What are you driving at?"

"What is the name and address of this Shadwell woman?"

"Well, then"—he wrote an address and handed it over—"you may be as close as you like. I don't care. It isn't my business. But you won't make me believe you don't know all about her. Look here, whatever happens, don't say I told you."

"It shall be a secret," said Lala, taking out the bag of notes. "Let us complete the business at once, Mr. Chalker. Here is another offer. I will give you two hundred pounds in discharge of your whole claim, or you shall have a valuation made, if you prefer it, and I will double the amount."

Mr. Chalker chose the former promptly, and in a few moments handed over the necessary receipts, and sent his clerk to recall the Man in Possession.

"What are you going to do with Joe?" he asked. "No good turn, I'll swear. And a more unforgiving face than yours I never set eyes on. It isn't my business, but I'll give you one warning. If you make Joe desperate, he'll turn on you; and Lord help your slender ribs if Joe once begins. Don't make him desperate. And now I'll tell you another thing. First, the woman at Shadwell is horribly jealous. She'll make a row. Next, the young one, who sings at a Music Hall, she's desperately in love with her husband—more than he is with her—and if a woman's in love with a man, there's one thing she never forgives. You understand what that is. Between the pair, Joe's likely to have a rough time."

"I do. I have had many wives myself."

"Oh, Lord, he says he's had many wives! How many?"

Lala Roy read the receipt, and put it in his pocket. Then he rose and remarked, with a smile of supreme superiority:

"It is a pleasure to give money to you, and to such as you, Mr. Chalker."

"Is it?" he replied with a grin. "Give me some more, then."

"You are one of those who, the richer they become, the less harm they do. Many Englishmen are of this disposition. When they are poor they are jackals, hyenas, wolves, and man-eating tigers; when they are rich they are benevolent and charitable, and show mercy unto the wretched and the poor. So that, in their case, the words of the Wise Man are naught, when he says that the earth is barren of good things where she hoardeth treasure; and that where gold is in her bowels no herb groweth. Pray, Mr. Chalker, pray earnestly for gold in order that you may become virtuous."

Mr. Chalker grinned, but looked uncomfortable.

"I will, mister," he said, "I will pray with all my might."

Nevertheless, he remained for the space of the whole morning in uneasiness. The words of the Philosopher troubled him. I do not go so far as to say that his mind went back to the days when he was young and innocent, because he was still young, and he never had been innocent; nor do I say that a tear rose to his eyes and trickled down his cheek, because nothing brought tears into his eyes except a speck of dust; or that he resolved to confine himself for the future to legitimate lawyer's work, because he would then have starved. I only say that he felt uncomfortable and humiliated, and chiefly so because an old man with white hair and a brown skin—hang it! a common Nigger—had been able to bring discord into the sweet harmony of his thoughts.

Lala Roy then betook himself to Joe's former lodgings, and asked for that gentleman's present address.

The landlady professed to know nothing.

"You do know, however," he persisted, reading knowledge in her eyes.

"Is it trouble you mean for him?" asked the woman, "and him such a fine, well-set-up young man, too! Is it trouble? Oh, dear, I always thought he got his money on the cross. Look here. I ain't going to round on him, though he has gone away and left a comfortable room. So there! And you may go."

Lala Roy opened his hand. There were at least five golden sovereigns glorifying his dingy palm.

"Can gold," the Moralist asked, "ever increase the virtue of man? Woman, how much?"

"Is it trouble?" she repeated, looking greedily at the money. "Will the young man get copped?"

Lala understood no London slang. But he showed his hand again.

"How much? Whoso is covetous let him know that his heart is poor. How much?"

"Poor young man! I'll take them all, please, sir. What's he done?"

"Where does he live?"

"I know where he lives," she said, "because our Bill rode away with him at the back of his cab, and saw where he got out. He's married now, and his wife sings at the Music Hall, and he lives on her earnings. Quite the gentleman he is now, and smokes cigars all day long. There's his address, and thank you for the money. Oh," she said with a gasp. "To think that people can earn five pounds so easy."

"May the gold procure you happiness—such happiness as you desire!" said Lala Roy.

"It will nearly pay the quarter's rent. And that's about happiness enough for one morning."

Joe was sitting in his room alone, half asleep. In fact, he had a head upon him. He sprang to his feet, however, when he saw Lala Roy.

"Hallo!" he cried. "You here, Nig? How the devil did you find out my address?"

There was not only astonishment, but some alarm upon his countenance.

"Never mind. I want a little conversation with you, Mr. Joseph."

"Well, sit down and let us have it out. I say, have you come to tell me that you did sneak those papers, after all? What did you get for them?"

"I have not come to tell you that. I dare say, however, we shall be able, some day, to tell you who did steal the papers—if any were stolen, that is."

"Quite so, my jolly mariner. If any were stolen. Ho, ho! you've got to prove that first, haven't you? How's the old man?"

"He is ill; he is feeble with age; he is weighed down with misfortune. I am come, Mr. Joseph, to ask your help for him."

"My help for him? Why, can't he help himself?"

"Four or five years ago he incurred a debt for one who forged his name. He needed not to have paid that money, but he saved a man from prison."

"Who was that? Who forged his name?"

"I do not name that man, whose end will be confusion, unless he repent and

make amends. This debt has grown until it is too large for him to pay it. Unless it is paid, his whole property, his very means of living, will be sold by the creditor."

"How can I pay him back? It is three hundred and fifty pounds now," said Joseph.

"Man, thou hast named thyself."

Joseph stammered but blustered still.

"Well—then—what the devil do you mean—you and your forgery?"

"Forgery is one crime; you have since committed, perhaps, others. Think. You have been saved once from prison. Will anyone save you a second time? How have you shown your gratitude? Will you now do something for your benefactor?"

"What do you mean, I say? What do you mean with your forgery and prison? Hang me, if I oughtn't to kick you out of the room. I would, too, if you were ten years younger. Do you know, sir, that you are addressing an officer and a gentleman?"

"There is sometimes, even at the very end, a door opened for repentance. The door is open now. Young man, once more, consider. Your grandfather is old and destitute. Will you help him?"

Joseph hesitated.

"I don't believe he is poor. He has saved up all his money for the girl; let her help him."

"You are wrong. He has saved nothing. His granddaughter maintains herself by teaching. He has not a penny. You have got from him and you have spent all the money he had."

"He ought to have saved."

"He could, at least, have lived by his calling but for you and for this debt which was incurred for you. He is ruined by it. What will you do for him?"

"I am not going to do anything for him," said Joseph. "Is it likely? Did he ever have anything but a scowl for me?"

"He who injures another is always in the wrong. You will, then, do nothing? Think. It is the open door. He is your grandfather; he has kept you from starvation when you were turned out of office for drink and dishonesty. I hear that you now have money. I have been told that you have been seen to show a large sum of money. Will you give him some?"

As a matter of fact, Joe had been, the night before, having a festive evening at the Music Hall, from which his wife was absent, owing to temporary indisposition. While there, he took so much Scotch whisky and water that his tongue was

loosened and he became boastful; and that to so foolish an extent that he actually brandished in the eyes of the multitude a whole handful of bank-notes. He now remembered this, and was greatly struck by the curious fact that Lala Roy should seem to know it.

"I haven't got any money. It was all brag last night. I couldn't help my grandfather if I wanted to."

"You have what is left of three hundred pounds," said Lala Roy.

"If I said that last night," replied Joe, "I must have been drunker than I thought. You old fool! the fimsies were duffers. Where do you think I could raise three hundred pounds? No, no—I'm sorry for the old man, but I can't help him. I'm going to sea again in a day or two. We jolly sailors don't make much money, but if a pound or two, when I come home, will be of any use to him, he's only got to say the word. After all, I believe it's a kid, got up between you. The old man must have saved something."

"You will suffer him, then, even to be taken to the workhouse?"

"Why, I can't help it, and I suppose you'll have to go there too. Ho, ho! I say, Nig!" He began to laugh. "Ho, ho! They won't let you wear that old fez of yours at the workhouse. How beautiful you'll look in the workhouse uniform, won't you? I'll come home, and bring you some baccy. Now you can cheese it, old un."

"I will go, if that is what you mean. It is the last time that you will be asked to help your grandfather. The door is closed. You have had one more chance, and you have thrown it away."

So he departed, and Joe, who was of a self-reliant and sanguine disposition, thought nothing of the warning, which was therefore thrown away and wasted.

As for Lala, he called a cab, and drove to Shadwell. And if any man ever felt that he was an Instrument set apart to carry out a Scheme of Vengeance, that Hindoo Philosopher felt like one. The Count of Monte Christo himself was not more filled with the Faith and Conviction of his Divine obligation.

In the afternoon he returned to Chelsea, and perhaps one who knew him might have remarked upon his face something like a gleam of satisfaction. He had done his duty.

It was now five days since the fatal discovery. Mr. Emblem still remained upstairs in his chair; but he was slowly

recovering. He clearly remembered that he had been robbed, and the principal sign of the shock was his firm conviction that by his own exercise of memory Iris had been enabled to enter into possession of her own.

As regards the Bill of Sale, he had clean forgotten it. Now, in the morning, there happened a thing which surprised James very much. The Man in Possession was recalled. He went away. So that the money must have been paid. James was so astonished that he ran upstairs to tell Iris.

"Then," said the girl, "we shall not be turned out after all. But who has paid the money?"

It could have been no other than Arnold. Yet when, later in the day, he was taxed with having committed the good action, Arnold stoutly denied it. He had not so much money in the world, he said; in fact, he had no money at all.

"The good man," said the Philosopher, "has friends of whom he knoweth not. As the river returns its waters to the sea, so the heart rejoiceth in returning benefits received."

"Oh, Lala," said Iris. "But on whom have we conferred any benefits?"

"The moon shines upon all alike," said Lala, "and knows not what she illumines."

"Lala Roy," said Arnold, suddenly getting a gleam of intelligence, "it is you who have paid this money."

"You, Lala?"

"No one else could have paid it," said Arnold.

"But I thought—I thought——" said Iris.

"You thought I had no money at all. Children, I have some. One may live without money in Hindostan, but in England even the Philosopher cannot meditate unless he can pay for food and shelter. I have money, Iris, and I have paid the usurer enough to satisfy him. Let us say no more."

"Oh, Lala!" The tears came to Iris's eyes. "And now we shall go on living as before."

"I think not," he replied. "In the generations of Man, the seasons continue side by side; but spring does not always continue with winter."

"I know, now," interrupted Mr. Emblem, suddenly waking into life and recollection; "I could not remember at first. Now I know very well, but I cannot tell how, that

the man who stole my papers is my own grandson. James would not steal. James is curious; he wants to read over my shoulders what I am writing. He would pry and find out. But he would not steal. It doesn't matter much—does it?—since I was able to repair the loss—I always had a most excellent memory—and Iris has now received her inheritance; but it is my grandson Joe who has stolen the papers. My daughter's son came home from Australia when—but this I learned afterwards—he had already disgraced himself there. He ran into debt, and I paid his debts; he forged my name and I accepted the Bill; he took all the money I could let him have, and still he asked for more. There is no one in the world who would rob me of those papers except Joseph."

Now, the door was open to the staircase, and the door of communication between the shop and the house-passage was also open. This seems a detail hardly worth noting; yet it proved of the greatest importance. From such small trifles follow great events. Observe that as yet no positive proof was in the hands of the two conspirators which would actually connect Iris with Claude Deseret. The proofs were in the stolen papers, and though Clara had those papers, who was to show that these papers were actually those in the sealed packet?

When Mr. Emblem finished speaking, no one replied, because Arnold and Lala knew the facts already, but did not wish to spread them abroad; and next, because to Iris it was nothing new that her cousin was a bad man, and because she thought, now that the Man in Possession was gone, they might just as well forget the papers, and go on as if all this fuss had not happened.

In the silence that followed this speech, they heard the voice of James downstairs, saying:

"I am sorry to say, sir, that Mr. Emblem is ill upstairs, and you can't see him to-day."

"Ill, is he? I am very sorry. Take him my compliments, James. Mr. Frank Farrar's compliments, and tell him——"

And then Mr. Emblem sprang to his feet, crying:

"Stop him! stop him! Go downstairs, someone, and stop him! I don't know where he lives. Stop him! stop him!"

Arnold rushed down the stairs. He found in the shop an elderly gentleman, carrying a bundle of books. It was, in fact,

Mr. Farrar come to negotiate the sale of another work from his library.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Arnold, "Mr. Emblem is most anxious to see you. Would you step upstairs?"

"Quick, Mr. Farrar—quick," the old man held him tight by the hand. "Tell me before my memory runs away with me again—tell me. Listen, Iris! Yet it doesn't matter, because you have already—Tell me——" He seemed about to wander again, but he pulled himself together with a great effort. "You knew my son-in-law before his marriage."

"Surely, Mr. Emblem; I knew your son-in-law, and his father, and all his people."

"And his name was not Aglen, at all?" asked Arnold.

"No; he took the name of Aglen from a fancied feeling of pride when he quarrelled with his father about—well, it was about his marriage, as you know, Mr. Emblem; he came to London, and tried to make his way by writing, and thought to do it, and either to hide a failure or brighten a success, by using a pseudonym. People were more jealous about their names in those days. He had better," added the unsuccessful veteran of letters, "he had far better have made his living as a—as a"—he looked about him for a fitting simile—"as a book-seller."

"Then, sir," said Arnold, "what was his real name?"

"His name was Claude Deseret, of course."

"Iris," said Arnold, taking her hand, "this is the last proof. We have known it for four or five days, but we wanted the final proof, and now we have it. My dear, you are the cousin of Clara Holland, and all her fortune, by her grandfather's will, is yours. This is the secret of the safe. This was what the stolen papers told you."

CHAPTER XIV. THE HAND OF FATE.

At the first stroke of noon next day, Arnold arrived at his cousin's house in Chester Square. He was accompanied by Iris, by Lala Roy, and by Mr. Frank Farrar.

"Pray, Arnold, what is meant by all this mystery?" asked Clara, receiving him and his party with considerable surprise.

"I will explain all in a few minutes, my dear Clara. Meanwhile, have you done what you promised?"

"Yes. I wrote to Dr. Washington. He will be here, I expect, in a few minutes."

"You wrote exactly in the form of words you promised me?"

"Yes, exactly. I asked him to meet me here this morning at a quarter past twelve, in order to discuss a few points connected with Iris's future arrangements, before he left for America, and I wrote on the envelope, 'Immediate and important.'"

"Very well. He will be sure to come, I think. Perhaps your cousin will insist upon another cheque for fifty pounds being given to him."

"Arnold, you are extremely suspicious and most ungenerous about Dr. Washington, on whose truth and disinterested honesty I thoroughly rely."

"We shall see. Meanwhile, Clara, I desire to present to you a young lady of whom we have already spoken. This is Miss Aglen, who is, I need hardly say, deeply anxious to win your good opinion. And this is Lala Roy, an Indian gentleman who knew her father, and has lived in the same house with her for twenty years. Our debt—I shall soon be able to say your debt—of gratitude to this gentleman for his long kindness to Miss Aglen—is one which can never be repaid."

Clara gave the most frigid bow to both Iris and Lala Roy.

"Really, Arnold, you are talking in enigmas this morning. What am I to understand? What has this gentleman to do with my appointment with Dr. Washington?"

"My dear cousin, I am so happy this morning that I wonder I do not talk in conundrums, or rondeaux, or terza rima. It is a mere chance, I assure you. Perhaps I may break out in rhymes presently. This evening we will have fireworks in the square, roast a whole ox, invite the neighbours, and dance about a maypole. You shall lead off the dance, Clara."

"Pray go on, Arnold. All this is very inexplicable."

"This gentleman, however, is a very old friend of yours, Clara. Do you not recognise Mr. Frank Farrar, who used to stay at the Hall in the old days?"

"I remember Mr. Farrar very well." Clara gave him her hand. "But I should not have known him. Why have we never met in society during all these years, Mr. Farrar?"

"I suppose because I have been out of society, Miss Holland," said the scholar. "When a man marries, and has a large

family, and a small income, and grows old, and has to see the young fellows shoving him out at every point, he doesn't care much about society. I hope you are well and happy."

"I am very well, and I ought to be happy, because I have recovered Claude's lost heiress, my cousin, Iris Deseret, and she is the best and most delightful of girls, with the warmest heart and the sweetest instincts of a lady by descent and birth."

She looked severely at Arnold, who said nothing, but smiled incredulously.

Mr. Farrar looked from Iris to Miss Holland, bewildered.

"And why do you come to see me to-day, Mr. Farrar—and with Arnold?"

"Because I have undertaken to answer one question presently, which Mr. Arbuthnot is to ask me. That is why I am here. Not but what it gives me the greatest pleasure to see you again, Miss Holland, after so many years."

"Our poor Claude died in America, you know, Mr. Farrar."

"So I have recently heard."

"And left one daughter."

"That also I have learned." He looked at Iris.

"She is with me, here in this house, and has been with me for a week. You may understand, Mr. Farrar, the happiness I feel in having with me Claude's only daughter."

Mr. Farrar looked from her to Arnold with increasing amazement. But he said nothing.

"I have appointed this morning, at Arnold's request," Clara went on, "to have an interview, perhaps the last, with the gentleman who brought my dear Iris from America. I say, at Arnold's request, because he asked me to do this, and I have always trusted him implicitly, and I hope he is not going to bring trouble upon us now, although I do not, I confess, understand the presence of his friends or their connection with my cousin."

"My dear Clara," said Arnold again, "I ask for nothing but patience. And that only for a few moments. As for the papers, you have them all in your possession?"

"Yes; they are locked up in my strong box."

"Do not, on any account, give them to anybody. However, after this morning you will not be asked. Have you taken as yet any steps at all for the transference of your property to—the rightful heir?"

"Not yet."

"Thank goodness! And now, Clara, I will ask you, as soon as Dr. Washington and—your cousin—are in the drawing-room, to ring the bell. You need not explain why. We will answer the summons, and we will give all the explanations that may be required."

"I will not have my cousin vexed, Arnold."

"You shall not. Your cousin shall never be vexed by me as long as I live."

"And Dr. Washington must not be in any way offended. Consider the feelings of an American gentleman, Arnold. He is my guest."

"You may thoroughly rely upon my consideration for the feelings of an American gentleman. Go; there is a knock at the door. Go to receive him, and, when both are in the room, ring the bell."

Joe was in excellent spirits that morning. His interview with Lala Roy convinced him that nothing whatever was known of the papers, therefore nothing could be suspected. What a fool, he thought, must be his grandfather, to have had these papers in his hands for eighteen years and never to have opened the packet, in obedience to the injunction of a dead man! Had it been his own case, he would have opened the papers without the least delay, mastered the contents, and instantly claimed the property. He would have gone on to use it for his own purposes and private gain, and with an uninterrupted run of eighteen years, he would most certainly have made a very pretty thing out of it.

However, everything works well for him who greatly dares. His wife would manage for him better than he could do it for himself. Yet a few weeks, and the great fortune would fall into his hands. He walked all the way to Chester Square, considering how he should spend the money. There are some forms of foolishness, such as, say, those connected with art, literature, charity, and work for others, which attract some rich men, but which he was not at all tempted to commit. There were others, however, connected with horses, races, betting, and gambling, which tempted him strongly. In fact, Joseph contemplated spending this money wholly on his own pleasures. Probably it would be a part of his pleasure to toss a few crumbs to his wife.

It is sad to record that Lotty, finding

herself received with so much enthusiasm, had already begun to fall off in her behaviour. Even Clara, who thought she discovered every hour some new point of resemblance in the girl to her father, was fain to admit that the "Americanisms" were much too pronounced for general society.

Her laugh was louder and more frequent; her jests were rough and common; she used slang words freely; her gestures were extravagant, and she walked in the streets as if she wished everyone to notice her. It is the walk of the Music Hall stage, and the trick of it consists chiefly in giving, so to speak, prominence to the shoulders and oscillation to the skirts. In fact, she was one of those ladies who ardently desire that all the world should notice them.

Further, in her conversation, she showed an acquaintance with certain phases of the English lower life which was astonishing in an American girl. But Clara had no suspicion—none whatever.

One thing the girl did which pleased her mightily.

She was never tired of hearing about her father, and his way of looking, standing, walking, folding his hands, and holding himself. And constantly more and more Clara detected these little tricks in his daughter. Perhaps she learned them.

"My dear," she said, "to think that I ever thought you unlike your dear father!"

So that it made her extremely uncomfortable to detect a certain reserve in Arnold towards the girl, and then a dislike of Arnold in the girl herself. However, she was accustomed to act by Arnold's advice, and consented, when he asked her, to arrange so that Arnold might meet Dr. Washington. As if anything that so much as looked like suspicion could be thought of for a moment!

But the bell rang, and Arnold, followed by his party, led the way from the morning-room to the drawing-room. Dr. Joseph Washington was standing with his back to the door. The girl was dressed as if she had just come from a walk, and was holding Clara's hand.

"Yes, madam," he was saying softly, "I return to-morrow to America, and my wife and my children. I leave our dear girl in the greatest confidence in your hands. I only venture to advise that, to avoid lawyers' expenses, you should simply instruct somebody—the right person—to transfer the property from your name to

the name of Iris. Then you will be saved troubles and formalities of every kind. As for me, my home is in America——"

"No, Joseph," said Lala Roy gently; "it is in Shadwell."

"It is a lie!" he cried, starting; "it is an infernal lie!"

"Iris," said Arnold, "lift your veil, my dear. Mr. Farrar, who is this young lady? Look upon this face, Clara."

"This is the daughter of Claude Deseret," said Mr. Farrar, "if she is the daughter of the man who married Alice Emblem, and went by the name of Aglen."

Clara turned a terrified face to Arnold.

"Arnold, help me!"

"Whose face is this?" he repeated.

"It is—Good Heavens!—it is the face of your portrait. It is Claude's face again. They are his very eyes——" She covered her face with her hands. "Oh, Arnold, what is it! Who is this other?"

"This other lady, Clara, is a Music Hall Singer, who calls herself Carlotta Claridane, wife of this man, who is not an American at all, but the grandson of Mr. Emblem, the bookseller, and therefore cousin of Iris. It is he who robbed his grandfather of the papers which you have in your possession, Clara. And this is an audacious conspiracy, which we have been so fortunate as to unearth and detect, step by step."

"Oh, can such wickedness be?" said Clara; "and in my house, too?"

"Joe," said Lotty, "the game is up. I knew it wouldn't last."

"Let them prove it," said Joe; "let them prove it. I defy you to prove it."

"Don't be a fool, Joe," said his wife.

"Remember," she whispered, "you've got a pocketful of money. Let us go peaceably."

"As for you, Nigger," said Joe, "I'll break every bone in your body."

"Not here," said Arnold; "there will be no breaking of bones in this house."

Lotty began to laugh.

"The gentle blood always shows itself, doesn't it?" she said. "I've got the real instincts of a lady, haven't I? Oh, it was beautiful while it lasted. And every day more and more like my father."

"Arnold," cried poor Clara, crushed, "help me!"

"Come," said Arnold, "you had better go at once."

"I won't laugh at you," said Lotty. "It's a shame, and you're a good old thing. But it did me good, it really did, to hear all about the gentle blood. Come, Joe. Let us go away quietly."

She took her husband's arm. Joe was standing sullen and desperate. Mr. Chalker was right. It wanted very little more to make him fall upon the whole party, and go off with a fight.

"Young woman," said Lala Roy, "you had better not go outside the house with the man. It will be well for you to wait until he has gone."

"Why? He is my husband, whatever we have done, and I'm not ashamed of him."

"Is he your husband? Ask him what I meant when I said his home was at Shadwell."

"Come, Lotty," said Joe, with a curious change of manner. "Let us go at once."

"Wait," Lala repeated. "Wait, young woman, let him go first. Pray—pray let him go first."

"Why should I wait? I go with my husband."

"I thought to save you from shame. But if you will go with him, ask him again why his home is at Shadwell, and why he left his wife."

Lotty sprang upon her husband, and caught his wrists with both hands.

"Joe, what does he mean? Tell me he is a liar."

"That would be useless," said Lala Roy. "Because a very few minutes will prove the contrary. Better, however, that he should go to prison for marrying two wives than for robbing his grandfather's safe."

"It's a lie!" Joe repeated, looking as dangerous as a wild boar brought to bay.

"There was a Joseph Gallop, formerly assistant purser in the service of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company," continued the Man of Fate, "who married, nine months ago, a certain widow at Shadwell. He was turned out of the service, and he married her because she had a prosperous lodging-house."

"Oh—h!" cried Lotty. "You villain! You thought to live upon my earnings, did you? You put me up to pretend to be somebody else. Miss Holland"—

she fell upon her knees, literally and simply, and without any theatrical pretence at all—"forgive me! I am properly punished. Oh, he is made of lies! He told me that the real Iris was dead and buried, and he was the rightful heir; and as for you"—she sprang to her feet and turned upon her husband—"I know it is true. I know it is true—I can see it within your guilty eyes."

"If you have any doubt," said Lala, "here is a copy of the marriage-certificate."

She took it, read it, and put it in her pocket. Then she went out of the room without another word, but with rage and revenge in her eyes.

Joseph followed her, saying no more. He had lost more than he thought to lose. But there was still time to escape, and he had most of the money in his pocket.

But another surprise awaited him.

The lady from Shadwell, in fact, was waiting for him outside the door. With her were a few Shadwell friends, of the seafaring profession, come to see fair play. It was a disgraceful episode in the history of Chester Square. After five minutes or so, during which no welscher on a race-course was ever more hardly used, two policemen interfered to rescue the man of two wives, and there was a procession all the way to the police-court, where, after several charges of assault had been preferred and proved against half-a-dozen mariners, Joseph was himself charged with bigamy, both wives giving evidence, and committed for trial.

His old friend, Mr. David Chalker, one is sorry to add, refused to give bail, so that he remained in custody, and will now endure hardness for a somewhat lengthened period.

"Clara," said Arnold, "Iris will stay with you, if you ask her. We shall not marry, my dear, without your permission. I have promised that already, have I not?"

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